

from the wild ruggedness of a gneiss region, to the level fields, swelling moors, and long undulating ridges of a sandstone one. But in the interior of the country, where the sandstone occurs chiefly in detached hills, it lends to the prospect features of surpassing boldness and grandeur. Rising over a basement of rugged gneiss hills, that present the appearance of a dark tumbling sea, we descry a line of stupendous pyramids from two to three thousand feet in height, which, though several miles distant in the background, dwarf, by their great size, the nearer eminences into the mere protuberances of an uneven plain. Their mural character has the effect of adding to their apparent magnitude. Almost devoid of vegetation, we see them barred by the lines of the nearly horizontal strata, as edifices of man's erection are barred by their courses of dressed stone; and, while some of their number, such as the peaked hill of Suilvein, rise at an angle at least as steep and nearly as regular as that of an Egyptian pyramid, in height and bulk they surpass the highest Egyptian pyramid many times. Their color, too, lends to the illusion. Of a deep red hue, which in the light of the setting sun brightens into a glowing purple, they contrast as strongly with the cold gray tone of the gneiss tract beneath as a warm-colored building contrasts with the earth-tinted street or roadway over which it rises. The stone of which they are composed is a hard, compact, arenaceous rock, usually of a chocolate tint, and varying in grain from an ordinary sandstone to a conglomerate. But the pebbles which it encloses, and which usually occur in thin beds, are greatly smaller than those of the Great Old Red conglomerate on the east coast,—ranging in bulk from the size of a pea to that of an egg. They are almost all water-rolled,—usually quartzose or feldopathic in their composition, though in considerable proportion jasperous; and, as I have often remarked of the pebbles of the Great Conglomerate, the prevailing color among