

lages : this is the abode of man. Above this verdant carpet rise, in admired disorder, green swelling hills, sometimes naked, sometimes covered with wood and shadow. Higher still, the eye rests upon rocky ridges, crowned with groups of firs. Among these rocks we still discover the slope smiling with rich pasturage ; but soon the character of the landscape abruptly changes : death succeeds to life, verdure gives place to the gray monotonous tints of the naked rocks. The mountain then borrows its attractiveness or its grandeur from other aspects, from the wild fantastic forms of the rocks which constitute its majestic mass. And finally, highest of all, the Alps enfold themselves in a dazzling canopy of snow, through which a few peaks, whose steep inclines are unable to retain the drifting flakes at the moment of their fall, with difficulty project themselves.

These six regions have received, according to the characteristics of their vegetation, the following denominations :—

	ELEVATION IN FEET.
1st, or <i>Sub-montane</i> region, or that of the walnuts,	2700
2nd, or <i>Montane</i> , or that of the beeches,	2700 to 4500
3rd, <i>Sub-Alpine</i> , or that of the fir-trees,	4500 to 5700
4th, the <i>Alpine</i> region, or that of the shrubs,	5700 to 7000
5th, <i>Sub-Niveal</i> , or that of the grasses,	7000 to 9000
6th, the <i>Niveal</i> (snowy) region, or that of the perpetual snows,	above 9000

The figures in the foregoing table are those generally accepted as correct, so far as the Alps are concerned ; in other localities they vary according to the distance from the Equator, and the mean temperature of the country.

Of all the natural regions which thus ascend in due gradation the mountain-sides, not one has so marked and specific a character as that of the *Perpetual Snows* ; so named, with justice, because they resist the summer heats, or renew themselves immediately a partial liquefaction in spring or summer has diminished their glittering mass. All the other regions are to some extent confused and intermingled, and encroach slightly upon each other's boundary ; but the lower limit of the snows which withstand the sun of summer appears in the distance like a line of demarcation traced by an unwavering hand :