

He continued to hold this office until the time of the Revolution, when his political friends—Trudaine, Malesherbes, La Rochefoucault, and others—perished on the scaffold or by the knife of the assassin. He himself was thrown into prison, and only by a miracle escaped the slaughter of the 2nd September. After the troubles were over, he was once more called to assist the Government of the day with his experience and judgment in all matters connected with the industrial development of the country. It may be said of Desmarest that “for three quarters of a century it was under his eyes, and very often under his influence, that French industry attained so great a development.”

Such was his main business in life, and the manner in which he performed it would of itself entitle him to the grateful recollection of his fellow-countrymen. But these occupations did not wholly engross his time or his thoughts. Having early imbibed a taste for scientific investigation, he continued to interest himself in questions that afforded him occupation and solace, even when his fortunes were at the lowest ebb.

“Resuming the rustic habits of his boyhood,” says his biographer, “he made his journeys on foot, with a little cheese as all his sustenance. No path seemed impracticable to him, no rock inaccessible. He never sought the country mansions, he did not even halt at the inns. To pass the night on the hard ground in some herdsman’s hut, was to him only an amusement. He would talk with quarrymen and miners, with blacksmiths and masons, more