

hewn out of it may not have dated further back than some of these French ones, yet Nature has dealt kindlier with them, crusting them over with lichen and moss, and making them look as crumbling and venerable as the crags and hillsides that rise around them. The Auvergne lava, on the other hand, is a singularly barren stone; it gives no harbourage to vegetation, and its chiselled surfaces stand up now as bare and blank as they have done for centuries.

No one should leave Clermont without looking at the baths of Saint Alyre. A spring, highly charged with carbonate of lime, issues from the side of the hill of Clermont, and deposits along its course a constantly-increasing mass of white travertin. In this way it has formed for itself a natural aqueduct, running for a considerable distance, and terminating in a rude but picturesque arch of the same material, below which flows a small stream. The water that trickles over this bridge evaporates, and leaves behind a thin pellicle of carbonate of lime, which gathers into rugged masses, or hangs down in long stone icicles or stalactites. Such a *fontaine pétrifiante* could not remain a mere curiosity: it has been turned into a source of considerable profit, and manufactures for the visitors an endless stock of brooches, casts, alto-relievoes, basso-relievoes, baskets, birds' nests, groups of flowers, leaves, fruit, and suchlike. A portion of the water is diverted into a series of sheds, where it is made to run over flights of narrow steps, on which are placed the objects to be "petrified." By varying the position of these objects, and removing them farther and farther from the first dash of the water, they become uniformly coated over with a fine hard crust of white carbonate of lime, which retains all the inequalities of the surface on which it is deposited. There is here,