



Person: Edwin Lees (1800 – 1887)  
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## Supplement to Berrows Worcester Journal, 12 September 1863

### <sup>1</sup>MALVERN FIELD CLUB

On Monday the members of the above club met at the Link Hotel, at eleven o'clock, previous to their making an inspection of the Priory Church at Great Malvern. After trans acting certain routine business and electing a few new members, the club started across the -ink Common for Great Malvern and arrived at the Priory Church, where they were met by many ladies and gentlemen who are friends of the members of the club. Among those present were Rev. W.S. Symonds, F.G.S. - (President), Rev. R. P. Hill (Secretary), the Very Rev. the Dean of Hereford, Dr. Holl, Rev. W. Thorne, Mr. J.S. Walker, Mr. J. Wood, Mr. H.H. Lines, Mr. H. Hill, Mr. G.W. Hastings and party, Rev. G.S. Munn, Captain Peyton, Captain Guise, Rev. T. King, Dr. E. Steele (Abergavenny), Mr. A. Thompson (Wool Hope), Rev. J.H. Thompson (Cradley), Mr. C.M. Berington, Dr. Wier, Dr. Rayner, Dr. Williams, Capt. Bartleet and Son (Redditch), Mr. T. Greaves, Major Tennant, Mr. J.D. Jeffery, Mr. Twinberrow, Rev. W.S. Price, Mr. J. Linton, Mr. J. Williams, Mr. H. Cross, Dr. Grindrod, Rev. R. Pilsou, Mr. P. Baylis, Mr. T. Walker, Mr. R. Lightbody, Mr. T. Curley, Rev. C. Smith, Rev. G. Cornewall, Rev. A.C. Key, Rev. P.C.M. Hoskin, Captain Lambert, R.N., Dr. McCullough, Mr. C. T. Bodenham, Mr. T.T. Davies, Mr. Mason, Rev. H.J. Adlington, Prince de Condé, attended by M. Auguste Laugel; Sir Charles Hastings, Mr. E. Lees, F.L.S., Mr. W.C. Lucy, Mr. D.J. Niblett, Rev. E. Viner, Mr. D.M. Walker, Mr. Pouting, Mr. S. Ballard, Rev. F. Bayly, &c., &c.

A paper was read by Mr. J.S. WALKER, of Worcester, on The Monastery of Great Malvern, which, he said, was a *Priory*, not an *Abbey*. For the paper itself, we are sorry that we have not room this week.

At the close of Mr. Walker's paper, the party visited the museum belonging to the club, at Messrs. Burrow's, after which they ascended the Worcestershire Beacon, where the Rev. W.S. Symonds gave an address on the geology of the district, but having special reference to the bills comprising the Malvern range. He said it gave him great pleasure to give a description of the magnificent geology of the Malvern district, but they mast understand that it was impossible for him to enter into the details, inasmuch as it would require a series of lectures to be able to explain only a very small portion of what they saw around them. In the first place he would draw their attention to the hill on which they stood - the Worcestershire Beacon - which was constituted of some of the oldest portions of the planet's surface. The investigations of geologists left no doubt about that rook being as old as any in the whole World, and he would give them as briefly as possible his reasons for thinking so. The nucleus of the hills was made up by what was known as the Plutonic rocks, which were nothing more than ancient lava which had been erupted at former periods into a deep sea, but at a great distance of time, and then became cooled and consolidated. There are evidences in this nucleus that there were sedimentary deposits of which geologists so far understood their history. The researches of Dr. B. Holl, one of their number, had been most ably

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<sup>1</sup> This item has been transcribed as it proves conclusively that the later items, although published under a pseudonym, are the work of Edwin Lees and it identifies his companion as the Rev. Joseph Hesselgrave Thompson, vicar of Cradley.

directed to the district around them, and he had brought his extensive experience to bear upon the subject in hand. Dr. Holl, for some years, had an opportunity of investigating the history of the Lawrentian gneiss on the St. Lawrence, in America, and he had come to the conclusion that the Lawrentian rocks were developed along the flanks of the Malverns, and rested upon the old Plutonic rock. This was a most important discovery, because geologists had formerly thought that the oldest rock in that neighbourhood consisted of the Cambrians, or Hollybush sandstone, lying on the south end of the hill. Having expressed his pleasure at this discovery, which he had long expected, he referred to a paper in the Ross Guide Book, in which he (the speaker) had arrived at a similar conclusion, and called upon the members of the club to thank Dr. Holl for the successful efforts he had, made, and was still making, to elucidate the history of the Malvern Hills. (Applause). For his own part, they must be content with an elementary history of the Hills. The rocks that overlie the Lawrentian deposits around them, there was reason to believe, were Cambrian deposits. Having referred to the atmospheric changes upon pre-existing rocks, and the water acting upon the soil, he said there were marks and tracks of animals which remain upon the surface – there were worm holes still visible – and the ripples left by the sea were yet to be seen, just as if the waves of the old Cambrian sea were in existence – at that moment. Having alluded to Professor Phillips, Miss M. Lowe, and Mr. Turner, of Pauntly, near Newent, and shown the benefits they had conferred upon the Museum at Malvern, as well as that belonging to Dr. Grindrod, and also the Worcester Museum, he passed on to the Llandovery conglomerate, at the south end of the Malverns, remarking that the upper Silurian rocks in the neighbourhood were of great interest, as it was over those beds their excursion that day was to be made. Mr. Lee's and Mr. Lightbody's research –, he said, led to the discovery of the remains of the first fossil fishes. He then drew the attention of his audience to the other side of the hills, and gave a fancy picture of some gentleman of the period, when the neighbourhood between where they stood, and the Bredon and Cotswold Hills, was a vast estuary, sailing about in his boat on the old Severn Straits, and having referred to the various classes of rock in the neighbourhood, he called attention to the denudation that took place between the above hills, and pointed out that portions of rocks on the top of each hill were of a similar character, which was proof beyond doubt that at one time those two hills were only one hill, and continuous strata. He then directed attention to the Imperial Hotel, where, in digging out the cellars, many remains of animals, interesting to the geologist, were found. These he had inspected, and among them were those of the rhinoceros, the great mammoth, and other animals. The animals he had mentioned had lived when the waves of the Severn estuary reached from the Malverns to the Cotswold Hills. In conclusion, he said if every member did as much for the subject as Dr. Holl had done, the wonderful history of the Malvern hills would be better understood. (Applause.)

At the conclusion of Mr. Symonds's address, the party descended the west side of the hill, halting at Miss Phillips's conglomerate, a large mass of stone, discovered by that lady, and which had been named after her; from thence past the Westminster Arms to the Quarries of Wenlock limestone, near the kilns; round by the Trap Bosses, in Cowleigh Park, and thence to the Link Hotel, where, with sharpened appetites, the party did justice to a first-rate dinner, which Mr. Parsons had provided for them. The president of the club occupied the chair, and was faced by the vice-president, Mr. E. Lees. After the removal of the cloth the usual loyal toasts were drunk, that of the "Bishop and Clergy" being acknowledged by the Very Reverend the Dean of Hereford, Dr. Dawes. The secretary, the Rev. R. P. Hill, next gave "the members of the Visiting Clubs," coupling with that toast the name of Captain Guise, the President of the Cotteswold Club. The gallant Captain having replied, proposed the health of Sir Charles Hastings, the President of the Worcester Natural History Society. Sir Charles, in responding, said he was glad to meet the members of the various clubs, and to see so many "old, familiar faces" about him, and as the annual meeting of the society of which he was president would be held on the 24th inst. at Worcester, he hoped he should see many of the gentlemen by whom he was then surrounded present on that occasion. The health of the President was next drunk, with great enthusiasm, and after he had replied, the meeting broke up.

In the evening, a large party, not only of the various clubs, but of ladies and gentlemen of Malvern, assembled at Dr. Grindrod's by his invitation, who had arranged all the stores of his matchless collection of Silurian fossils upon tables in his new Conservatory, where, after tea and coffee had been partaken of, the company assembled under the presidency of the Rev. W. S. Symonds, to hear a paper on *the Geology of Auvergne in France* read by Capt. Serecold, who, with the aid of maps prepared for the occasion, gave full details as to the extensive ancient lake that had once occupied the Limagne of Auvergne, and also described the extinct volcanoes and craters of that wonderful district that had formerly been the seat of such intense igneous action countless ages ago. Captain Serecold referred in particular to the country around Clermont, and described his ascent up the grand trachytic mountain called the Puy de Dome, more than 4,000 feet high. He also gave many interesting details as to the strata deposited from the ancient lake, which must have stood several hundred feet above the present level of the valley of the Allier, though how the water could have been maintained at that elevation could not be fully accounted for, as no remains of any barrier could now be traced. The quiet manner in which this waters of the lake had deposited their calcareous load was evidenced by the undisturbed thin layers presented to view in various sections, as well as by the curious "Indusial limestone," as it was called, which was made up of the incrustated cases of what were commonly called caddis-worms, well known to anglers, but which were really the larvae of a species of winged fly called a *Phryganea*, which in its first state lived in the water, covered by a case of fragments of weeds, &c, that it constructed. Capt. Serecold entered into long scientific details as to the different volcanic regions close to Clermont, as well as in the Cantal and Velay, but considered that as no volcanic cinders were present in the deposits of the lake, that the volcanoes were not in action till the lakes had nearly completed the deposition that was now exhibited to view.

