

ing-place for man. But, during geologic ages unnumbered, the powers of water have been wrestling with the powers of fire. Rains and floods have been tearing down what fire had built. The energies of fire have been wasting; the earthquake and the volcano have been stricken with the palsy of age. Old Ocean, however, is still in his youth. The volcano had been smitten with decrepitude even before the ocean had its birth. The denuding and destroying agencies of Nature have gained the ascendancy, and, in the inevitable order of things, are destined to retain it.

Let us glance at the labors of water in leveling the inequalities which ancient volcanic energy had long ago created upon the surface of our planet. Throughout the whole extent of the circumambient sea, the tireless surge is gnawing at the rock-bound shore, and mouthful by mouthful the continents and the islands are being swallowed up. The sediment which every summer shower washes down the hill-side is so much material taken from the hill-top and deposited in the valley. The deep mould of the alluvial fiat is made up of the spoils of the adjacent declivities. By as much as the valley is raised, the hills are lowered. The turbid waters of a winter stream are hurrying off with a freight of sediment stolen from a hundred townships. The mud which settles in my glass of river water upon a Mississippi steam-boat is a mouthful of the Rocky Mountains—or perchance of the Alleghanies—or, what is still more probable, it is a whole museum of soils, gathered from the fertile farms of New York and Pennsylvania—from the sandy cliffs of the Great Kenawha—from the clayey slopes of Cincinnati—from the slimy borders of Lake Pepin—from the melon-patch of a Cheyenne squaw, and from the beetling cliffs of the far-off Yellowstone. Of what part of the country is not this slime the washing? From month to month, and from year to year, and from age to age, this