

may be termed *table-lands of deposit*. But, whatsoever its mode of origin, the plateau undergoes a gradual transformation under continued denudation. No sooner are the rocks raised above the sea, than they are attacked by running water, and begin to be hollowed out into systems of valleys. As the valleys sink, the platforms between them grow into narrower and more definite ridges, until eventually the level table-land is converted into a complicated network of hills and valleys, wherein, nevertheless, the key to the whole arrangement is furnished by a knowledge of the disposition and effects of the flow of water. The examples of this process brought to light in Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada and the other Western Territories, by Newberry, King, Hayden, Powell, Gilbert, Dutton and other explorers, are among the most striking monuments of geological operations in the world. The erosion of the ancient table-lands of Scandinavia and Scotland, and their conversion into systems of hilly ridges and valleys, convey less impressive but still instructive evidence of the efficacy of subaerial waste.

Watersheds are of course at first determined by the form of the earliest terrestrial surface. But they are less permanent than the watercourses that diverge from them. Where a watershed lies symmetrically along the centre of a country or continent, with an equal declivity and rainfall on either side, and an identity of geological structure, it will be permanent, because the erosion on each slope proceeds at the same rate. But such a combination of circumstances can happen rarely, save on a small and local scale. As a rule, watersheds lie on one side of the centre of a country or continent, and the declivity is steeper on the side nearest the sea. Hence, apart from any influence