The Rev. W.S. SYMONDS considered that they were all much indebted to their observant member. Captain Serecold, for a most interesting account of a country that had engaged much attention from geologists. Capt. Serecold had met their Vice President (Mr. E. Lees) and the Rev. J. H. Thompson, while progressing in Auvergne, and those gentlemen would now give them some details of what they had seen in geology and gathered in botany.

Mr. E. LEES remarked that such was the interest exerted in his mind by the double contemplation of volcanic rocks and rare flowers in the wonderful district he had explored, that he felt something like Garrick, when tempted on one side by Tragedy and on the other side by Comedy; for Botany on the one hand tempted him to countless hours of enjoyment, and Geology beckoned to countless ages of mystic difficulty. He had climbed the three great heights in central France, the Puy de Dome, the Pic de Sancy, and the Plomb de Cantal, and of the two latter he could state that their summits formed the most exquisite botanic gardens, teeming with rare flowers, while, strange to say, the head of the Puy de Dome, which was trachytic like the others, had not a single plant of interest upon it. Probably this last peak was of later origin than the former mentioned, which retained the flora of an older state of things. With regard to the great lakes once existing, their origin went doubtless a long way back, though he disliked to be involved in "countless ages" and did not believe in everything that geologists affirmed. The volcanoes and silent craters were said to have ceased action long before the historical period, but Mr. Thompson and himself met with loose cinders forming a stratum between very incoherent sand that appeared to be not of very ancient date, and the lavas might have been flowing even later than Roman times, from their stern and barren aspect, though Julius Caesar having something else to do in Gaul than note volcanic phenomena, had not described them. Neither did he mention the Puy de Dome itself, though it would hardly be contended that such a mountain was not there for him to see.

The Rev. J.H. THOMPSON next rose to describe the Flora of Auvergne, the contemplation and collection of the plants composing which had given him such pleasure in connection with the extinct volcanoes and vast masses of columnar basalt that appeared with astonishing grandeur in several places, that though intending to proceed to the Alps, he found two months pass away without being able to get farther than the Cantal, and the district round the city of Le Puy. Mr.

Thompson amusingly referred to the vines so extensively cultivated in the south of France, and having seen the crushing of the grapes performed, it did not recommend the wine to him, as coming from very heterogeneous compounds.

Mr. SYMONDS closed a very pleasant soiree by some appropriate remarks, commending Auvergne as a district for examination, and where the club ought to hold a meeting the first opportunity. (Laughter.) He could not take his leave of them without thanking Dr. Grindrod for his kindness and hospitality in inviting them there, thus realizing a thing which, when mentioned to him by the doctor years ago, he only thought of as a pleasant dream. But they had in this convenient conservatory enjoyed delightful intercourse, and contemplated a collection of fossils of no common interest. It was finally arranged that at this late period in the autumn the Sapey Bridge meeting should be given up, but that instead the club should assemble in Worcester the day after the annual meeting of the Worcestershire Natural History Society (Sept. 24), at which Sir Charles Hastings has invited them to be present, and make an excursion in that vicinity.

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Berrows Worcester Journal, 13 June 1863

SCRAPS OF CONTINENTAL TRAVEL.  
BY A "FAITHFUL" CORRESPONDENT.  
(SECOND SERIES.)  
A TRIP TO PARIS.

"Voila tout."- See everything.- Victor Hugo.

Everybody goes to Paris now, who has a week to spare, and cares to see it, and this very Whitsuntide just gone into the historic past, a large party was organised to go by rail- that is as far as they could that way- for the sea, narrow as it is between England and France, cannot be yet railed off, though very likely to be railed at. The organiser of the trip referred to found it necessary, however, to print a pamphlet on the subject to show people how it was proposed to take them there, and the advantages they would enjoy, one of which was a seven hours' toss on the bed of Tithonus, as the Greeks fancifully called old ocean. Tithonus' bed may be downy in one sense, but, unfortunately, it is too often as uppy as it is downy, and therefore the excursion passage from Newhaven to Dieppe - between six and seven hours - is not what I should prefer unless very anxious to contribute to the resources of Neptune. I therefore advise the route from Folkstone to Boulogne, which, though higher than the cheap Newhaven passage, gives only two hours of salt water, which is certainly more endurable than seven. Get to London, of course, by the West Midland, then *underground it*, which can now be done for threepence or sixpence, to Farringdon-street, and next by omnibus or cab to London Bridge Station, where through tickets are obtainable to Paris, with (by first or second-class) permission to stop at any of the chief towns on the road. An economist can have a third-class ticket for one pound, but then he must "keep moving," both by land and sea, until he arrives at his destination. Bradshaw (the study of which is worse than algebra) does not say so, but so it is, and an intending traveller had better know beforehand. So I report accordingly.

It would be miserable book-making to describe anything incidental between London and Folkstone, and like Canning's knife-grinder I have "no story to tell," unless I made one by virtue of my traveller's license, which I believe is yet in use, although passports are done away with almost everywhere, except in the Pontifical States, where you must buy your permission to sojourn, and everything else too, the comforts of Purgatory included. My companion and myself had intended to cross the Channel at once, but a boisterous wind and a sea boiling with foam had such an unpleasant look, that, following in the wake of many other persons who told us the packet would not be able to go that night, we presented ourselves in the reception room of the grand Pavillion Hotel, and demanded beds. If it was an ill wind for us, it blew well for the Pavillion landlord (who is a Frenchman), and he found his house at once filled, so that we were obliged to sleep in private lodgings, taking our meals at the hotel. The next morning, though rather blusterous, was not quite so bad as the day previous, and so between ten and eleven o'clock, a.m., we embarked, and the word to "let go" was given. The different costumes on board a channel boat when the weather is rough, is curious and amusing; while the mind is disposed to be amused. Some are enveloped in pilot coats, or surtouts, with enormous capes covering their heads; others, encased in mackintoshes or dread-noughts, look like great walking seals, with shining skins; while dandy Frenchmen are seen with merely dress coats, as if indifferent to any weather. But the cutting wind obliges all to look out for places where they can make all things "snug," as the sailors say; and having fixed upon a position, if it be upon deck, a calculating sailor comes and offers the loan of a greasy or weather-beaten P.C, or dreadnought. I myself from experience in former voyages tried to get as near the middle of the vessel as possible; and here I found a young Canadian lady, who appeared to know where the most convenient berth was. She told me that she had crossed the Atlantic in stormy weather, tossed about for fourteen days, without being in the least affected. I could believe her, for she sat upright, stately as a fir-tree, and cold as an icicle, well illustrating the lines of Tom Moore in the once popular "Irish Melodies" -

"The snow on Jura's steep  
Can smile with many a beam,

Yet still in chains of coldness sleep,  
How bright soe'er it seem."

And so with this Canadian fair, who could only talk of ice and sledges, and required no more protection than an iceberg floating on the Atlantic. Between her and the cutting wind I became so exceedingly chill as to forget all sense of the rolling sea, and I was thus saved from the unpleasantness that many others experienced, and landed at Boulogne in a little less than two hours and a half, without paying any toll to Neptune.

"Time works wonders" both in the physical and moral world, and a traveller of twenty-five years ago could never have hoped that the time would arrive when the misery of examining passports would be done away with. But so it now is, thanks to the vigorous move of Louis Napoleon in the matter, for which move in the real path of progress I very cordially say—*vive l'Empereur*. I well remember when in young life on the pier at Dover, curiosity tempted me on board a steam packet about to start for Boulogne. The bell rang for moving off, but still I lingered, half wishing I could take a continental trip— but I had no passport. The captain saw my hesitation, "Come along, Sir," he said, we shall have a lovely passage, "and I'll make it all right about the passport. "I'll go then, and I was "on the sea," as well as the boat, pretty soon. But at Boulogne, having no passport to show, I was marched guarded by gendarmes to the Bureau de Police, subjected to an examination, and my name, weight, colour of hair, physiognomy, and every other possible particular carefully noted, as well as my object in favouring France with my good company. At last, I was let go, after stating where I was to be found, if wanted, which I could only do by favour of some touter, knowing nothing whatever of the place. Ultimately, I had, of course, to pay most of the francs remaining in my purse, after not many days' sojourn, for a paper giving me permission to leave *la belle France*. Now, all the old absurdities are agreeably changed. No gendarmes trouble the stranger, but at once we are out of the packet and into one of the twenty omnibuses that stand ready for the purpose, and are whisked at once from the quay to the railway terminus, where rises an extensive pile of red brick in such an oriento-gothico-grando whimsical style, that might try the critical powers of the secretaries of our Diocesan Architectural Society, if they chose to write a paper on the subject. But if its style be fanciful, it gives a feature to the place, and is just what railway times produce, and with more conveniences than many provincial stations in England possess, and as for internal ornamentation, the French have ever been superior in that respect with artistic appliances.

