

power to hold the rains for vegetation and for exhalation, which before would run off upon a hard or saturated surface. It is therefore evident that the clearing and cultivation of the country must in a very great degree increase the evaporation, and consequently diminish or dry up the numerous small streams and rills which contributed to fill the larger channels and rivers, hence in the event of these changes being extended over a great surface of country, the rivers of that country must have been also considerably diminished, and progressively as those clearing operations had advanced. If we now apply these effects to the belt of land surface, draining into those great lakes, it is certain the supply of water will be diminished in proportion to the new cleared surface so exposed to greater evaporation, and consequently the discharges of the St. Lawrence lessened. Such diminution of this might not be remarkable in one age, and therefore could not be almost ocularly observed by those most familiar with it, until made somewhat conspicuous by another coinciding cause, producing a like effect, such as one or two successive dry seasons, by which the level might then become comparable to some recollected mark, but without suspecting that the difference had been made chiefly progressively. From those diminishing causes it is easy to account for the low state of the St. Lawrence in 1848.

At the commencement of clearing off the forests, this work would proceed very slowly: but as the population increased this would go on more rapidly, especially in a country continually supplied by adult population, as that draining into the Lakes has been; and consequently the diminution of the St. Lawrence from an increased evaporation within a few years back must have greatly increased, more than in the same previous period, as any diminution from this cause must have only commenced after the first settlement upon it, which may not exceed fifty or sixty years back and for some time this diminution would be insensible.

The above evident causes of diminution may have been added to, by the average fall of rain also diminishing, from the same clearing of the forests; for it is allowed that rain is the production of changes of temperature of the atmosphere, or from the conterminous sur-