

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

AMONG the many forms of scenery that vary the surface of the earth, mountains and ravines have from time immemorial impressed most vividly the human imagination. The lower grounds where man passes his existence are liable to continual change. He sees the shores worn away by the sea, the plains strewn with debris by the streams, and the meadows torn open by the inroads of floods. He himself too helps to transform the landscape. He ploughs up peat mosses, turns wet bogs into fertile farms, cuts down forests, plants new woodlands, covers the valleys with cornfields and orchards, graves the country with lines of roadway, and builds all over the land his cottages, villages, and towns. But high above the din and stir of his feverish life, the great mountains rise before him with still the same forms of peak and crag that were familiar to his ancestors long centuries ago. While the outlines of the lowlands are touched with the instability that marks everything human, these far heights seem to remain impassive and unaffected, as if the hand of time had passed them by. Hence the everlasting hills have ever been favourite