

leaf, and layer after layer of marl and limestone were slowly laid down, derived mainly from the crumbling remains of shells, cyprids, and other living creatures that tenanted the water. The rate of growth of these tranquil deposits must have been remarkably slow. When a thickness of at least a thousand feet of them had been formed, a volcano sprang up in the neighbourhood, and rolled into the lake the stream of lava represented by the lower bed of basalt. Fine calcareous sediment, however, began to be deposited anew over the floor of lava, yet the volcanic forces had not become wholly quiescent, for from time to time showers of ashes were thrown out, which, falling into the lake, gave rise to those beds of peperino, in one of which we were now taking refuge from the storm. Afterwards another stream of lava was erupted, forming the present summit of the hill. How much farther the series may have originally extended cannot now be discovered, since if anything was deposited on the surface of the second basalt it has been subsequently worn away. The rain at last ceasing, we descended by an endless series of turnings and windings to a tree-shaded road that led through corn-fields, now heavy with their golden crop. Away to the left we could see the Château de Montrognon, a ruined fortalice perched on the summit of a narrow and precipitous basaltic hill. Farther over lay the high ground of the Puys, with the rain-clouds still floating over it. As we advanced, however, the sky began to clear, patches of deep blue now and then appeared through gaps in the driving clouds, until the last mist-wreath rose from the great Puy de Dôme, and amid gleams of bright sunshine we re-entered Clermont about noon.

The journey to Mont Dore, being uphill nearly all the way, takes the greater part of a day. The first half of the