I hardly cared to go on directly, if I could have done so; and in the interest of the Refreshment Rooms, and the inhabitants of the town in general, some four hours was at command to look about. Boulogne has been said to be almost an English town : but though it may have a considerable number of English inhabitants, the lower classes show at once the garb of the continent, and the number of white caps in the vegetable market is picturesque and characteristic. In the open space before the Hotel de Ville, or Town Hall, there was a number of stalls containing shoes only, so that I presume that Boulogne is a shoe place, and would like all the "poor feet" in the world to come there to be fitted. If the town is not quite an English one, yet I fancy most of the shopkeepers understand English, and would gladly enough change or keep English money. I went into a shop where an undoubted fat and *jolie* Frenchwoman was mistress of the situation, and tried my first *vouler vous* for a *bisqueet*, when the *jolie* dame, taking no notice of miserably toned French, simply said — hard or soft? which made me feel softer than the biscuit that I took in hand, I had a look at the cathedral or dome, which is a modern structure in the Grecian style, and at present in an unfinished state. An inscription in the choir states that it was founded in the seventh century, and destroyed at the Revolution. The building, now under process of completion or beautification, is cruciform, the nave divided on either side by rows of composite columns, and a lofty but singularly narrow dome rises at the intersection of the cross in four tiers, one of which is filled with statues, and the roof is ornamented with blue stars. Service is at present celebrated only in a temporary chapel opening from the transept, but on the north side of the dome was an altar dedicated to the Virgin, with her statue richly apparelled, and amidst a mass of verdure and fir branches round about, a profusion of white roses was scattered. I suppose that Maria "*plena gratia*" has on some former occasion of distress favoured

Boulogne with her particular protection, for her statue was on the gate that opens on the sands, with the inscription—

NOSTRA PATRONA SINGULARIS ;

and the same inscription is on the wall of the presbytery of the cathedral beneath a sculpture yet unfinished, and the addition of *Ora pro nobis*. There is a school for boys in connection with the cathedral, and they were at play in a large enclosed court, much to the satisfaction of my companion, but they were watched over by a usher in a black gown, as arbiter of the sports. My friend would willingly have got into conversation with them and taught them a game they were unacquainted with, but we were overlooking them from the gallery, and before we could get down, the inexorable bell rang, and they were all off to their scholastic duties. How many the school educated I cannot say, but there was a staff of five or six masters and it appears to be a rule at all these clerical schools that the boys shall be never left without the supervision of some under-master or usher.

From the old ramparts of the place, which the modern town has overgrown, we saw Napoleon's column, which was erected by the first emperor to commemorate a feat that he did not accomplish — the invasion of England and he had the good sense to give it up, after assembling a "grand army" for the purpose. The column is crowned with the statue of the Emperor, and though I had not sufficient time on the present occasion to reach it, I believe the inscription only takes credit for the good intentions of the soldiers assembled on these heights, who would have made mince-meat of perfidious Albion, if a narrow channel had not stood in the way. In returning to the railway station with my friend, we looked in at the Museum and Library, which is a free affair, and contains a number of objects, of which those relative to Natural History are very good, and can be contemplated at leisure by those staying at Boulogne, but anything like a good account of them would take up too much space. We crossed a new bridge over the shallow river here, and got to the station just as a fresh cargo of live animals had disembarked from the boat, and the scene at the refreshment rooms was rather amusing, where every one was trying to get what could not be had, when so many were pressing to be served. But at French railways, when there is anything like a cargo, the officials are by no means in a hurry, so with a little patience every one got served, and at four o'clock p.m. we were off in earnest for Amiens and Paris.

The vicinity of Boulogne is flat, with relics of extensive woods now cut up for fuel, and any quantity of boggy ground stretching for leagues, the black boggy soil apparent, and piles of black peat. Stations on the line not very numerous, villages few, and little worth notice till Amiens was reached, where two things tempted me to stay - the magnificent gothic cathedral, and the quarries where those "flint instruments" are found, that have upset, in the opinion of many geologists, the accredited history of the world. But on this point every body may not think alike, and all dogmatism is to be abjured, whether ecclesiastical or geological. Having fixed ourselves at the Hotel de France, and "taken in" water and other necessary aliment, for which we were taken in the next morning by rather imposing figures in the bill, we hastened to the cathedral. It is built chiefly in the early pointed style, and if not the finest gothic cathedral in Europe, is assuredly among the first rank. The height of the slender arches that support the nave is very great, and it is 132ft. to the groined roof. The clerestory windows entirely fill up the space above the triforium. The transepts have a remarkably elegant aspect, forming three very lofty arches on either side, above which is a triforium lighted by windows behind. At both the northern and southern ends are intricate circular windows reaching up to the very roof, filled with stained glass of deep blue and red hues, and beneath, the trifolium lights are also filled with rich tinted glass. The choir terminates in an apse with five lancet windows, and beyond the choir are five lofty chapels, each with three lancet windows in two lights, and many of these are filled with richly stained glass, forming numerous vignette subjects from sacred history. The ground of these is blue, but in the figures red so predominated that the blue is kept in due subjection. The central chapel forming the extreme east end is, as usual, dedicated to the Virgin, and has seven lofty lancet windows, all filled with painted glass, the three central ones being especially rich with small figures. The arcades round this chapel are painted and gilded as well as the pillars and roof. The altar also is gilt, as well as the figures of the Virgin and the infant Christ above it. The aisles of

the choir are double, and altogether the height and grandeur of this cathedral can scarcely be overrated. The west end, which has two lofty towers and three sculptured doorways, is almost matchless, the central one having eight receding arches all filled with niches and figures carved with exquisite skill. On the tympanum of the arch, the resurrection and last judgment are shown in a multitude of figures in alto-relievo, the Lord Christ forming the principal and upper figure. Other subjects are sculptured above the lesser doorways. It was getting into twilight as we mounted one of the western towers, and, crossing the roof, proceeded to the central spire of open work, and reached its gallery by a somewhat dangerous flight of steps, which required some care to ascend and descend. The extensive prospect from it I would not attempt to describe without some study of the country. It was dark when we got down again to the cathedral, which being lighted by only two or three lamps distant from each other, the effect was peculiarly mysterious and solemn, heightened by a few kneeling figures of female devotees, or of some rising from their prayers, whom we stumbled against in the gloom, and whom my perhaps too critical and censorious friend thought might have been better at home than lurking about a dark cathedral aisle. But surely the poor women had a greater right to be there than we had, and it struck me rather forcibly (I hope to be esteemed a philanthropist for the suggestion) that if some of our female protestants were advised or obliged to go and kneel by a cool church pillar for an hour every evening, it might be for the advantages of their soul's health, and, if married, perhaps *pro temp*, for that of their husbands as well. In catholic countries all good Christians must be at their devotions early in the morning, which makes people rise early, for getting up before six o'clock a.m. on the following day to take more exact notes of the cathedral, I found the aisle and side chapels crowded with devotional persons, mostly females, so that good women are not scarce at Amiens whether men are so or not. I do not here say anything about beauty, never criticising that in a church.

Looking about for curiosities, I saw some queer object under a round glass with a canopy above it, which was untranslatable by me, but a kind-hearted damsel, pitying my heretical ignorance, told me it was a portion of the skin of St. John the Baptist, which I saw some person afterwards kiss; and I ultimately discovered that the Baptist preacher in the wilderness of Judea was held in great reverence in Amiens, some most elaborate sculptures in alto-relievo of his acts and deeds being placed against the screen in the north aisle of the choir. Who may have been the sculptor I know not, but he must have been a clever fellow, and the eight tableaux he has produced must have taken some years to have completed. Of course John is beheaded in one of them, and in the next appears John's head, brought to Herod on a great dish. The revengeful paramour of Herod proceeds to cut it up with a knife, while poor Herodias, who was the tool of her mother, has the grace to sink down in a fainting fit. However, this is not all about John, for it seems that after all was done that a revengeful woman, whose charms are interfered with, might or would do, that the head fell into pious hands, who preserved it, and here it actually is in Amiens cathedral. At any rate I was shown a kind of coffer, in which it was said to be, but if the head was there the *charger* was not, being away somewhere with the key of the chest in his pocket, which I was not very sorry for, as it saved a charge upon my personal effects, and in the absence of Herodias herself, I fear my faith would not have been sufficiently strong to make quite sure of the identity of the head. My want of faith, nevertheless, leaves the head just where it was, or rather where it is, and the verdict must be "according to the evidence." I noticed among the tombs in the cathedral one of *Petrus Sabatier*, "*Ambiensis episcopus*," and it is almost a facsimile of the monument of Bishop Hough, in Worcester cathedral, as far as the figure is concerned, and the sarcophagus on which it reposes. The date of this is 1732, but the sculptor's name not apparent, nor is the chiseling so good as in the noble figure of the English Bishop. My friend found out that there was to be a Children's Festival or celebration at the cathedral, in honour of "Sainte Enfance," or holy infancy, held once a year, and so would insist upon stopping to see it. All the children belonging to schools in Amiens assembled at the cathedral, and after an "appropriate" sermon, a grand procession was organized, which went round the cathedral three times, and formed a very pretty show. Abundance of banners and pennons was carried by the various little troops of boys and girls, who were all distinguished by colours of some sort, wands, ribbons, &c, - white and blue, red, white and red, white, green, and scarlet. The chief emblem was a gilt figure of

our Saviour, represented as a little child, placed on the top of an ornamentation, and borne by little boys, fancifully dressed, and with scarlet sashes, while little girls in white bore up ribbons depending from the kind of palanquin that was carried. Priests and nuns in costume, each headed their own school, and there was besides a number of women bearing babes, in gala dresses, that were to be dedicated, I suppose, to the service of religion. The whole passed in review before certain sacerdotal dignitaries seated in one of the chapels, and at intervals as they paced along, the different schools sang a devotional song most vigourously, taken up through the long drawn aisles with good effect by different sets of scholars. Some corps of the little fellows were, according to the French custom, dressed *a la militaire*. The spectacle was certainly a pretty one, the children with their showy adornments seemed to like it, and I dare say it would rest through life upon their memories. The festival was connected in some way with the conversion of heathen children, judging by inscriptions on some of the banners, one of which was - "Sauve les petite Infidellès." The observance too, did not last too long, the service being for the occasion and was all over in the cathedral by twelve o'clock, so that the little dears - many of whose mothers appeared to be present, were not tired out.

