

they encounter, where they accumulate until they become clouds and fall in the form of rain, dew, or snow. These waters at first descend upon the plains without any fixed course, but by degrees hollow out a bed for themselves; by their natural bent they run to the bottom of mountains, and penetrating or dissolving the land easiest to divide, they carry earth and sand away with them, cut deep channels in the plains, form themselves into rivers, and open a passage into the sea, which constantly receives as much water from the land rivers as it loses by evaporation. The windings in the channels of rivers have sinuosities, whose angles are correspondent to each other, so that where the waves form a salient angle on one side, the other has an exactly opposite one; and as hills and mountains, which may be considered as the banks of the vallies which separate them, have also sinuosities in corresponding angles, it seems to demonstrate that the vallies have been formed, by degrees, by the currents of the sea, in the same manner as the rivers have hollowed out their beds in the earth.

The waters which flow on the surface of the earth, and support its verdure and fertility, are not perhaps one half of those which the vapours