

period was probably limited, for the most part, to high latitudes, and its aspect, though more rugged and abrupt, and of greater elevation, must have been of that character which we still see in the Laurentian hills. The distribution of this ancient land is indicated by the long lines of old Laurentian rock extending from the Labrador coast and the north shore of the St. Lawrence, and along the eastern slopes of the Appalachians in America, and the like rocks of the Hebrides, the Western Highlands, and the Scandinavian mountains. A small but interesting remnant is that in the Malvern Hills, so well described by Holl. It will be well to note here, and to fix on our minds, that these ancient ridges of Eastern America and Western Europe have been greatly denuded and wasted since Laurentian times, and that it is along their eastern sides that the greatest sedimentary accumulations have been deposited.

From this time dates the introduction of that dominance of existing causes which forms the basis of uniformitarianism in geology, and which had to go on with various and great modifications of detail, through the successive stages of the geological history, till the land and water of the northern hemisphere attained to their present complex structure.

So soon as we have a circumpolar belt or patches of Eozoic¹ land and ridges running southward from it, we enter on new and more complicated methods of growth of the continents and seas. Portions of the oldest crystalline rocks, raised out of the protecting water, were now eroded by atmospheric agents, and especially by the carbonic acid, then existing in the atmosphere perhaps more abundantly than at present, under whose influence the hardest of the gneissic rocks gradually decay. The arctic lands were subjected, in addition, to the powerful mechanical force of frost and thaw. Thus every shower of rain and every swollen stream would carry into the

¹ Or Archæan, or pre-Cambrian, if these terms are preferred.