

The manner in which inundations are occasioned merits peculiar attention. When a river swells, the rapidity of the water always increases till it begins to overflow the banks; at that instant the velocity diminishes, which causes inundations to continue for several days; for when even a less quantity of water comes after the overflowing than before, the inundation will still be made, because it depends much more on the velocity of the water than on the quantity; if it was not so rivers would overflow for an hour or two and then return to their beds, which never occurs; the inundations always remaining for several days; whether the rain ceases, or a less quantity of water is brought, because the overflowing has diminished the velocity, and consequently, although the like quantity of water is no longer carried in the same time as before, yet the effects are the same as if the greater quantity had come there. It might be remarked on the occasion of this diminution, that if a constant wind blows against the current of the river, the inundation will be much greater than it would have been without this accidental cause, which diminishes the celerity of the water;