

tance, until, far away as the eye could reach, the mountains of Mont Mezen were steeped in the softest violet, that melted into the twilight of the eastern sky.

And here we took leave of the volcanoes of Central France. Coming as learners to a district which had been already often and carefully explored, we gained such a vivid impression of the phenomena of the country as can only be obtained from an actual visit. We were now able to realise, with a clearness till then unlooked for, the original features of those ancient Scottish igneous rocks, among whose fragmentary relics we had been at work for years. In the form of their cones, their distribution, their aspect in the landscape, the limited extension of their ashes, the form and disposition of their lava-currents, the structure of their craters, and their relation to the underlying and to the contemporaneous stratified deposits, these extinct Tertiary volcanoes of France cast a flood of what to me was new light upon the long-extinct Carboniferous volcanoes of Scotland. I seemed no longer to be dealing with conjectures, but with sober truths. To the history of the igneous rocks of my own country there was now imparted a freshness and reality such as it did not possess before. More than ever did these rocks stand forth, not as mere mineral masses, to be described in text-books as occupying definite areas of ground, or to be arranged by hand-specimens in a museum as so many mineralogical compounds, but as the records of a long geological history which they would unfold if only questioned in the right way. And the main result of our wanderings in the Auvergne and Velay was to show us how this questioning should be carried on.

Nor did we value less the new and enlarged views which those rambles gave us of the potency of rain, rivers, and other atmospheric agencies, in effecting the degrada-