

"The primitive formation appears to possess quite an extraordinary thickness; and to reach very far down into the depths of the earth. At the same time it shows in a remarkable manner, in those different regions where it comes to the surface, such a general resemblance as regards its rocks, their structure and form of stratification, that one is led from this alone to think that some stupendous process must have taken place over the whole surface of the earth at the same time and in the same manner, and that it is to this process that the primitive formation owes its existence; and even, although it may be so completely covered over in regions of immeasurable extent that in these it is not observed to come to the surface, still we are entitled with complete justice to suppose, the existence of an uninterrupted extension of the same, under all the sedimentary and eruptive formations with which we are acquainted.

"The necessity of a primitive formation is besides so apparent that one can scarcely comprehend how its existence could ever be doubted. It appears, in fact, to be a first and indispensable condition, without which the possibility of sedimentary, as well as of eruptive formations cannot be comprehended. The primitive formation has also been, by different authors, entitled the prozoic, azoic or hypozoic formation, because it existed long before the commencement of the first races of animals or plants, and therefore contains not a trace of organic remains, and lies beneath all fossiliferous formations. But all eruptive formations are likewise azoic; the oldest sedimentary formation is likewise prozoic, and the term hypozoic is perhaps a word which does not correspond sufficiently well with the idea intended to be expressed by it."

"It is possible for us to regard the primitive formation perhaps, as the uppermost part of the original solidified crust of our planet; and this supposition has here and there been adopted. We leave, however, the process of their formation undecided, and rest satisfied, in the meantime, with the negative result, that according to the present condition of our knowledge, the primitive formation can neither be a sedimentary formation, in the usual signification of the term, nor yet an eruptive formation, properly speaking. It is however a most remarkable fact, that a few comparatively far younger formations show a surprising similarity to the primitive formation in the structure and architecture of their rocks, (viz., the Münchberg gneiss-formation in Oberfranken, and the protogine formation of the Alps). This fact, as well as the circumstance, that they are almost all cryptogenous or stratified crystal-