

was exactly what was needed to enable one to realise the character of those old British Carboniferous volcanoes of which only such mere fragments now remain. High among the uplands of Central France my eye was ever instinctively recalling the hills and valleys of Central Scotland, and picturing their original scenery by transferring to them some of the main features in the landscapes of Auvergne. The imagination easily filled again with a sheet of deep blue water the broad expanse of yonder Limagne. Vines, and acacias, and mulberry-trees, seemed to melt of their own accord into stately *sigillariæ*, *lepidodendra*, and *calamites*; the orchards and cornfields along the slopes began to wave with a dense underwood of ferns and shrubby vegetation; some of the cones rose fresh and bare, others were dark with a growth of araucarian conifers, and there, with but little further change, lay a landscape in the central valley of Scotland during an early part of the great Carboniferous Period. Nor did a more extended examination of other parts of the Volcanic District weaken this comparison, for the general outward resemblance of the present volcanic rocks of France, to what must have been the original aspect of those of Scotland at the geological era just named, holds good, even when traced into detail.

One of the most interesting excursions from Clermont is to the hill of Gergovia, about six miles to the south. We started off early one morning, while the sky, which had been remarkably clear for some days, began to grow dusky with heavy clouds that kept trooping up from the south-west. Puy de Dôme had his head wrapped in mist, and giant shadows chased each other across the range of Puys until, as the clouds thickened, all the uplands were shrouded in an ominous gloom. Rain at last began to fall in large round drops, and a distant muttering of thunder was heard