

The sagacity of these generalisations has been amply sustained by the researches of later times. Alike in volcanic geology and in the doctrines of denudation, the labours of Desmarest marked the rise of a new era in the investigation of the past history of the earth. They showed how patient detailed research could solve some of the most transcendently interesting problems in geology, and how the minute and philosophical investigation of one small area of the globe could furnish principles of universal application.

In one respect, perhaps, this far-seeing observer seems to have been almost afraid to push his views of denudation to their logical conclusion. There occur in Central France many flat, isolated areas of basalt, capping detached hills and fragments of plateaux, not apparently connected with any visible lava-current or centre of eruption. The origin of these patches (called by him "culots"), was explained by supposing them to mark the positions of volcanic vents up which the melted material had risen without flowing out, and where it had solidified within the crater, being retained by the encircling wall of scoriæ and cinders. The removal of the surrounding loose material would, he thought, leave the lava as a cake with steep scarped sides crowning the slopes below. Possibly some of his culots originated in the way supposed, but there can be little doubt that most of them are remnants of lava-streams reduced to almost the last stage by the progress of denudation.

From the long intervals which he allowed to elapse between the presentation of his papers to the Academy and their final publication, it might be supposed that