rivers the means of surmounting all these obstacles. Now, observation would seem absolutely to prove the contrary.

We have remarked, that rapid rivers which, in the bottom of valleys, fall in cascades, from rock to rock, which beat with violence against the walls which contain them, do not in any degree alter these rocks, and that, far from corroding their surface, they allow it to be covered with a rich coating of mosses, confervæ, &c. which could neither maintain itself, nor be formed at all, were the least portion of the surface of these rocks continually or even only frequently removed.

A much more striking fact is that which some of the great rivers present, such as the Nile, the Orinoco, &c. which flow in the equatorial regions.

These powerful rivers, when they have arrived at places where they are contracted, and, as it were, jammed in between two rocky walls, form impetuous cataracts. Their waters, endowed by the celerity of this fall with the greatest erosive power that can be attributed to this fluid, must necessarily have corroded, or at least worn, the rocks which they have thus beat against since the creation of our present Continent. Now, so far from removing the surface, they cover it with a brownish varnish of a peculiar nature.

It appears, therefore, well established, that water *alone* does not scoop those rocks, whose aggregation is complete, or which are solid; and that it does not wear them in any way, whatever be its quantity of motion.

We say *water alone;* and we must insist on this distinction, in order to make the preceding facts agree with other facts, which might seem contradictory.