

might be, not inappropriately, called pools. It has been supposed that they are the craters of extinct volcanoes, and are supplied by springs, a supposition not at all improbable. They all increase and decrease with changes in the atmosphere.

The second class comprises those which receive water, but have no outlets. The Caspian and Lake Aral belong to this division. The Caspian is about 600 miles long, and its extreme breadth 300, though its average breadth is not more than 100 miles. This most remarkable lake receives the waters of the Volga, a river which has a course of about 2000 miles, flowing through European and a part of Asiatic Russia, and brings down more than 518,000,000 of cubic feet every hour. The Ural, the Yaik, the Kur, and many other streams of considerable magnitude, are also received by the Caspian; but its level is not changed, though it has no perceptible outlet by which to discharge the water it receives. Lake Aral presents the same phenomena, and, though not to be compared in superficial extent to the Caspian, receives two large rivers, the Oxus and the Jaxartes. The difficulty in explaining the nature of these lakes is to account for the constancy of their level, which might be expected to rise considerably, as they are daily receiving so large a body of water. It has been supposed that they are connected by some internal channel with the sea, and the opinion has been supported by the fact that the water of both the Caspian and Lake Aral is salt, and contains marine productions; but it is stated by a modern writer, that the Caspian is at the present moment not less than 300 feet below the level of the Black Sea. It is almost certain that the phenomenon referred to may be accounted for by evaporation, though it is possible that the process of filtration may be going on, and assist this cause. Mr. Bell has mentioned several interesting facts, to show how great an effect may be produced by evaporation under favourable circumstances. In the valley of the Missouri, he says, "a climate as cold as that of the Caspian, the evaporation is so great, that a tablespoonful of water placed on the deck of a vessel was evaporated in a very short space of time, and the inkstand was daily replenished during a voyage of 1000 miles downward, from Fort Mandan, in 47° north latitude. The evaporation on the river was so great, that though more than twenty rivers of large volume fell into the