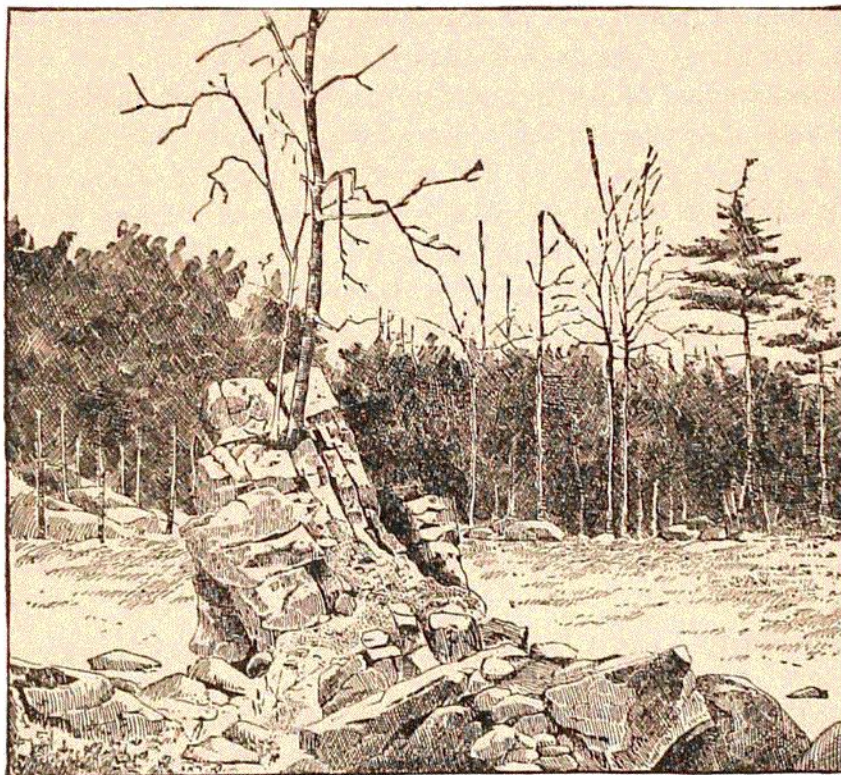


DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS.

The destructive effects proceed either from living plants or animals, or from the products of decomposition. The latter subject is briefly considered under Chemical Work.

1. The roots which come from the sprouting of a seed in the crevice of a rock, as they increase in size, act like wedges, in tending to press the rock apart; and, when the roots are of large size, masses tons in weight may be

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Rocks disrupted by roots of trees, between Gloucester and Rockport, Mass. Shaler, '89.

torn asunder; and if on the edge of a precipice, the detached blocks may be pushed off, to fall to its base. This is one of the most effective causes of the destruction of rocks. Many regions of massive and jointed rocks are thickly covered with huge blocks, looking like transported boulders, which are the results of this kind of upturning. The *Confervæ* and other simple plants often commence their wedging work in the smallest of rifts; and yet by constant growth cause great results. Moreover, the opening of rifts and fissures gives access to moisture, and thus contributes further to rock destruction by chemical processes and by frost.

2. Boring animals, like the saxicavous Mollusks, make holes, often as large as the finger, and sometimes larger, in limestone and other rocks, along some seashores. Species of *Saxicava*, *Pholas*, *Petricola*, *Lithodomus*, *Gastrochaena*, and even some Gastropods, Barnacles, Annelids, Echini, and Sponges,