

climes, constitute islands in the estuary of the Thames; while the sediments of lakes and gulfs, teeming with the skeletons of beings which are blotted out from the face of the earth, compose the soil of the metropolis of France.

Although the changes in the relative level of the land and sea during this epoch were numerous and extensive, yet one region still preserves traces of its original physical geography; and although the earthquake has rent its mountains to their very centre—though hundreds of volcanoes have again and again spread desolation over the land—and inundations and mountain torrents have excavated valleys, and chequered the plains with ravines and water-courses—yet the grand primeval features of that country remain; and we can trace the boundaries of its ancient lakes, and the succession of changes it has undergone from the first outbreak of its volcanoes, to the commencement of the present state of repose. The lowermost lacustrine deposits in Auvergne, which are spread over the foundation rock of granite unmixed with igneous productions, mark the period antecedent to the volcanic era; while the intrusions of lava and scorix in the superincumbent strata, denote the first eruptions of Mont Dome. The succeeding period of tranquillity is recorded in characters alike intelligible. The slow deposition of calcareous mud—the incrustation of successive generations of aquatic insects, crustacea, and mollusca, and we may even add of infusoria—