

In South America, I remember a trifling instance of the same effect. I was walking in the main street of San Jago in the middle of the summer, and, like every human or living being in the city, was exhausted by extreme heat, when I suddenly felt as if some one was breathing upon my face with frozen lungs. I stopped, and turning round, perceived, at a little distance, a line of mules laden with snow, which they had just brought down from the Andes. And if this insignificant cargo, if the presence of a solitary little iceberg in the ocean, can produce the sensation I have described, it surely need hardly be observed how great must be the freezing effects on the continent of North America, of the northwest wind blowing over an uncovered icehouse, composed of masses of accumulated snow several feet in thickness, and many hundreds of miles both in length and breadth.

Now, it is curious to reflect that while every backwoodsman in America is occupying himself, as he thinks, solely for his own interest, in clearing his location, every tree—which, falling under his ax, admits a patch of sunshine to the earth—in an infinitesimal degree softens and ameliorates the climate of the vast continent around him; and yet, as the portion of cleared land in North America, compared with that which remains uncleared, has been said scarcely to exceed that which the seams of a coat bear to the whole garment, it is evident, that although the assiduity of the Anglo-Saxon race has no doubt affected the climate of North America, the ax is too weak an instrument to produce any important change.

But one of the most wonderful characteristics of Nature is the manner in which she often, unobservedly, produces great effects from causes so minute as to be almost invisible, and accordingly while the human race—so far as an alteration of climate is concerned—are laboring almost in vain in the regions in question, swarms