

logical past, as is shown by the existence of table-lands of erosion (ante, p. 83). To these table-lands the name of "plains of marine denudation" has been applied by Sir A. C. Ramsay. From what has now been said, however, it will be seen that in their actual production the sea has really had less to do than the meteoric agents. A "plain of marine denudation" is that base-level of erosion to which a mass of land had been reduced mainly by the subaerial forces—the line below which further degradation became impossible, because the land was thereafter protected by being covered by the sea. Undoubtedly the last touches in the long process of sculpturing were given by marine waves and currents, and the surface of the plain, save where it has subsided, may correspond generally with the lower limit of wave-action. Nevertheless, in the past history of our planet, the influence of the ocean has probably been far more conservative than destructive. Beneath the reach of the waves, the surface of the abraded land has escaped the demolition which sooner or later overtakes all that rises above them.

##### *5. Deposition—the framework of new land*

If a survey of the geological changes in daily progress upon the surface of the earth leads us to realize how momentously the land is being worn down by the various epigene agents, it ought also to impress us with the vast scale on which new formations—the foundation of future land—are being continually accumulated. Every foot of rock removed from the surface of a country is represented by a corresponding amount of sedimentary material arranged somewhere beneath the sea. Denudation and deposition are synchronous and coequal.