

twenty miles away, it sweeps round into the mountains of Mont Dore that terminate the southern landscape.

It is the nearer prospect, however, which forms the chief source of wonder as we look from the summit of the Puy de Dôme. Between us and the great plain of the Limagne lies a strip of the elevated granitic plateau—a tract of bare uneven ground, traversed by some deep valleys that descend towards the east. On this plateau rises a chain of isolated conical hills, stretching due north and south from the Puy de Dôme, which is the highest point in the district. Unconnected by ridges and watersheds into a regular chain, like a common range of hills, they shoot up from a dark sombre kind of tableland, at a steep angle, into cones which seem to be completely separated from each other. Cone behind cone, from a mere hillock up to a good hill, rises from the brown waste for some twenty miles to the north and south of the great Puy. Some of them are partially clothed with beechwoods, but most have a coating of coarse grass and heath, intermingled here and there with numerous wild flowers. Where devoid of vegetation, their slopes consist of loose dust and stones, like parts of the tableland on which they stand. Wolves still harbour in their solitudes, among the dense woods that clothe some of the slopes, and the shepherds have to keep a good look-out after their flocks. At the top of the Puy de Dôme I found a boy, of ten or twelve years, armed with a club-headed staff, which he told me was used against the audacious wolves, and he pointed to a thick forest on a neighbouring hill whence the animals made their forays.

Not the least singular feature of these conical hills is, that nearly all of them look as if they had had their tops shaved off. Nay, they even seem in the distance to have been more or less scooped out, as if some old Titan had