On leaving the cathedral, we hastened towards the quarries of St. Achieul, about a mile and a half from Amiens, which have recently excited great curiosity, from the "flint instruments" found there, and from the supposed antiquity of which the appearance of man upon the earth has been antedated millions of ages. The subject, curious and important as it is, cannot be discussed in a few lines, and I must treat it separately on a future occasion. Abundance of flints, of almost every conceivable form, came under view in the quarries, doubtless at some distant period much knocked about by violent watery action, and we knocked them about again, in a vain attempt to discover genuine "instruments." Weapons of extortion they have now become, and geological theorizers have really something to answer for in tempting honest people to utter forged instruments and drive a trade in deception. The people living near the quarries are ready to benefit by the credulity of collectors, and baskets full of very queer looking "instruments" were shown us to purchase. The majority were really not worth a kick, and no sensible man, unless a flintomaniac, would have picked them up as artificial objects. Some looked of suspicious modern make, and only two or three might be considered as specimens at all near the mark, and for which preposterous prices were demanded. I wish to speak with respect of the opinions of other observers, but I must confess that I left the place rather disappointed, and by no means convinced that these quarries gave undeniable evidence of the existence of mankind in geological periods dating "countless ages" ago.

Iron and not flint is what man now trusts to and on the iron road myself and my companion soon reached Paris without any accident to record; and finding all the world were, as usual, running in one direction to the "Grand Hotel" recently erected in the Rue Rivoli, we went with the stream, and looked in there too. A grand hotel it certainly is, and superior to anything of the kind at present in London. It forms a great quadrangle, which is entirely enclosed in glass at the height of the roof, thus in itself forming a large conservatory, with a terrace around, adorned with shrubs and flowering plants. Saloons, halls, drawing and dining rooms are furnished and ornamented in the artistic way that the French are celebrated for, and nearly as many beds can be made up as there are pages in the "Spectacle de Paris," or sights to be seen in that metropolis, which amounting to above seven hundred, I find that I cannot condense without further study.

**Berrows Worcester Journal, 1 August 1863**

SCRAPS OF CONTINENTAL TRAVEL.  
BY A "FAITHFUL" CORRESPONDENT.  
(SECOND SERIES.)  
No. II.  
A DAY AT VICHY.

- " Dehors la liberté  
Le grand air, le beau pare le gazon souhaité,  
L'eau courante ou l'on jette, une herbe à l'aventure"

VICTOR HUGO

Freedom out doors, fine air, grand park, and turf of velvet green. With sportive fountains dashing wild upon the ground between.

Now that the Emperor of the French is taking - not the towns of Lombardy or the province of Savoy - but the pleasant waters of Vichy (pronounced Veshey), within his own dominions, and the newspapers of London and Paris are noting his sayings and doings there from special correspondents, it may be a good opportunity for reporting something about that celebrated continental watering place for of late years much has been said and written about Vichy, and it has become a familiar word. It may be noted on modern maps of France, and even on the common "Indicateur des Chemin's de Fer" (iron roads), as situated a considerable distance south of Paris, about half-way between that gay capital and the Mediterranean, and a railway has been carried on to it from the main line passing through Nevers and Moulins, so that it is now easily accessible. I had no particular malady calling for the special application of the Bains de Vichy, but in returning from an examination of the coal field at St. Etienne, I found myself one night obliged to stop at a little place called St. Germain de Fosse, which, as I was told, was only about ten miles, or less, from Vichy, it seemed a good opportunity to get there, and, so taking the first morning train, with a *compagnon de voyage*, I was soon there from the place where I had slept. Vichy is at present a town of innkeepers and *Magasins de Nouveautés*, as the French call their fancy shops, and the principal street consists of a line of hotels, on either side throughout its entire length, and there are plenty of others in the town besides - I was told two hundred in all - which, though I did not count them, I can well believe. Their names are mostly taken from persons and places - often the proprietor's own name - and not bells, unicorns, crowns, and anchors, &c., as with us in England. Hotel Napoleon, Hotel de Lyons, Hotel Guillard, &c, and if a stranger does not well know where to go he soon finds touters to tell him, or rather cannot shake them off till he makes a choice. Two fair (for I suppose I must not call them unfair), women got on either side of my friend and myself, and insisted on escorting us somewhere, so seeing there was no help for it, we yielded to the seductions of one of them, who soon introduced us to "Prince Eugene," who was anxious enough to place a dejeuner before us, and take us in as long as there was anything within our purses to take out. As it was not eight o'clock, we hastened down to the promenade to drink the waters, and see others drink them too. This is done in earnest at Vichy, more, perhaps, than at any other watering-place at present; for, after a time, either water fails, or enthusiasm for its imbibition declines, and thus it is that Cheltenham is now scarcely a drinking place at all, and the thirty glasses before breakfast that patients "under the system" used to drink at Malvern, has become a tale of other days. If it had continued, the Malvern water would not have held out, and pipes most have been laid on from the River Teme or the nearest brook supply. But Vichy is a fresh and rising place, and if its waters are not quite fresh, they are very abundant, both cold and hot. Under the covered way of the great building erected by "the Establishment of the Baths," we found two large circular fountains at either end, one of hot, and the other of cold water, and three damsels at the hot fountain were lading out water as fast as we have seen punch distributed to eager electors in those pleasant days when Maddresfield Court opened its hospitable gate on the morning of a county election. We give the simile now, as thanks to the stupidity of incorruptible reformers, it will not be understood by the next generation. The hot water went merrily round,

though not mixed with those pleasant ingredients that people are accustomed to in their evening smoke rooms, and it was distributed in a peculiar manner. Each Hebe held a long pipkin in her hand, and a glass within it, which was immersed in the bubbling water, the pipkin in a moment extricated, and the glass handed forth to every one in succession. Some fastidious persons, I observed brought their own glasses. The water is not too hot for imbibing a tumbler-full at a draught, is slightly saline, and the cold is very exhilarating from the gas within it. One spring is hotter than the others, and I tried a glass of all for the experiment's sake, and pronounce them really very agreeable, so returned to the first fountain again after a little walk. Drinking, I noticed, was going on, more or less, throughout the day, but most vigorously in the morning. I did not buy any medical guide to the taking of the waters, though I saw some for sale on the book-stalls, but on taking a ride of about three miles to the neighbouring town of Cusset, where there is a rival spring entitled "Les eaux de Saint Marie et Elizabeth," I found a statement there hang up, about this water deserving a preference to that of Vichy, on account of its having *more* iron, manganese, and carbonic acid gas within it. So I, of course, took another glass of this superior sacred spring, without discovering any difference. However, the printed paper farther said as to this holy water, that "elle est tree efficace dans lee diabetes, l'albyminene, l'anie, lachlorose, les fievres intermittentes, les dyspepsies, quelques matrites, &c., &c. — the said &c., &c., including, no doubt, every other complaint incident to human nature. If not, all other waters, salts, &c, were to be had at an establishment that I noted near the promenade. The "Establishment Thermal" here is under the management of a company, and a most spacious building accommodates the "Dames" and gentlemen who visit Vichy, with baths at a very moderate rate, besides which are promenade galleries filled with paintings for sale, of about the average merit of those in London show rooms — pleasant lounging places enough — news rooms, &c. Everything connected with the baths and waters is very well managed, and the subscriptions to everything, so prominent in English watering-places, is avoided.

Though Vichy is the Leamington of France, there is almost an entire want of any villa residences about the place, for that is not the French fashion, the hotel being a home to the Frenchman, whether with or without a family. Some of the two hundred here have appliances and palatial rooms almost equal to the Queen's Hotel, at Cheltenham, but many are of a very second-class character, where I was told persons were lodged and boarded at five and a half francs per day (4s. 7d. English money), having the usual *dejeuner* and *diner* that makes up the continental gorging meals. There are plenty of Cafés, of course, for caffee noir and liqueurs. The want of detached villas about Vichy has necessitated the erection of one for the accommodation of the Emperor and his suite, and this has been done in the English cockney-form style, with bow windows, and is placed within a little garden, very much like what may be seen at Ealing, Notting Hill, or Norwood, near London, only with the addition of green painted shutters to every window, as usual on the continent, where the southern sun is rather too powerful. In some little pleasure grounds opposite the villa, clumps of young plantations were disposed, and an extemporized lawn of turf was being watered to make the grass grow. Boulevards, as the French call them, or roads lined with trees, are in favour at Vichy, but the trees are very lanky at present, and to increase the verdant effect about the Emperor's residence, a number of fir trees had been cut down in some of the neighbouring forests, and were being planted to look like a forest procession. The road between Vichy and Cusset, which is an excursionsal place to which omnibuses take visitors for fifty centimes (2½d.) every half-hour, is closely lined with black poplar and lime trees alternately; but the poplars being tall and lanky, while the limes are mere durgs, the effect of this diversion of the trees as it might be called, is very queer. Some tufts of plane-trees near the hot-water baths, have a pleasing effect, and make a good protection against the sun's meridian rays. The High-street was lined with Oleanders in boxes. But the park-like, large open space near the Baths, is thickly covered with lime trees alone, and makes a pretty grove, not only star-proof, but really sun-proof. The trees form four main avenues, and several lateral ones, and here all the fashion and wealth of Vichy is conspicuous from about eleven o'clock a.m., until four o'clock p.m.. There we paraded like the rest of the world in Vichy, and a view of continental watering-place life was presented, which, from its diversity, is difficult fully to describe. Round the Pavillion Café were innumerable chairs, and

little pleasant parties were grouped about, or sat in twos or solitary, in that indolent and careless fashion abandoned to enjoyment, which the Italians call the *dolce far niente*. Pleasant oblivion from low thoughted care it doubtless is, as far as the resting is concerned, but many of the gay idlers here were playing either at cards or dominos, the latter being almost as large as the cards. The players all seemed very earnest in playing their game, quite indifferent as to who looked upon what they were doing. But the promenaders, as bringing more action into the picture, were still more interesting, and exhibited considerable variety of costume in all that abandonment which can only be done in a watering-place, where—

"I care for nobody, and nobody cares for me."

