

detritus produced by sub-aërial waste is washed into the rivers, and the coarser parts are employed by the running water in scouring its channels, which are thus deepened and widened, and sink inch by inch farther into the framework of the land. Under favourable conditions of climate and geological structure, the streams dig out long and deep ravines in solid rock; but more usually their work is made less obvious by the activity of the other sub-aërial agents, which attack the sides of the water-channels and lower them as fast as the streams can deepen their beds. By this combination of operations, valleys with sloping sides are hollowed out.

In those regions where the atmospheric moisture generally falls to the ground as snow, land-ice is formed, which, when it assumes the character of an ice-cap or of distinct valley glaciers, moves downwards from the higher grounds, grinding, smoothing, polishing, and scratching the rocks over which it marches, hollowing them out into basin-shaped cavities in one place, and leaving them as projecting domes and bosses in another, but everywhere removing that angularity of feature, which they naturally assume under the ordinary influence of the weather, and replacing it with those characteristic smooth flowing contours, which are everywhere so marked a relic and evidence of ice-action.

Lastly, the sea eats into the margin of land and cuts away slice after slice. Here and there indeed, whether from the sediment carried down by rivers or from that which the tides and waves cast ashore, there is a gain of land from the sea. But such additions are merely local, and are generally insignificant. They do not seriously affect the conclusion which the evidence forces upon us that, on the whole, the sea encroaches on the land, and will continue to do so as long as any dry land is left above its level.