

stand out as a bold hill from amid the more decomposable strata through which it has risen. These features, often so marked on the lower grounds, attain their most conspicuous development among the higher and barer parts of the mountains, where subaerial disintegration is most rapid. The torrents tear out deep gullies from the sides of the declivities. Corries or cirques, if not originally scooped out by converging streamlets (their mode of formation is a somewhat difficult problem), are at least enlarged by this action, and their naked precipices are kept bare and steep by the wedging off of successive slices of rock along lines of joint. Harder bands of rock project as massive ribs down the slopes, shoot up into prominent peaks, or, with the combined influence of joints and faults, give to the summits the notched saw-like outlines they so often present.

The materials worn from the surface of the higher are spread out over the lower grounds. We have already traced how streams at once begin to drop their freight of sediment when, by the lessening of their declivity, their carrying power is diminished (p. 665). The great plains of the earth's surface are due to this deposit of gravel, sand and loam. They are thus monuments at once of the destructive and reproductive processes which have been in progress unceasingly since the first land rose above the sea and the first shower of rain fell. Every pebble and particle of the soil of the plains, once a portion of the distant mountains, has travelled slowly and fitfully downward. Again and again have these materials been shifted, ever moving seaward. For centuries, perhaps, they have taken their share in the fertility of the plains and have ministered to the nurture of flower and tree, of the bird of the air, the beast of the field, and of man himself. But their destiny