

Look at a river-cliff, formed of drift; what destruction does a flood do to it? A mere bagatelle, unless there has been a frost previously, and then tons of *débris* fall, to be carried away by the river.

The work done by Rain and Rivers is perceptible in centuries, while the work done by Frost in this country (not to go to its large work-shop in the North) is perceptible after every winter.

The Sea acts in a similar manner. Its years' work is clearly seen—aye, even the work of a single tide. We know that Rain has done very little work in this country since the Glacial period, as the rocks forming the bottom of all the large valleys and *Cooms*, and of most *Ailles* or ravines, are Ice-dressed, and yet we are to believe that Rain has cut out those valleys instead of ice! while ice is doing exactly similar work farther North at the present day.

The same way with the sea. If we examine the work done by the sea we find that it cuts away soft or homogeneous rocks, such as shales or limestones, while hard rocks, such as traps and grits, it leaves standing as *Carrigs*, *Carrigeens*, or *Illawns*; and if we go inland we find hummocks, *Carricks*, or crags and hillocks formed of bosses of trap or some other hard kind of rock protruding out from mountain sides or standing up in undulating plains; the surrounding country in every case being of a much softer rock; and yet we are to believe that the mountain slopes and the undulating plains were formed by Rain and Rivers, and not by marine denudation.

I do not mean to say that Rain and Rivers have not done some work, but what I do say is that they are only some of the minor workers—that they do a little work on their own account—but that their place in nature is that of “Carriers” to remove the *débris* which other agents (principally the Sun and Frost) have formed.

Yours truly,

G. HENRY KINAHAN.

OUGHTERARD, IRELAND, Dec. 2nd, 1865.

A BURNING COAL-SEAM.

A CORRESPONDENT, “R. N.,” states that “at Bradley, a small village near Bilston in Staffordshire, a Coal-bed has been burning for half a century,” and enquires if this be true, and “whether there are no other means, except ‘flooding the pit,’ to extinguish the fire and arrest the useless destruction of valuable fuel.”

On referring to A. K. Johnston’s Dictionary of Geography (London, 1853) we find a statement to the same effect. We shall be glad if any correspondent will inform us whether the seam be still burning, and what is the depth of the mine.

We recorded (GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE, vol. ii. p. 336) an instance of an outcrop of Coal of Miocene Tertiary age on the Mackenzie River, noticed on fire, as long ago as 1785, by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and again by Sir John Richardson, in 1849; but we did not think that such destruction was allowed to take place in England, and cannot suppose it to be irremediable.—EDIT.