

to and fro between the hotels and the central building where the waters are dispensed. Some are borne in sedan-chairs, but the greater number perform the short journey on foot. Men and women, as soon as they imbibe their draught, hurry home holding their mouths—a sight which is now and then irresistibly comic—as where a portly priest, perhaps of some threescore, shuffles back to his hotel with the ends of his dress muffled round his mouth and nose. On inquiry we learned that this proceeding is meant to prevent the gas from escaping after the morning dose of water—a precaution without which it is held impossible to derive the full benefits of *les eaux minérales*.

The journey from Mont Dore les Bains to the plain of the Allier at Issoire is probably one of the most interesting in Central France. From the summit level of the road the eye wanders over a wide sweep of mountains of volcanic origin, traversed by wide valleys and narrow gorges. Southward, in the dark shady rifts of the higher peaks, lie gleaming patches of snow, and the breeze that plays about these uplands, even in the bright sunshine, is cool and refreshing. In the course of the descent we again observed evidence of lava-flows of several distinct ages, some of them high up along the sides of valleys which had since been excavated through them; old river gravels, too, far above the channels of the present streams; and in the bottom of the valley, following all its curves like a river, a current of black rugged lava, which in one or two places rose up into the most fantastic masses. The impression of the immense lapse of time represented by these Tertiary formations and their subsequent denudation was deepened tenfold as we threaded this valley of Chambon. The stream which meanders through the broader meadow-lands, and leaps down the narrower defiles, has undoubtedly been the main