

Although everything was thoroughly dried up, it was easy to imagine the effect of an inundation of the Pedias river, which had formed this delta of alluvium, precisely as the Nile on a more extensive scale has produced the Delta of Egypt. There were a few wretched villages upon the flat, which were necessarily on the poorest scale, as they existed at the mercy of a sudden inundation. The unhealthiness of this locality must be extreme during wet weather, as it is only suitable to the constitutions of frogs and ducks. Upon arrival at higher ground on the opposite side of the plain I looked back upon the aguish area over which we had passed, and I had little doubt of the great engineering necessity that must be the first step to a sanitary reform in this pestilential neighbourhood.

As the river Pedias is a mere wayward torrent that *never* flows as a permanent stream, but only comes down in impulsive rushes from the mountains during heavy rains, it has no power to cleanse its original bed, such as would result from a constant and clear current; but, on the contrary, the heavy floods from the upper country, being the result of a sudden rainfall, are surcharged with earth washed down from the higher ground and thickly held in solution. This vast mass of soil, which adds a corresponding weight to each gallon of water, is carried forward according to the velocity of the stream, and is ready to deposit upon the instant that the propelling power shall be withdrawn. So long as the river is confined between narrow banks, the high rate of the current is sufficient to force forward the thickened and heavy fluid; but the instant that the banks are over-topped and the river expands over an increased area, the rapidity is reduced, and the water, no longer able to contain the earth in