

From this point of view it will be at once evident that rivers are frequently older than the present topography of the land-surfaces; they can often cut their way through folds of the crust as rapidly as these arise across their course. It is equally evident, on the other hand, that lakes must be regarded as but transient features of the ever-changing surface of the earth. They come and go, arise and become extinguished with the varying cycles of topographic development, and with the climatic changes of the regions in which they are located.

The temperature of the water in lakes varies with the latitude ^{Temperature.} and with the altitude. It is subject to much variation, depending on the depth, the mass of water, and the superficial area of the lake, that is, the extent of surface exposed to the sun and sky. The

that their channels meander through great curves. When a meander is abandoned for a cut-off, it remains for a time as a crescentic lake. When rivers get on so far as to form large deltas, lakes often collect in the areas of less sedimentation between the divaricating channels. Deltas that are built on land, where the descent of a stream is suddenly lessened and its enclosing valley-slopes disappear, do not often hold lakes on their own surface; for their slope is, although gentle, rather too steep for that: but they commonly enough form a lake by obstructing the stream in whose valley they are built. Tulare Lake in southern California has been explained by Whitney in this way.

“The contest for drainage area that goes on between streams heading on the opposite slopes of a divide sometimes produces little lakes. The victorious stream forces the divide to migrate slowly away from its steeper slope, and the stream that is thus robbed of its head waters may have its diminished volume clogged by the fan-deltas of side-branches farther down its valley. Heim has explained the lakes of the Engadine in this way. The Maira has, like an Italian brigand, plundered the Inn of two or more of its upper streams, and the Inn is consequently ponded back at San Moritz and Silvaplana. On the other hand, the victorious stream may by this sort of conquest so greatly enlarge its volume, and thereby so quickly cut down its upper valley, that its lower course will be flooded with gravel and sand, and its weaker side-streams ponded back. No cases of this kind are described, to my knowledge, but they will very likely be found; or we may at least expect them to appear when the northern branches of the Indus cut their ways backwards through the innermost range of the Himalaya, and gain possession of the drainage of the plateaus beyond; for then, as the high-level waters find a steep outlet to a low-level discharge, they will carve out cañons the like of which even Dutton has not seen, and the heavy wash of waste will shut in lakes in lateral ravines at many points along the lower valleys.

“In its old age, a river settles down to a quiet, easy, steady-going existence. It has overcome the difficulties of its youth, it has corrected the defects that arose from a period of too rapid growth, it has adjusted the contentions along the boundary-lines of its several members, and has established peaceful relations with its neighbors: its lakes disappear, and it flows along channels that meet no ascending slope on their way to the sea.

“Certain accidents to which rivers are subject are responsible for many lakes. Accidents of the hot kind, as they may be called for elementary distinction, are