and the facts that establish it, a deduction which appears to be justified by the strength of the analogy—namely, that in the Giant's Causeway, and in all the prismatic masses which present themselves along the cliffs of the Irish coast, in short even among the truncated summits of the interior, we see the operations of one or more volcanoes which are extinct, like those of Auvergne. Further, I am fully persuaded that in general these groups of polygonal columns are an infallible proof of an old volcano, wherever the stone composing them has a compact texture, spangled with brilliant points, and a black or grey tint."

Here, then, was a bold advance in theoretical as well as observational geology. Not only was the discovery of Guettard confirmed, that there had once been active volcanoes in the heart of France, but materials were obtained for explaining the origin of certain enigmatical rocks which, though they had been found over a large part of Europe, had hitherto remained a puzzle to mineralogists. This explanation, if it were confirmed, would show how widely volcanic action prevailed over countries wherein no sign of an eruption has been witnessed since the earliest ages of human history.

Desmarest was in no hurry to publish his discovery. Unlike some modern geologists, who rush in hot haste into print, and overload the literature of the science with narratives of rapid and imperfect observations, he kept his material beside him, revolving the subject in his mind, and seeking all the information that he could bring to bear upon it. He tells us that