

further reduce the local temperature, brings the air below the actual point of saturation and rain falls. It is therefore to be noted that forests affect precipitation in the form of rain or snow, to the extent that rains become more *frequent* in forest regions than elsewhere. This effect, then, is of a local nature, but has popularly been interpreted to mean that forests increase the total rainfall, which can hardly be regarded as true, since they do not increase the absolute amount of water in the atmosphere, but only the relative quantity. And, moreover, the weight of scientific evidence thus far available, shows that such influence is not produced. One of the most conclusive arguments bearing upon this point, is that of Mr. Henry Gannett in a recent number of *Science*. For this purpose he employs large areas in the United States where, since colonial times, deforestation and reforestation have been going on on a very large scale. The deforesting of 25,000 square miles in New England, prior to 1860, was found to be attended by an actual increase in annual rainfall. The deforesting of 40,000 square miles in Ohio was attended by an almost inappreciable diminution in rainfall, while the reforestation of 100,000 square miles of prairie in Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota and Illinois has been accompanied by a slight diminution. And Mr. Gannett's conclusion that it is useless "to discuss further the influence of forests upon rainfall from an economic point of view," is to be endorsed as essentially correct.

But the question is then pertinent, How do we account for the shrinkage of streams, the drying of springs and other changes which are known to attend the removal of forests? Southern Europe and some parts of Asia Minor have, by removal of their once abundant forests, become converted into dry wastes. The question here raised is of the greatest importance, and each year demands more serious consideration. In their report for 1885, the Forestry Commission for the State of New York, the chairman of which is no less an authority than Prof. C. S. Sargent, of Harvard University, give expression to the following views, based upon observed facts:—"The most important