

any moisture from it.* I have examined pieces of garden ground, eight or ten feet thick, which had not been stirred for many years, and whose surface was nearly level, and found that the rain water never penetrated deeper than three or four feet; and on turning it up in the spring, after a wet winter, I found it as dry as when first heaped together.

I made the same observation on earth which had lain in ridges two hundred years; below three or four feet it was as dry as dust; from which it is plain that water does not extend so far by filtration as has been generally imagined.

By this means, therefore, the internal part of the earth can be supplied with a very small part; but water by its own weight descends from the surface to the greatest depths; it sinks through natural conduits, or penetrates small passages for itself; it follows the roots of trees, the cracks in rocks, the interstices in the earth, and divides and extends on all sides into an infinity of small branches and rills, always descending until its passage is opposed by clay

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or

* These facts are so easily demonstrated, that the smallest observation will prove their veracity.