Under the shady limes the slowly moving procession kept passing and re-passing, showing, of course, the wide spread crinolines of the ladies to great advantage, whether of the whitest muslin covered with black lace, or the most vivid blues and reds, sashes of a peculiarly broad and coloured ribbon flashing in the sun among demure nuns, with their curious bonnets and neck-bands, their silver crosses, black robes in long folds. Among the throng, white parasols often rose conspicuously. Nor was the dress of gentlemen much less conspicuous, for there were hats of all colours and descriptions, and dandies all in white habiliments, contracting with the priests in their black robes and cocked hats, and these latter again appearing side by side with the red-pantalooned soldier, and even a few Greeks or Jews with turbans. Moustaches and beards of every kind of cut and dimensions might here be studied by anyone anxious to appear in the character of a wandering Jew, and some of them displaying "horrid hair" such as Milton has assigned to a comet. To complete the picture, we must bring in the bands, with their banging tantarronade, and numerous French ladies in morning dress plying most industriously, and willing, like the Pharisees of old, to be "seen of men" at their fancy work. I had almost forgotten a new kind of *ombrelle* sported by many dashing young fellows, which had an exterior of brown holland, with an interior lining of green, and seemed, well adapted for a protective sun-screen — though whether equally useful in a heavy shower I shall one day know, as the appearance of the double protection pleased me, and I unseated five francs accordingly in the purchase of one. I need hardly say that in stalls and shops every temptation was offered to induce the purchase of all kinds of pretty, but in many instances useless or fantastic things, and among the rest of a great quantity of incrustated articles, or "petrifications" so called, from the celebrated travertine spring at Clermont. Some life-sized statues exhibited of Flora and Pomona, as specimens of ingenuity, were really very good.

Watering-places are almost everywhere terribly hot, however cold or salt the water that they produce. Cheltenham, with its white houses, is almost unbearably fervid in the blaze of summer. Leamington is hotter; and even where the sea breezes play around Torquay, the iron-barred seats there put up for the ease and comfort of promenaders, imbibe such an amount of calorie from the sun's rays, that it is rather dangerous for anyone not desirous of the fate of St. Lawrence to sit down upon such gridirons. Vichy, under a much more southern sun, is pretty well burnt up, notwithstanding the efforts of clumps of limes, sycamores, and planes to make a shade out of doors, and shutters to every window, to exclude sun light within doors. In fact, to be boiled, broiled, and despoiled too, is likely to be the fate of most visitors to Vichy, unless they are careful. Amidst all the variety and even magnificence of dress that I saw in the walks, I cannot say a great amount of first-rate beauty was discernible, but then it may be said that people come to Vichy out of condition, and would, of course, renew their good looks and smooth complexion, as the wily snake does its skin, after a sufficient residence and brightening up by the waters. This I did not stay long enough to see.

I have little more to say about Vichy, except that it has a very long suspension bridge, in four divisions, over the wide, but very shallow, gravelly-islanded, river Allier — so long, in fact, that the roadway and railings being at a white heat, I was too glad to retrace my steps ere I had reached the other aide of the river, and took refuge in a public garden or arboretum laid out on the banks of the Allier, but which, being of recent formation, though it is prettily arranged, and is adorned with some fine flowers and plants of tropical affinities, possesses

as yet no shady walks, so it was under the glare of noon impossible to stay there, notwithstanding that the walks were free for anybody to roam about in at their pleasure – and as far as gratuitous pleasure is concerned, it may truly be said, "they do these things better in France" than generally in England. Except for the use of baths, and of course for hotel accommodations, I heard nothing of that constant call for subscriptions, which is so prominent to the eye, if not the ear, at an English watering place, for at Vichy the company who manage the "Establishment Thermal" appear to arrange everything at their own cost.

The heat became so oppressive that my friend and myself took shelter in a church, which was cool as charity (I mean the cold shouldered sort with which some persons treat their friends) itself, and here we found an old priest, with a demure nun seated beside him to see fair play, catechising a miscellaneous lot of boys and girls, some of the latter of whom were giggling and restless under papal instruction, and made a tumultuous rush to the door as soon as they could, followed however by the nun, and the old gentleman was left behind to pray to the saints. The priests and nuns between them do all the work of instruction in France, and schools, even when walking in the streets, are always attended by one or the other. That the nuns do their work best is obvious from the immense majority of women in every congregation. We strolled back to the Baths and shady walks, where a band had just finished playing, and promenading, lounging, drinking, and other efforts to pass time gaily away – were going on just as a poet has represented of some fancied place.

"Each sex, each age, each order and degree,  
To ease and idle sport abandoned all.  
Kept one perpetual general jubilee,  
Nor suffer'd ought disturb their merry glee."

So it is in "la belle France,-" but even the pleasure of contemplating and pursuing pleasure at last tires, and we were glad enough to find out our hotel, and sit down to a welcome table d'hote with "all the world," as the French say, or at least with people who had journeyed hither from far parts of the world.

**Berrows Worcester Journal, 15 August 1863**

SCRAPS OF CONTINENTAL TRAVEL.  
BY A "FAITHFUL" CORRESPONDENT.  
(SECOND SERIES.)

No. III.

FROM PARIS, THROUGH ORLEANS, TO BOURGES.

"On le raille. Qu'importe. Il pense.

Plus d'une ame inscrit en silence

Ce que la foule n'entend pas."

VICTOR HUGO.

Before I get on the rail and proceed to observe whatever the rapid locomotion of the present day allows, I must put on my spectacles, though my prospects at the very outset of this traverse were very nearly being marred by the loss of them. I once, when life was younger, smiled at the pathetic exclamation of an artist among the mountains of Wales, that his views were all spoiled by the unfortunate fracture of his glasses; but I have myself been since quite as unlucky, and a pair of gold spectacles I once possessed, and dropt, are now probably on the nose of some Milanese patriot whose views of Italian unity have been strengthened at my expense. I now find steel more suited to see and fight one's way with in this world of appropriation, where a private loss may be a gain to the world, but to "steal from the world" - although recommended by the poets - is no easy matter. While poking about for adventures in Paris, my friend and myself entered a rather humble house in a side street near one of the many bridges over the Seine, to refresh with a warm basin of soup, which we obtained for merely two sous each, though very good. We paid the charge and walked away, and had proceeded some distance along the bank of the river, when a loud shouting behind arrested our attention, and, to my surprise, the "jolie dame" of the soup-house came puffing and running along - with my spectacles, which I had stupidly put down on the table while I eat my soup, and had left them there. I merely mention this incident to show that honesty really yet exists in the world, and in Paris, too; and I shall honour that woman's memory, and if I had not forgotten her name would do my best to marry it - to immortal verse. N'importe! perhaps, if she ever gets into purgatory, I may be able to manage an indulgence in her behalf, and that will be better. Yet, after all, those spectacles thus restored to my gaze I shall never see again, for as I may have subsequently to relate, they now repose in the embrace of the volcanic mountains of the Cantal.

The rail now traverses France in all directions, and we took our places on that proceeding southwards to Lyons and the Mediterranean, but willing to take the journey before us "doucement" or pleasantly, in French phraseology, we determined to stop at Orleans, tempted by its historical fame, and the memory of the "pucelle" of that city. To describe the intermediate country between places when travelling by railway is no easy matter, and therefore I shall not attempt it in these "Scraps." An unsuccessful effort, indeed, I did make to put down all the stations between Paris and Orleans, but we went at a pretty rapid pace, and passing several without stopping I gave up the task, and looked only for points of interest, The country had a pretty undulating aspect, with many trees and scattered houses, not so flat and open as in other parts of France, and at this season a colouring was given to the landscape by extensive fields of Saintfoin, which now displayed their bright pink papilionaceous flowers in perfection, this plant being much cultivated in France for the abundant but coarse hay that it produces. The only town that we came very near was St. Michell, where was a tower dominating with good effect above the houses, and dedicated, I presume, to that prince of the angelic host. After passing this we came in view of some very fine limestone masses and wooded cliffs, near Chamagarde, suggesting good ground for botany, and at Etampes, still further along the line, some grand Jurassic cliffs and quarries presented themselves to view. Etampes has a castle with a great ruinous keep, and apparently several ruined churches also. Nothing further worth mentioning attracted my attention in landscape scenery until the city of

ORLEANS

came into view. As in England, so in France, the rail and the station generally keep a respectful distance from the interior of towns, and omnibuses have to be entered with all the trouble and nuisance of seeing to the deportation of luggage. Chance most decide for a stranger what hotel to go to, and change often takes to a bad one, but in this instance the 'bus that had inscribed upon its sides "Grand Hotel d'Orleans," made no mistake, for it took us to a very comfortable hotel, reasonable in its charges, and where, for a wonder, a good cup of tea could be made. Orleans is an historical place famed in story, and is a handsome city now, but most of its antiquities are gone, and its walls, whence the English were repulsed by the doughty and enthusiastic "Pucelle d'Orleans," exist no longer to raise sympathy or excite curiosity. A reading-man is sure to be disappointed in the course of his travels, as forgetful of the changes ever so rife in the world, and having his mind filled with the images of former things that have in the robe of tragedy swept before his imagination, at well as the figures of warriors and renowned personages, and

" - Aught else great bards beside  
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,  
Of torneys, and of trophies hung,  
Of forests and enchantments drear ;-

he perpetually looks out for what time and change have hurried away into inextricable obscurity, scarcely even leaving the finger-marks of antiquity as a reminder. So it is at Orleans, where modern houses have replaced the ancient ones, a long railway bridge of many arches over the Loire stands conspicuous in place of the demolished walls, and the cathedral itself has had the transforming efforts of modern dabblers in the Old Gothic too palpably displayed upon its external outline.

