

risen from the tombs of the preceding epoch. And not alone around the borders of the widened lake, but upon every island knoll which raised its head above the denuding waters. This encircling forest and these isolated island clumps still stood and flourished when at length the lake receded.

No turf carpeted the abandoned lake-bottom. No oak, or beech, or pine raised its head through the covering of lake-slime which separated the slumbering-place of vegetable germs from the animating influence of sun and air. By degrees, however, the floods washed down the seeds of grasses and herbs upon the desert area, and humbler forms of vegetation crept from the borders toward the centre. At length the entire area smiled with vernal flowers, and browned in the frosty blasts of winter. The bulky acorn, and walnut, and hickory-nut traveled with less facility, and the forest more sluggishly encroached upon the lake's abandoned domain. In this stage of the history the Indian was here. For aught I know, he was here while yet the prairies were a lake-bottom. His canoe may have been paddled over the future spires of Bloomington and Springfield, and the muscalonge may have been pursued through the future streets of Chicago; but, at least, the Indian was present in the interval of time by which the herb distanced the tree in their race for possession of the new soil. In this interval he plied the firebrand in the brown sedges of autumn, and made for himself an Indian-summer sky, while he cleared his favorite hunting-ground of the rank growths which impeded both eye and foot. While the Indian was engaged in these pursuits, and while yet the forest had not had time to extend itself over the prairie, the white man came up the lake from Mackinac, crossed over the prairies to the Mississippi, saw the Indian engaged in his burnings, and hastily concluded that this was the means by which