

could be more striking than this singular and novel scene; and we were all delighted as we wound our way up the beautiful ravine.

#### GEOLOGICAL WONDERS.

We here remarked a very curious circumstance. Several acres of land on this elevated position were nearly covered with lofty isolated sandstone pillars of the most grotesque and fantastic shapes, from which the imagination might easily have pictured to itself forms equally singular and amusing. In one place was a regular unroofed aisle, with a row of massive pillars on each side; and in another there stood upon a pedestal what appeared to be the legs of an ancient statue, from which the body had been knocked away.

Some of these time-worn columns were covered with sweet smelling creepers; while their bases concealed by a dense vegetation, which added much to their very singular appearance. The height of two or three which I measured was upwards of forty feet; and as the tops of all of them were nearly upon the same level, that of the surrounding country must at one period have been as high as their present summits, probably much higher.

From the top of one of these pillars I surveyed the surrounding country, and saw on every side proofs of the same extensive degradation; so extensive, that I found it very difficult to account for: but the gurgling of water, which I heard beneath me, soon put an end to the state of perplexity in which I was involved, for I ascertained that streams were running in the earth beneath my feet; and on descending and creeping into a fissure in the rocks, I found beneath the surface a cavern precisely resembling the remains that existed above ground, only that this was roofed, whilst through it ran a small stream which in the rainy season must become a perfect torrent. It was now evident to me that ere many years had elapsed the roof would give way, and what were now the buttresses of dark and gloomy caverns would emerge into day, and become columnar clad in green, and resplendent in the bright sunshine. In this state they would gradually waste away beneath the influence of atmospheric causes; and the material being then carried down by the streams through a series of caverns resembling those of which they once formed a portion, would be swept out into the ocean and deposited on sand-banks, to be raised again, at some remote epoch, a new continent, built up with the ruins of an ancient world.

I subsequently, during the season of the heavy rains, remarked the usual character of the mountain-streams to be, that they rose at the foot of some little elevation, which stood upon a lofty table-land composed of sandstone, then flowed in a sandy bed for a short distance, and afterwards mysteriously sank in the cracks and crevices made in the rocks from atmospheric influences, and did not again reappear until they had reached the foot of the precipice which terminated the table-land whence they sprang: here they came foaming out in a rapid stream, which had undoubtedly worked strange havoc in the porous sandstone rocks among which it held its subterranean course.

What the amount of sand annually carried down from the North-western portion of Australia into the ocean may be, we have no means whatever of ascertaining; that it is sufficient to form beds of sand of very great magnitude, is attested by the existence of numerous and extensive sand-banks all along the coast. One single heavy Tropical shower of only a few hours duration washed down, over a plot of ground which was planted with barley, a bed of sand nearly five inches deep, which the succeeding showers again swept off, carrying it further upon its way towards the sea.

#### A WOUNDED EXPLORER'S REFLECTIONS.

I still pushed on until we were within two miles of the tent; when, as I tried to cross a stream, I strained my wounded hip severely, just reached the opposite shore, and fell, utterly unable to rise again. Coles, with his usual courage and devotion to me, volunteered to go on alone to the party, and send assistance. I desired Coles to say that a tent, stores, the surgeon, and two men, were to be sent to me, for that I was not well enough to be moved.

The water of the stream revived me considerably. My wound, however, was very painful; and the interim between Corporal Coles leaving me, and assistance arriving from the tent, was spent in meditations naturally arising from my present circumstances. I sat upon the rocky edge of a clear, cool brook, supported by a small tree. The sun shone out brightly; the dark forest was alive with birds and insects; on such scenery I had loved to meditate when a boy; and now how changed I was—wounded, fatigued, wandering in an unknown land, and in momentary expectation of being attacked. The loveliness of nature was around me, the sun rejoicing in his cloudless career, the birds were