

veins are observable, piercing through talcose gneiss, which passes insensibly upwards into secondary strata.

It is certainly in the Alps of Switzerland and Savoy, more than in any other district in Europe, that the geologist is prepared to meet with the signs of an intense development of plutonic action; for here we find the most stupendous monuments of mechanical violence, by which strata thousands of feet thick have been bent, folded, and overturned. (See p. 58.) It is here that marine secondary formations of a comparatively modern date, such as the Oolitic and Cretaceous, have been upheaved to the height of 12,000, and some Eocene strata to elevations of 10,000 feet above the level of the sea; and even deposits of the Miocene era have been raised 4000 or 5000 feet, so as to rival in height the loftiest mountains in Great Britain.

If the reader will consult the works of many eminent geologists who have explored the Alps, especially those of MM. De Beaumont, Studer, Necker, Boué, and Murchison, he will learn that they all share, more or less fully, in the opinions above expressed. It has, indeed, been stated by MM. Studer and Hugi, that there are complete alternations on a large scale of secondary strata, containing fossils, with gneiss and other rocks, of a perfectly metamorphic structure. I have visited some of the most remarkable localities referred to by these authors; but although agreeing with them that there are passages from the fossiliferous to the metamorphic series far from the contact of granite or other plutonic rocks, I was unable to convince myself that the distinct alternations of highly crystalline, with unaltered strata above alluded to, might not admit of a different explanation. In one of the sections described by M. Studer in the highest of the Bernese Alps, namely in the Roththal, a valley bordering the line of perpetual snow on the northern side of the Jungfrau, there occurs a mass of gneiss 1000 feet thick, and 15,000 feet long, which I examined, not only resting upon, but also again covered by strata containing oolitic fossils. These anomalous appearances may partly be explained by supposing great solid wedges of intrusive gneiss to have been forced in laterally between strata to which I found them to be in many sections unconformable. The superposition, also, of the gneiss to the oolite may, in some cases, be due to a reversal of the original position of the beds in a region where the convulsions have been on so stupendous a scale.

On the Sattel also, at the base of the Gestellhorn, above Enzen, in the valley of Urbach, near Meyringen, some of the intercalations of gneiss between fossiliferous strata may, I conceive, be ascribed to mechanical derangement. Almost any hypothesis of repeated changes of position may be resorted to in a region of such extraordinary confusion. The secondary strata may first have been vertical, and then certain portions may have become metamorphic (the plutonic influence ascending from below), while intervening strata remained unchanged. The whole series of beds may then again have been thrown into a nearly horizontal