One indicator of the stirring times of armoured feudality - though not a relic of them - there indeed is, in the equestrian statue of Joan of Arc, the "Maid of Orleans," which stands in the Grand Place, at the centre of the town. She is represented in armour, but bareheaded, and bestriding her horse spurred like a military knight. On the sides of the pedestal various scenes in her life are depicted in bas relief, and among the rest her cruel burning by the enemies into whose hands she had fallen, and to whose bitter resentment she was abandoned by those whose interests she had enthusiastically served. Yet it is to be borne in mind, that she perished as much by the superstition of the age as by the revenge of the English for the losses she had occasioned to them. Witches were then and long afterwards considered unfit to live, and many an unfortunate woman, who had committed no crime, was burned to death on the mere supposition that, being old and ugly, she was capable of seriously looking injury to her neighbours by an "evil eye." Joan of Arc, as a deceiver, was a real witch, and her claim to revelation from the unseen world led to warfare that caused the death of hundreds of brave men. Her position became an anomalous one, and the new monarch she had given to France (Charles VII) it is thought, wanted to be rid of her, as she had served his turn, and so suffered her to be taken prisoner by the besiegers in a sally from Orleans. He made no effort to save her, and her enemies, with savage malignancy, yet in accordance with popular belief, accused her of witchcraft. This view was admitted by the Church as correct, and she was condemned accordingly. It was a barbarous affair, but she had introduced a new and unfair element into the battle field, and that it was delusive was proved by its failing her in the hour of need. Long forgotten, she is at last glorified in an ideal statue, which only a few persons can now understand or appreciate.

As soon as we could dispatch dinner at the hotel, we hastened to the Cathedral, though it was getting dusk; but in Catholic countries it is not often that the churches are found closed, some service at one or other of the numerous altars always going on from five in the morning until after eight o'clock in the evening. The cathedral is an extensive structure and in the pointed style of architecture, but has had its exterior renovated, and of course spoiled, by modern hands. The two towers at the west end of the fabric are in the "cabbage Gothic," as it is sometimes termed, of modern adaptation, and only the eastern part can be considered in its original form, and much of this has been renewed. The interior of the cathedral is, nevertheless, impressive, though in various styles of the pointed, the transepts having been rebuilt after a debased fashion at either end,

and having star-like modern circular windows, with stained glass in them of but little merit. The nave extends in five arches on either side, evidently late-pointed work, with a triforium and tall clerestory windows.

When we entered an evening service was going on in the transepts, an altar decorated with artificial flowers being placed before the northern window, and chairs with their occupants filling up the area here, as in Catholic countries the choir, however spacious, is devoted to the clergy alone. Evening cathedral service has rather a solemn effect, the imperfect light not filling up the extensive space in the fabric, and the gloomy depths of shade being impenetrable, while in the dimly-lighted aisles behind the choir, where are many chapels in the recesses, some female devotee may be seen silently kneeling at a solitary lamp near the Virgin's alter, or perhaps stumbled against on the pavement, and the storied windows glowing with colour in the daylight, now only form black and desolate spaces. Even outside, the grand and massive structure looms more gigantic in its proportions against the sombre or starry evening sky. I got up early in the morning to examine the cathedral more at leisure, and it merits attention within, though so much modernised on its exterior. The arches of the nave are in the so-called "perpendicular" style, and the side aisles are double thus much increasing the effect of fretted roof, &c. The choir is plain, in six arches of early pointed date, and terminates eastward in an apse of seven lancets, five of the windows being filled with stained glass, and two plain. These windows form double lancets, each filled with twenty-two vignette Scripture subjects. Their ground is blue, but the figures in each are numerous, and the red colour which is introduced is very vivid, and thus balances the blue pleasingly. Beyond the choir the east end is made up of recesses lighted by tall lancets, three in each recess, forming chapels, adorned with much painting and gilding. In the centre is the Ladye chapel, where is an altar with figures of the Virgin and Infant Saviour, before which a number of females on their knees were either receiving the consecrated wafer from the priest, or waiting their turn for it. The windows of all these chapels are filled with fine stained glass of modern execution, treated in artistic style, containing figures of various saints and monarchs, whose features are especially well done, in one window, the figures, costumes, and countenances of St. Louis, Henri Quatre, and Louis XIV. curiously contrast with each other – the latter, in his flowing periwig, makes almost a ludicrous appearance.

With my imagination full of the times when the English possessed Normandy, left kindred blood there, and contested the possession of much of modern France, then cut up into various independent duchies, I looked about Orleans for ancient walls and relics of olden times, but was very unsuccessful in my search. Only a row of trees marks the line of the mural fortifications, and on getting to the extremity of the grand way where the towers and gates once were, I was quite disgusted to find merely a common modern lodge-like place, with wooden palisades across the road, a "defense," as the French technically term, a barrier or warning, against country people, with commodities to sell, entering the city without paying the "octroi" duties – a local taxation. A very few old timber houses rewarded my researches, and I did at last find a very narrow street with some beggarly habitations, whose width certainly remained as it was centuries ago, and along which probably knights and their retainers of the feudal age, with the redoubted amazon Joan of Arc in their midst, had marched to sally against the foe from their beleaguered walls. Tradition, or perhaps rather supposition, has assigned two mansions of some antiquity to celebrated beauties that charmed Royal fancies in their day, namely, Agnes Sorel, "la belle maitresse de Charles VII.," and Diane de Poitiers, so well known in connexion with Francois Premier. This for a moment invests them with a poetical halo, until we find architectural critics pronounce the supposed fact "la question est controversée." Another "maison" in the Rue du Tabourg, bears the name of Jeanne d' Arc, and she is reported to have been lodged there. Part of the exterior may perhaps belong to the epoch when she flourished, but the interest ceases when even the local historian is obliged to confess that the rooms as now arranged "sont attestés par des ornements d'un style *postérieur* au séjour de la Pucelle." Thus it is in the lapse of time, for almost every house and public building in Orleans seems to have changed its appearance since the days of the English wars in France, and perhaps the east end of the cathedral is the only now remaining structure upon which the soldiers of the middle ages cast their eyes when they defended the walls. But Nature in its grand features remains ever

the same, and still the broad river Loire flows past the city as it did ages ago, but, instead of old towers and fortifications bristling with armed men, now reflecting in its waters a modernized bridge, open to all who wish to pass across it, and a long stone viaduct of numerous arches to carry the railway.

Into the vicissitudes of this old city I shall not further enter, but it must always be interesting to Englishmen, as connected with the celebrated siege that decided the continuance of their dominion in France. The entrance of the pucelle into the besieged place, who was regarded by the French as a Saviour sent by God, inspired them accordingly, while the common soldiery, on the other side, quailed before what they conceived to be the power of sorcery not to be withstood. The result was Orleans delivered, and France saved for the French. Ignominious as was the defeat at the time to the English, the result has been far more advantageous to our nation than if Orleans had been taken, and Henry VI. remained as he was proclaimed on his father's death monarch of France. Our kings must have resided at Paris, continental affairs would have been predominant in our councils, French would probably have been the language of the Court, and English and French interests would have been perpetually clashing with each other. I do not myself believe that either angels or demons instigated Joan of Arc to the work she accomplished, but her asserted supernatural powers were useful to an end that might not otherwise have been attained, though, as is too often the case, the agent that accomplishes a good purpose suffers in the cause that others reap the benefit of.

