

## CHAPTER VI.

## OLD OCEAN COMMENCES WORK.

A THOUSAND years of storm and lightning have passed, and the primeval tempest is drawing to a close. The waters are now permitted to rest upon the surface. By degrees the clouds are exhausted, and sunlight filters through the thinned envelope. As the morning of another geological epoch dawns, it reveals the change of scene. The surface which, in the preceding age, was scorched and arid, is now a universal sea of tepid waters. The earliest ocean enveloped the earth on every hand. A few isolated granite summits perhaps protruded above the watery waste. Around their bases careered the surges which gnawed at their foundations. Geology is unable to aver that any of them survived the denudations of this first detrital period. The demands of nature for material from which to lay the thick and massive foundations of the stratified pile of rocks were enormous, and it is probable that whole mountains were quarried level by the energies of this young, fresh, and all-embracing ocean. Probably, however, the nuclei of some of our oldest mountain masses, though subsequently elevated to their present altitudes, may be regarded as the remnants of the granite knobs that reared their frowning and angular visages above the primordial deep. If so, the erosion of the waves and the battering of the tempests have given to their sides and heads a smooth and bald rotundity. But most, if not all of the original pinnacles of the earth's crust have been leveled to the water's surface and spread over the floor of the