

France, covering the rich fields of Touraine and the wide flats of the Netherlands. It rolled far up the plains of the Danube, and stretched thence eastward across the south of Russia into Asia.

By this time some of the species of shells which still people the European seas had appeared. So long have they been natives of our area that they have witnessed the rise of a great part of the continent. Some of the most stupendous changes which they have seen have taken place in the basin of the Mediterranean, where, at a comparatively recent geological period, parts of the sea-floor were upheaved to a height of 3000 feet. It was then that the breadth of the Italian peninsula was increased by the belt of lower hills that flanks the range of the Apennines. Then, too, Vesuvius and Etna began their eruptions. Among these later geographical events also we must place the gradual isolation of the Sea of Aral, the Caspian, and the Black Sea from the rest of the ocean, which is believed to have once spread from the Arctic regions down the west of Asia, along the base of the Ural Mountains into the south-east of Europe.

The last scene in this long history is one of the most unexpected of all. Europe, having nearly its present height and outlines, is found swathed deep in snow and ice. Scandinavia and Finland are one vast sheet of ice, that creeps down from the watershed into the Atlantic on the one side, and into the basin of the Baltic on the other. All the high grounds of Britain are similarly buried. The bed of the North Sea as well as of the Baltic is in great measure choked with ice. The Alps, the Pyrenees, the Carpathians, and the Caucasus send down vast glaciers into the plains at their base. Northern plants find their way south even to the Pyrenees, while the reindeer, musk-