

of the land, vapour is constantly passing into the air, whence, condensed into clouds, rain and snow, it descends again to the earth. All over the surface of the land the water which falls from the sky courses seawards in brooks and rivers, bearing into the great deep the materials which are worn away from the land. Water is thus ceaselessly circulating between the air, the land, and the sea. The sea, too, is never at rest. Its waves gnaw the edges of the land, and its currents sweep round the globe. Into its depths the spoils of the land are borne, there to gather into rocks, out of which new islands and continents will eventually be formed. Lastly, inside the earth is lodged a vast store of heat by which the surface is shaken, rent open, upraised or depressed. Thus while old land is submerged beneath the sea, new tracts are upheaved, to be clothed with vegetation and peopled with animals, and to form a fitting abode for man himself.

268. This world is not a living being, like a plant or an animal, and yet you must now see that there is a sense in which we may speak of it as such. The circulation of air and water, the interchange of sea and land; in short, the system of endless and continual movement by which the face of the globe is day by day altered and renewed, may well be called the Life of the Earth.