

PAGE
 304
 Valleys 395
 ttthard . 395
 and the 396
 . 397
 . 398
 . 400
 . 401
 . 402
 . 405
 . 406
 teratsch 407
 . 410
 . 411
 Uisanno 412
 . 413
 . 416
 erland . 417
 giore) . 420
 . 421
 . 422
 . 424
 . 425
 id Morat 426
 . 427
 . 428
 . 430
 . 431
 . 435
 . 437
 . 443
 d . 444
 and . 447
 . 449
 . 450
 Geneva 455
 . 456
 . 459
 . 461
 . 462
 . 463
 ar . 464
 . 465
 . 466
 uss, and . 467
 . 468
 . 476
 . 480
 . 481
 . 482
 ROAD OF . 483
 . 484
 . 485
 Simplon . 486
 . 487
 . 488



A UNIVERSAL GEOGRAPHY.

FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL ASPECTS.—THE COUNTRY AND ITS INHABITANTS.

GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION.—GEOLOGY.*



RANCE occupies a medium extent amongst those countries of the world which have played a distinct part in politics and in the history of civilisation. Smaller in area than either China, Russia, the Brazils, or the United States, it is nevertheless far more considerable than that of either Greece, Portugal, Switzerland, Holland, or even of England, all of which have left their mark upon the march of human history. Scarcely covering the 225th part of the habitable portion of the globe, its dense population has nevertheless enabled it to play a part quite out of proportion to its area.

It would be presumptuous if we claimed on behalf of France a sort of moral hegemony amongst the nations of the world. Still, within the comparatively small territory bounded by the Alps and Britany, by the Pyrenees and Vosges, there have taken place events whose influence has made itself felt to the farthest corners of the world. In arts and science France has found worthy rivals since the beginning of this century, and there are other nations which claim to march at the head of civilisation. But this merely proves that the area of the civilised world has been enlarged—that there are other nations capable of giving birth to initiatory movements. But France has at all times performed her share of this work of human progress, and looking to the influence which her ideas have exercised throughout the world, it would be difficult to conceive a future history of nations with France blotted from the map of Europe. To a very large extent

* Dufrenoy et Élie de Beaumont, "Mémoires pour servir à une Description géologique de la France."