

of diligence travelling, and inns none of the best, were hindrances seldom surmounted save by enthusiastic geologists, or by valetudinarians who risked all peril to spend a few weeks at the Baths of Mont Dore. Now, however, this state of things has changed. Railways penetrate far into the upland districts, and although this part of France is still comparatively little known to English tourists, it can be visited with even more ease, and in a shorter time, than the remoter parts of Scotland. Dining on a summer evening in London, one may take one's seat in the Dover express about nine o'clock, and next evening at the same hour may see the sun set behind the long chain of *puys* that dot the granitic plateau of Auvergne. The journey from Paris southward, indeed, is a dreary and monotonous one, even if you make it at the rate of thirty-five or forty miles an hour. Wide uninteresting plains occupy hundreds of square miles, and it is not until towards the close of the day, as you approach the department of Allier, that the ground begins to undulate, amid hedgerows of acacias and patches of woodland. From the quaint old town of Moulins the scenery becomes hourly more interesting. A vast, richly-cultivated plain, several miles broad, and known as the Limagne d'Auvergne, widens out southward and stretches as far in that direction as the eye can reach. On the east lies the chain of granite hills which separates the plain of the Allier from the basin of the Loire, while to the west the eye rests with increasing wonder upon a long line of conical hills, sometimes bare and gray, sometimes dark with foliage, and grouped like a series of colossal forts and earthworks along the summit of a long ridge. Beyond these, and seemingly rising out of them, towers the grand cone of the Puy de Dôme, now flushed, perhaps, with the last rays of the sinking sun. As the train advances southward these