

which seems to indicate that some universal agent was active in their formation. All the peninsulas, with the exception of two, one in each world, have a southerly direction. The exceptions are the peninsula of Yucatan, in Mexico, and Jutland, in northwestern Europe. There is also a similarity between the two great divisions, in the union of continents, and the manner in which that union is completed. North and South America, forming the new world, are connected by the Isthmus of Darien. The old world may be considered as though divided into two parts ; the western, including Europe and Africa, the eastern, Asia and Australia ; the former are united by the Isthmus of Suez, and the latter by the islands of Java, Sumatra, and others, which form, as it were, a broken isthmus. In these particulars there is a great resemblance between the old and new worlds ; but there are many points in which they greatly differ from each other, and particularly in the form of their coasts. The coasts of the old world, excepting Africa, which is singularly even, are deeply indented ; gulfs, bays, and inland seas, giving a constant character to every shore ; but, on the western side of the new world, there is only one considerable inlet, the Gulf of California.

#### MOUNTAINS.

The elevations upon the surface of the earth are known as mountains or hills. The distinction between these two classes is not so definite as might be desired ; for if we were to attempt an explanation of what is meant by a hill, we could only say an elevation less than a mountain. There is, in fact, no height at which the elevation ceases to be a hill and becomes a mountain ; the terms are relative, and every observer must decide for himself whether the one or the other should be employed. It is necessary to observe that a distinction must be made between a plateau and a mountain. A plateau is an upland plain, and is generally situated in the centre of a continent or island. In South America these plains are exceedingly numerous, and have a considerable elevation ; but as they are often quite level, the inhabitants have not the slightest idea of their height. The plain which surrounds the mountain Antisana occupies a surface of twelve leagues, and is 13,451 feet above the level of the sea.

Mountains present a great variety of forms : some are bold