

must not confound rocky masses which pierce the soil in the midst of the desert, and of which mention has often been made by travellers, with mere scattered fragments. These facts seem to prove, that the blocks of Scandinavian granite, which cover the sandy plains on the southern side of the Baltic, in Westphalia, and in Holland, are owing to a particular debacle which proceeded from the north, to a purely local catastrophe. The old conglomerate (*grès rouge*), which covers a great part of the Llanos of Venezuela and of the basin of the Amazon, contains, without doubt, fragments of those same primitive rocks of which the neighbouring mountains are composed; but the convulsions of which these mountains present undoubted evidences, do not seem to have been accompanied with circumstances favourable to the transportation of great blocks. This geognostic phenomenon is so much the more unexpected, that nowhere in the world does there exist a plain so continuous, and which is prolonged with fewer interruptions to the abrupt declivity of a purely granitic cordillera. Before my departure from Europe, says Humboldt, I had already been struck with the observation that there are no primitive blocks in Lombardy, nor in the great plain of Bavaria, which is the bottom of an ancient lake, having an elevation of 250 fathoms above the level of the ocean. This plain is bounded on the north by the granites of the Upper Palatinate, and on the south by the alpine limestones, transition clay-slates, and mica-slates of the Tyrol.

Boulders, or loose blocks of alpine rocks, are found in the lower part of the Alpine valleys, which terminate in the great principal valley that stretches between the Alps and