The Origin of Lake Basins.

The most thorough-going glacialist could find no ground for complaint that Dr. Wallace has not gone far enough in his most interesting advocacy of the glacial origin of lakes. I do not propose to enter into any general discussion of this question; that glaciers can excavate rock basins is indisputable, but there is a limit to their power, and this limit I believe to be reached far short of even the larger of our English lakes. The controversy is of long standing, and there is little new to be said on either side; nor would I have desired to re-enter it, but that Dr. Wallace's article seems to me to contain one serious fallacy and one vital misstatement which have not as yet been noticed, though they should not be left uncorrected.

The fallacy is not a new one; it may be found in the writings of more than one of the advocates of the glacial theory, and is contained in the argument that because lakes are found in regions that have been extensively glaciated, and are not found in regions precisely similar in every respect, except that there has been no great extension of glaciers, therefore the rock basins in which the lakes lie were excavated by glaciers. I trust I have not misrepresented the argument in this succinct statement of it; but such condensation is useful if we would detect a fallacy, and in this condensed form the fallacy of the undistributed middle term becomes conspicuous. The term "lake" is by no means coextensive with the term "rock basin," and it is not the water filling the lake which requires explanation so much as the basin that it fills. A rock basin filled with alluvium is a rock basin still, and requires explanation as much as if it contained water, and was consequently a lake.

The misrepresentation is to be found in Dr. Wallace's limitation of what he rightly regards as the only tenable alternative theory, that the rock basins owe their origin to deformation of the surface immediately before the advance of the ice. This