alarming increase of drought in the summer months. The cry of complaint is sounding louder every year from the manufacturers and others dependent on a steady water-supply. The streams are believed to be drying up; the trout-brooks on the old homestead have disappeared; the river which used to be knee-deep in the heat of midsummer is now dwindled to a thread, and bids fair to vanish altogether; the spring on the hillside is to be seen no longer since the spruces on the slope beyond were cut for fire-wood; and to whatever side we turn it is evident that the natural water-courses have been dealt a fatal blow.

Alternate floods and droughts, scarcity and superabundance, these are the two extremities to which we have come. It would seem that any measures tending to stop the mischief would receive speedy and zealous attention. Mr. George William Curtis states the case very vigorously: “If a magician were secluded in the inmost fastnesses of the Adirondacks, and weaving there the malign spells which should gradually dry up the rivers, and strike into deathly silence the busy hum which makes a music of industry in every little valley of the Commonwealth, nothing could stay the indignant march of the whole community to track the monstrous public enemy to his lair, and end at once and forever the sorcerer and his spells. But there is such a fell enchanter. Ignorance, and greed, and carelessness are the triune monster whose audible spells are the ring of the axe and the roar of the flame.”

This wholesale destruction of the trees, this massacre of the innocents and the patriarchs together, is believed to be the cause of this great injury to the national prosperity; for the forests are so closely related to the climate, soil, and water-supply, that whatever harm they receive spreads outward in mischievous and ever-widening circles.

The direct connection between the forests and the water-supply is easy to trace. The drops of rain strike on the leaves, twigs, and branches, and trickle slowly down toward the ground, the leaves themselves retaining much of the fall. The part reaching the ground is greedily absorbed by the thick, spongy carpet of fallen leaves, porous moss, and decayed vegetation, and all who have been in the woods in early spring know well what a large amount of water is kept stored in this damp, soggy layer. Here, too, the winter snow is well hidden from the sun, and melts slowly in quantities nicely graduated to the absorbent capacity of the underlying débris. Altogether, the ground is one vast reservoir, in which the surplus water is safely detained. The water gradually filters down into the earth, and runs off in its natural channels. Finally it bubbles up in springs and flows quietly away, feeding during the whole summer the head-waters of the mountain-brooks and rivers. Everything is done slowly and in due time. There is a constant, even discharge of water, and an abundance is kept stored in the springs and swamps for time of need. There are no sudden floods; no wasting droughts.

Now reverse all these conditions. Let the trees on the uplands be destroyed; let the rain pelt fiercely down on the unprotected surface, gully ing out the hillside and washing away the rich soil. The snows of winter are melted like sugar by the steady pour of the warm rain. The shelter of the trees is sorely needed in such a juncture. Now that they are gone, the boisterous elements have it all their own way; the gullies are deepened into ravines, the rivulets swell into rivers, the natural water-courses are gorged beyond endurance by the sudden influx of rain and melted snow, and at last the dam breaks, the log-jam gives way, and the whole mass goes thundering down into the valley, carrying away houses and barns, and spreading a heavy layer of rocks and gravel over the fertile meadowlands.

This is what happens again and again every year. The wonder is that we have stood so long idle. The once thickly-wooded hill-tops of New England have long since been changed to bare and arid ledges. Every one knows how the White Mountains have been shorn of half their beauty and strength by the hand of the wood-chopper, and how vast tracts of forest in