

peaks rise above all these shelly strata, that their summits had already emerged from the waters, when the shelly strata were forming.

Such are those celebrated Primitive Mountains which traverse our continents in different directions, raising themselves above the clouds, separating the basins of rivers from one another, affording, in their perennial snows, reservoirs which feed the springs, and forming, in some measure, the skeleton, and as it were the rough framework, of the Earth.

The eye perceives from afar, in the indentations with which their ridge has been marked, and in the sharp peaks with which it is bristled, indications of the violent manner in which they have been elevated. Their appearance, in this respect, is very different from that of those rounded mountains, and hills with long flat surfaces, whose less ancient masses have always remained in the situation in which they were quietly deposited by the waters of more recent seas.

These indications become more obvious as we approach. The valleys have no longer those gently-sloping sides, those salient and re-entering angles corresponding on either side to each other, which seem to denote the beds of ancient streams. They widen and they contract without any general rule; their waters, at one time, expand into lakes; at another, fall in torrents; and some-