

and geological features of the surrounding country, the fauna of their depths, and the flora of their shores, furnish us with facts for the compilation of their history?

The object of the present paper is to suggest what has been the origin of the contours of the Great Lakes as they now present themselves. All writers on the subject are probably agreed that at a relatively recent quaternary period these lakes have been united consequent on a depression of the land, greatest at Lake Superior, and lessening towards the present St. Lawrence outlet. That in the previous glacial period this greater lake was a still larger inland sea extending farther southward, into which glaciers from the then more elevated Laurentian area, and rivers having their sources at the glaciers, flowed, and across whose surfaces floated icebergs and icefloes, carrying their burdens of boulders and debris in the direction in which the currents impelled them, has always appeared the most reasonable view to take. The depression would be a natural result of a rise of land to the north. It has not hitherto been sufficiently considered that whatever changes in level take place, the maintaining of an equilibrium in the earth's crust can in general terms be predicated. If there is a great subsidence in the land over any extended area, it may be assumed that there is a corresponding rise in the land over some other area. Thus, if over the Laurentian region there was an increase in height which gave some slope and consequently denuding power to the glaciers which flowed to the north and northeastward on the one side of the Laurentian axis, as shown by Drs. G. M. Dawson and Bell, and to the southwestward on the other, then we can accept the assumption that immediately to the southward or northward, or both, there might reasonably be an extensive depression of the land and an inflow of the sea. This inflow on the southward side also found its way, no doubt contemporaneously, as far west as the Rocky Mountains, as the enormous boulders and other features discovered by Dr. G. M. Dawson indicate. And there seems to be corroborative evidence of this inflow in the flora around the lakes