

which also shews itself at the surface in the eastern provinces of France, and in the whole southern part of Germany.

In this shell-limestone are deposited great masses of gypsum and rich beds of salt; and under it are found the thin beds of copper-slates so rich in fishes, among which there are also fresh-water reptiles. The copper-slate rests upon a red sandstone, to the epoch of which belong those famous deposits of coal, which supply the present inhabitants of the civilized countries of Europe with fuel, and are the remains of the first vegetable productions with which the face of the globe was adorned. We learn from the trunks of ferns, whose impressions they have preserved, how different these ancient forests have been from ours.

We then quickly come to those transition formations, in which primeval nature, nature dead and purely mineral, seems to have disputed the empire with organising nature. Black limestones, and schists which present only crustacea and shells of kinds now extinct, alternate with remains of primitive formations, and announce our having arrived at those formations, the oldest with which we are acquainted, those ancient foundations of the present envelop of the globe, the marbles and primitive slates, the gneisses, and, lastly, the granites.