

cones become still more defined, standing up dark and clear against the evening sky, until, halting at last at Clermont, we seem to rest almost at the feet of the giant Puy.

The ancient province of Auvergne—now parcelled out into the departments of Cantal, Puy de Dôme, and Haute-Loire—comprises a considerable part of the high ground in Central France, and from the variety of its geological structure contains a diversity of outline that contrasts well with the monotonous scenery of so much of the lower parts of the country. Granite and other crystalline rocks rise from under encircling plains of Secondary and Tertiary strata, and form an elevated tableland in the central districts, through which run the valleys of the Loire, the Allier, the Dore, the Sioule, and other minor rivers.

At a comparatively recent geological period there were some large lakes in these uplands, one of them extending over the modern Limagne d'Auvergne in a north and south direction, between granitic hills, for a distance of fully forty miles, and with a breadth of sometimes twenty. But the lakes have long since disappeared, though their site is still marked by broad plains formed of lacustrine strata, often composed of the remains of the shells that lived in these inland waters. It was in this region of high ground, among hills of granite, gneiss, and schist, watered by large rivers and by broad lakes, that those volcanic eruptions broke forth, to some of whose features it is the object of the present paper to direct attention. To such protrusions of igneous matter the great altitude of some parts of the district is due. Lava and ashes have been thrown out upon the granitic hills, so as to rise even into great mountains, where, as in the higher and deeper recesses of Mont Dore, snow may be seen gleaming white among the crags under the glare of a July sun.