

instance the hair soon loses its natural moisture and becomes dry."

But there are other facts equally remarkable. "No sooner are the walls of a building plastered than the tenant may move in without any fear of rheumatism or those sicknesses which would be the inevitable consequence of so doing in Europe. So too the plasterer himself can lay on the second coat at once; while on the other hand the upholsterer and piano-forte manufacturer must be very careful in selecting their wood, for what would be amply seasoned in Europe would soon crack and split in America."

Our author is evidently speaking of the Eastern and Middle States, for this extreme dryness of the atmosphere does not prevail in Western Canada, nor in those States bordering the great Lakes.

The number of rainy days in America, if we except perhaps England and Norway, is not less than in Europe generally. But here the air never retains the moisture; no sooner does it cease raining than the hygrometer commences at once to sink, and soon shows that the atmosphere is as dry as ever. This dryness of the American climate is very readily explained by our savan. In America, as in Europe, westerly winds chiefly prevail. They proceed, however, to the coasts of Europe, loaded with the moisture which they have collected during their passage across the ocean. Consequently, rain generally accompanies them. The westerly winds reach the middle and Eastern States only after passing over a whole continent, and when they have lost a large portion of their moisture. Therefore they seldom bring rain with them.

In considering the action of our climate on animals and plants, it would seem as Buffon has observed, that while the animals generally that have been introduced here, have on the whole, rather deteriorated from the parent stock, plants on the other hand, have decidedly improved. From this it is argued that America is peculiarly the continent for the vegetable, while Europe is that for the animal kingdom. The history however, of North America is of too recent a date to afford any very just grounds for determining the modifications the animal kingdom may have undergone, and our author prefers rather looking at man himself.

He attributes the peculiar characteristics of the New Englanders to the influence of climate. "That some of these," he says, "depend on climate is seen by the fact that a trip to Europe will give fullness to the cheek, while the Englishman rarely grows stouter, but almost invariably thinner during his sojourn in America." To the dryness of the atmosphere too, M. Desor would attribute the feverish activity which seems to belong to the American. He considers that the want of moisture in the air may act to some extent on the nervous system, and supports his theory by noticing that a long con-

tinuance of a north-east wind—the wind that corresponds in dryness with the westerly one in America—produces the same kind of restlessness and activity among the inhabitants of the Jura. If a dry wind blowing for a short time only among the Alps, can exert any such influence, we can easily imagine that the comparative thorough dryness of the American climate may have something to do with that constitutional activity which is so rapidly advancing us in all the arts of civilized life, while it is at the same time producing a gradual deterioration of the physical man.

M. Desor's views come to us through an imperfect fragmentary translation, and we are, therefore, unaware if he produces any facts to justify the belief that the immigrant races will, in a few centuries, become thoroughly acclimatised. "A careful study," says Lyell, "of the present distribution of animals and plants over the globe, has led nearly all our best naturalists to the opinion that each species had its origin in a single birth place, and spread gradually from its original centre." Now if we adopt this view of "specific centres," and admit the Sacred Record as authority on questions of geography, we must conclude that the aboriginal tribes migrated from Europe at some remote period, and are merely "settlers" of an older date. The well-built frames, and due proportion of muscular and adipose substance displayed by many of these tribes, prove incontestibly that the deteriorating climatic influences of this continent may be overcome in a long course of years. But whether the descendants of the first settlers of New England (more than two centuries having now elapsed) exhibit any evidence that they have reached the lowest point in the descending scale, and have begun to ascend to the original type, is a point of much interest, and one that we should like to see investigated. We have met with no facts to support such a conclusion; the evidence produced rather goes to show that the nadir of physical deterioration cannot be reached in two centuries. Sir Charles Lyell seems to be of this opinion. In his "Second Visit to the United States, &c.," he remarks (Vol. 1, p. 123) that,—

"Many who have been born in America of families settled there for several generations find their health improved by a visit to England, just as if they returned to their native air; and it may require several centuries before a race becomes thoroughly acclimatised."

And after mentioning the fact that the atmosphere is drier, and the annual range of the thermometer much greater in America than in corresponding latitudes on the Eastern side of the Atlantic, he says,—

"Even so cosmopolite a being as man may demand more, than two centuries and a quarter before