Having resolved to spend our Sunday in the city of Bourges, where is a cathedral and archbishop's see, we now dispatched the unpleasant duty of adding up the francs and centimes of our bill, which, for a "grand hotel," was really moderate, and placed ourselves and our traps on the iron road. In the vicinity of Orleans the line traverses a wide plain extending to the horizon, which, dotted over with ponds and dark pine forests (called sapins), has quite a wild and savage character. The red-legged partridge, as well as lapwings, ducks, teal, quails, &c, here abound, while hares and other game love to sport in these shady retreats. This district, called La Sologne, is, however, about to be drained and ameliorated, and the Emperor, to set an example, has purchased some chateaux, and employed an agent to superintend the work. We soon passed these wilds, and came to Vierzon, the only considerable town between Orleans and Bourges, which has an ancient chateau and abbey, and a good deal is said about its history in the "Guides - Itineraries," but as I did not stop there I pass this over, although interesting connected with some of our Norman sovereigns, for it is as recorded that in 1196, Richard Coeur de Lion ravaged the surrounding country and burnt the town, so that nothing remains prior to his time. Late in the afternoon we reached the old city of Bourges, or rather the station for it, for nearly two miles intervene between the railway and the houses of the town. Unfortunately we took an omnibus that conveyed us to a very queer hotel, evidently unused to receive foreigners, and where we found it difficult to get a tolerable meal. The house, too, was divided into detached parts, and I was assigned a chamber some distance up the yard, though it was of regal dimensions. But I must describe Bourges, with its curious narrow streets, its fine cathedral, and other antiquities, in a succeeding paper.

**Berrows Worcester Gazette, 22 August 1863**

SCRAPS OP CONTINENTAL TRAVEL.  
BY A "FAITHFUL" CORRESPONDENT.  
(SECOND SERIES) No. <sup>2</sup>III.  
A SOJOURN IN BOURGES.

" - A mighty minster, dim, and proud, and vast,  
- - - - - a shadow of the past,  
A memory of the sainted steps that wore  
Erewhile its gorgeous pavement, seem'd to brood  
Like mist upon the stately solitude."

MRS. HEMANS.

Every traveller ought to have an object before him on his journeyings, and, indeed, the generality of travellers are prepared, in the slang language of continental tourists, to "do" those especial things, and see those sights that the red-bound guide-book of Murray intimates as a labour to be accomplished by all who run and read. So one man mounts up the dangerous external stair of the spire of Strasburgh cathedral, another gets through the eternal snow to the summit of Mont Blanc, or Monte Rosa, or maybe descends some mine, or explores some cavern at the risk of his life - and the assertion that he has done so is his reward, and all the knowledge he has obtained; except, perhaps, that it was miserably cold, or confoundedly hot. But I confess that, to myself, mere labour for the empty beast of having accomplished a feat is very unsatisfying; but there is a peculiar pleasure and enjoyment in what I denominate Landscape Life. What a labourer in this working-day world of duty requires to refresh and renovate his jaded powers, is change of scene and action, and fresh air - indeed, any change and any scene different to his accustomed habitat, which has got moulded all over with carking anxieties and troubled thoughts, will benefit him. How pleasant it is to look out upon a fresh world of novelty, where discovery beckons the wanderer on, and to feel that no matter of business, and no bearer of a little bill can possibly rise up like a hideous phantom to trouble the mind or annoy the sight. Away from all disagreeables the mind plumes its wing, delights in its liberty, feels released from a load of oppressive studies, and "at ease" in the sanctum of its inn, knows that it is safe from any intrusion, even that of a half-hearted friend, whose sympathetic tenderness would extend no farther than the utmost than giving advice - if not wanted. Well, we are clear from all the buzzing insects of prattle and insincerity, and how pleasant the sensation to feel liberty of thought and action, and a bright landscape in view waiting for exploration -

"Where liberal nature all her charms bestows.  
Birds in the sunny air sing sweet, flowers bloom,  
and water flows."

The temptation is irresistible to wander forth, and it is easy to understand how Chaucer cast aside his book and his devotion, when the sun came shining into his oratory on a May morning. To all this pleasant feeling of liberty, other pleasures are superadded if a traveller has a taste for art, antiquities, or architecture, or a love for geology and natural history. I have written all this as an apology for "doing" more than many tourists do, and, indeed, for saying as well as doing, and I am now at once off to see Bourges Cathedral.

A guide-book that I looked into makes the very curious remark, that the streets and lanes of Bourges are as narrow tortuous, and irregular, as a skein of thread pulled about by the sportive paw of a cat! I do not think that I should have hit upon this simile myself, though I got lost in the entangled maze, and had some difficulty to get disentangled; but, I must admit that there is a "désordre pittoresque" in the streets of the town, and some old houses that might be sketched to advantage. The cathedral is a noble and very lofty structure in the pointed style of the early part of the 14th century, without transepts, but having two square towers at the west end, and five sculptured portals. It is one of the finest monuments of Catholic art in France, and is scarcely to be exceeded in

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<sup>2</sup> This is an error, it was actually the fourth part  
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Europe. The "Guides Itineraries" that I got hold of, declares this grand fabric to be a mountain of stone which the artists of an inventive age have adorned with an innumerable population of saints, virgins, martyrs, bishops, demons, angels, phantoms, gargoyles, satyrs, and fantastic animals; so that, with its "incroyable et magnifique ornamentation," it may be said to resemble the trunk of an oak mantled all over with ivy – "un gigantesque edifice criblé de joyaux." It must be acknowledged that, in looking up the nave of Bourges Cathedral from the western entrance, the effect is very fine from the wide unobstructed space that appears before the view, no great screen intervening before the choir or lofty angelic achievement above the high altar, so that the eye takes in the whole length of the structure, and sees the window of the Lady Chapel with the white figure of the Virgin in front of the circles of blue mosaic work that fill up that distant window. The very lofty arches, triforium, and arcaded clerestories above, conducting the gaze to the embossed roof at a height of 116 feet, with the double aisles of the nave and choir, and secondary triforium and clerestory windows, increase the grand effect of the *tout ensemble*, and overpower the mind with astonishment. At the west end of the cathedral are two unequal square towers, in five stages, and though of late pointed date, in three of the stages or stories the round Norman arch has been re-introduced, which has a curious effect. The northern and southern doorways are of rich decorated Norman, and on the side of the south porch is a curiously constructed apartment, having a door and grated windows above, but whether intended for devotees or prisoners who had offended against ecclesiastical law, I was unable to ascertain. After a cursory examination of the nave and choir, we were led into a subterranean church or crypt beneath the choir and its side aisles, but which is lighted by rather large windows all round. Here is a Holy Sepulchre, with a number of life-size figures in stone praying around it; and in the centre of the crypt is a marble tomb, having on it a recumbent effigy of Jean le Magnifique, one of the Dukes de Berri, who were sovereign princes, in Bourges.

Leaving the crypt as evening was drawing on, we ascended one of the western towers just after sunset, while an orange after-glow yet tinted the western sky, and though the view was extensive and beautiful, yet a solemn stillness prevailed, and gloominess gradually crept over the landscape. The stone stairs up this tower are almost, without exception, the widest and the easiest to climb that ever came under my observation. We got back to our inn, but from some capricious temper in the people of the house found it difficult to get properly attended to, and so fared worse than usual, which we submitted to with more philosophy than we should have done at home. We afterwards went again to the cathedral, where, being <sup>3</sup>Whitsun Eve, there was a night service in one of the chapels, the altar of which was most brilliantly illuminated.

The French are no early closers of their shops, as I here particularly noted, though it was the same in other towns; but as evening approaches, they sit down there with their families, and seem to take things very easy. In one shop indeed card-playing was going on, though the cards were put hastily aside when we entered to make a purchase. On summer evenings chairs are brought out on the pavement in the front of the shops, the inmates, and perhaps a friend who has dropped in, sit down and quite fill up the pavement, so that a passenger has to turn off, and gossiping goes on to any extent. This has a more social and enlivening look than the "early closing system" that now makes English provincial towns look so dark and lugubrious at night.

To see a Catholic cathedral to advantage on the Continent, it is necessary to rise early, for the priests have a host of duties to attend to, and they commence their services at five o'clock. At that hour the churches will be found crowded, especially by females, and offices are going on at various altars at the same time. The Confessionals, too, have then their occupants. On festival occasions of course the number of attendants is greater, and on the morning of Whit-Sunday I took care accordingly to be in time for matins. When I got within the cathedral I found the space before the Lady Chapel, at the extreme east end, crowded with kneeling women arrayed in white caps, and a priest engaged in presenting them successively with the consecrated wafer. Above the altar of this chapel is a white

marble figure of the Virgin, devoid of the usual tawdry accompaniments, but in another chapel, also sacred to the Mother of Christ, in the south aisle of the nave, there was a great profusion of decorations with vases of both natural and artificial flowers, pots of trees, &c. On either side of the rails in front of the Lady Chapel are two kneeling figures of the size of life, representing a Duke and Duchess of Berri, who here resided in mediaeval times. They are placed in the attitude of prayer before desks, on which are open books. The lady has a fine countenance, though rather masculine, but that of the duke seems the most curious compound of humanity that it is possible to conceive. With a little nose, puffy cheeks, and sharpish eyes, he appears to have been, with his remarkably thick head, as assumptive, restless, inquisitive, and stupid, as can well be imagined.

