

those conical mountains, those hills with long broad surfaces, in which the recent mass has remained since the period when it was quietly deposited by the latest receding of the seas.

These signs become more manifest in proportion as we contemplate them nearer.

The valleys have no longer sides with gradual declivities, those projecting angles, intersecting each other, which seem to have been the beds of some ancient currents: they expand and contract without regularity; their waters sometimes spread out into lakes, sometimes are precipitated in torrents, sometimes their rocks, suddenly approximating, form transverse clefts, whence the waters fall in cataracts. The disturbed layers on the one side exposing their edge to the summit, present on the other large and oblique portions of their surface. They do not correspond in height, but that which on the one side forms the peak of the steep height, is buried on the other side, and does not reappear.

However, in the midst of all this disorder, great naturalists have arrived at the conclusion that there is a certain arrangement, and that these immense banks, broken and misplaced as they are, yet have a systematic order, which is nearly the same in all great chains. The granite, they say, of which the greater portion of the summits of the chains are composed, the granite which protrudes beyond all, is also the stone which is buried under all others, it is the most ancient of those which we are enabled to see in the place assigned to it by nature, whether it owe its origin to that universal liquid which formerly held all bodies in solution, or that it was originally the first body consolidated by the sudden cooling of a vast mass in a state of fusion or even