There is a profusion of rich painted glass in the windows of Bourges cathedral, and the long time that I was in the edifice enabled me to examine it to great advantage. At intervals all round the aisles of the east end are recesses, each lighted by three lancet windows filled with vignette scripture subjects in painted glass, which has a most gorgeous effect, and every window is leaded differently in circles, quatrefoils, hexagons, &c., variously arranged. In the whole there are twenty two Early English windows here, but the glass appears to be a modern imitation of the antient types. Though the ground of all the vignettes in the window is blue, yet in only one is the blue colour too preponderating; in all the others the great number of figures, with vestments of yellow and crimson, tones down the blue; and the borders also are mostly crimson. The figures of saints in the clerestories of the choir appear to be old and original but are coarse in their treatment. In the great west window are four large figures under canopies of blue and crimson, which have a general appearance to some of those in Tewkesbury and Malvern churches. Bourges cathedral is truly a capital place to study the various styles and ages of painted glass. In three windows of the north side of the nave three different dates of glass are in close approximation. In one are four figures of saints under canopies of early 14th century work; in the next are four very fine figures of a cardinal and three bishops of the 15th century; and in the window nearest the west end the work is of the 16th century, and probably late in that. In this last window, in the upper part, is the tomb of Christ vacant, but filled with flowers, and numerous figures, in wondering attitudes, are placed around; and in the panes below a lady and gentleman are placed kneeling opposite to each other at desks, in the costume of the time, with ruffs, &c. One window on this side in the nave, probably late 14th century work, represent martyrs being tortured in various ways – one is lying down extended and manacled, broiling on burning coals. A window on the south side of the nave shows in its upper part an arrangement of blue and white colours exceedingly well managed. The 14th century glass is well marked by its Gothic adornments, always in good taste; – thus in the Virgin's Chapel, in the nave, angels on either side hold up the emblazoned arms – white lilies on a blue ground – of the Dukes de Berri. Other 14th century figures and work are in other windows, and all of this date are very interesting. That even on glass effective shadowing may be made is shown in the window of the Lady Chapel, where a seated female figure comes out with all the effect of a painting from Rembrandtish depth of shade and the Virgin herself, seated beside a palm tree, is very expressive. In all the 14th century work, and as shown particularly in one window, where saints have the charge of various kneeling figures, all the faces are depicted with considerable force of expression.

In the forenoon high mass was celebrated, in which the archbishop, who was present, took part, and before the end of the service, seated on his throne in full pontifical habiliments, he received the homage of the ecclesiastics of the cathedral, and, with his crimson-robed officers beside him, various bowings and genuflexions took place. At the conclusion of the service the prelate passed in procession down the nave to his palace, with an official train, blessing the congregation as he went along. A mass of people lined the way outside the cathedral, and many women with infants in their arms were among the crowd. Whenever the archbishop saw a little child, he kindly stopped, touched the child, and blessed it – to the manifest delight of its I mother. He was a tall, rather handsome middle-aged man, I and perhaps he would not have disliked some such little appendage playing in the wide courts of his palace. But in Catholic countries bishops and all other ecclesiastics can only have nephews and nieces. There is no scandal attached to this, for precise people might otherwise whisper

naughty things even about a bishop, and "affect a virtue" as to their own better conduct. I observed in the cathedral, this morning, a collection made in rather a curious way, which may be suggestive of "trying it on" in a similar manner in England. I happened to be standing near one of the side entrances to the choir with many others – for none but priests can enter the solemn sanctuary within – when a gentle tap on the shoulder caused me to turn round, and a gentleman bowing politely introduced a lady, who, smiling her sweetest, directed my attention to a velvet bag she bore for contributions. This was repeated more than once in the course of the morning, and it is a sort of thing that does not exactly bear repetition, pleasant as it may be to contribute once to an offertory. In the Madelaine Church at Paris I observed with surprise that, on the conclusion of a sermon there, the preacher himself, preceded by the beadle in all his finery, went round the church bowing for alms, and this in my opinion was proceeding a step too far.

The archbishop has an extensive palace near the cathedral, attached to which is a very large garden with pleasant walks, and he has devoted this to the use of the inhabitants of Bourges, and it was crowded on the Sunday afternoon with an array of all the fine dresses that the place could produce, with of course no end of beards and moustaches, curled and uncurled, as adornments of fierce or feeble physiognomies. A military band discoursed clanging music, necessary perhaps to overpower the conversation of the promenaders, but as if, as Collins says in his well-known ode–

"Each, for madness rul'd the hour,  
Would prove his own expressive pow'r."

Soon tiring of this noisy scene of French enjoyment, I strolled into the town and entered an old irregular Early Gothic church, called, I believe, Notre Dom. It was of early date, having a rudely-vaulted nave and side aisles, but was sadly out of condition, and having a diseased and disused organ stopping up the west window. Vespers had commenced, and the service was being intoned by an old priest, with the aid of an assistant hoisting a trombone. This trombone did not suit my musical ear, and as I saw nothing to contemplate but a window of stained glass devoted to the history of John the Baptist, with his ubiquitous head, which I had become familiar with, I left the priest, his trombone, and half a dozen old women besides, which was about the muster there, to proceed intoning at their leisure.

I found, at last, a pleasant place of meditation on a shadowed seat beneath poplars and plane trees, which shade a walk carried all round the city on the site of the former frowning walls, no longer required in the present state of centralised power, when petty duchies and separate jurisdictions have been all absorbed in one monarchy. Bourges, as a duchy, had once its sovereign, its palace, its Sainte Chapelle, and fortifications that tempted the assault as well as resisted the attack of invaders. Of course it was visited and pillaged by Goths and Huns, Normans, and whatever military leader fancied it worth a siege or a combat, and had, as its formal history relates, "troubles incessantes." All this was in the stirring mediaeval times which some people lament the loss of, but which, if interesting to knights and master builders, as well as the custodes of the keys of St. Peter, was only productive of coarse food and hard blows to the "public in general." Under the English sway in France, the Dauphin subsided into the petty King of Bourges, until roused into successful action at the instigation of Joan of Arc. Now, after all its past grandeur and importance, Bourges has settled down into a very quiet cathedral city, for its ancient royal palace and Sainte Chapelle were burned down in 1693, its walls are demolished, and of all its magnificent monuments that might revive ancient traditions, there only remains intact its wonderful cathedral, and two or three turreted, neglected, or battered stone mansions, one of which – having a curious gateway and lofty tower, with others having pyramidal tops similar to those at Westwood, near Droitwich – I examined with much curiosity. Some of the narrow streets have also an aspect of antiquity, and the tangled skein of their tortuosity is pleasing enough to wander along, if a stranger is in no hurry to get back to his hotel. I myself lingered too far into the evening in my wanderings about, and might have passed the night in the streets, if the boom of the cathedral bell had not guided me thither, and given me the clue I wanted.

(To be continued.)

**Berrows Worcester Journal, 5 September 1863**

SCRAPS OF CONTINENTAL TRAVEL.  
BY A "FAITHFUL" CORRESPONDENT.  
(SECOND SERIES.)  
No. V.  
AT THE CITY OF CLAREMONT, IN AUVERGNE.

" - - - - - Countries we compare,  
And estimate the blessings which they share."  
Goldsmith.

When a man has "got a month" - I don't mean a month allotted by a judge or a magistrate - before him for the enjoyment of fresh air and change of scene, the first question is, and one on which a good deal of the pleasure depends, where to go? Fifty places at once rise up in the mind - all inviting the exploring foot one way or another - and it becomes rather difficult to choose. With me, however, the grand tempting point must be - somewhere not visited before - thus combining attractive novelty, the hope of adventure, and, of course, on new ground, additional knowledge and instruction of the pleasantest kind. I remember, on commencing the study of geology, years ago, the delight that I felt in reading Lyell's account of the volcanic district of Auvergne in the south of France, and his fascinating imagery of the great fresh water lake formerly existing there, now dried up, with the extinct quadrupeds that then inhabited its banks, and the volcanoes that flamed at that distant period on its sides, and which still show their frowning summits, abandoned craters, and long terraces of naked lavas, in proof of the disturbances desolating the earth at a period long before man was then thought to have been placed upon this tellurian scene. While pondering over a map of Europe, yet uncertain towards what point to steer, I happened to catch my eye upon the name of Auvergne, when at once the memory of old romantic thoughts returned, and I determined to explore the Limagne, as the country once occupied by the great lake is termed, and see some of the wonders of the old province of Auvergne, that in description only had interested me in younger days. I think it is well to see all one can while it is possible to do so, and follow the advice a worthy baronet once gave me, to travel and explore while the bodily frame is able to endure the necessary fatigue; for the pleasure becomes too much of a toil afterwards. This is deserving of attention, and there is also good philosophy to some extent in getting all the knowledge possible as to the physical geography of the planet on which Divine Providence has placed us, not surely with the intention that we should keep our eyes shut. Moore, in his playful poetical reasoning, has suggested what is true enough in another sense than he meant it-

"This earth is the planet for you, love, and me;"

for whatever other orbs the astronomer may behold "on the verge of creation," they are beyond any actual examination, whatever analogy or theory may attempt to make out; and it appears to me the wisest plan to explore what is of comparative easy access, and while it is in our power to do so.

A fine morning opened on the unpleasant prospect of a heavy bill to pay for very indifferent fare, but this is so common an incident in travelling that one soon gets used to it, and the only thing that lightens the pocket when it should only enlighten the bed-chamber, and which I ever felt disposed to grumble at, is the one franc "bougie" that never will go out-of the bill ! Tenpence for being lighted into bed. This is much complained of in a volume just published on the inconveniences an Englishman sustains abroad; but there is one remedy, and that is to carry the unburnt bougie away, and make it serve as long as it will. A friend that I know tried this, and as one must of necessity carry soap from place to place, a traveller might as well carry tallow, only that the latter in hot weather might run away, and not much saving be effected. Clermont, the capital of Auvergne, or rather (in modern nomenclature) of the department of the Puy de Dome, was now our destination, which the rail allowed us to effect between eleven o'clock, a.m., and four, p.m. The line taken, passed the cities of Nevers and Moulins, of which I have nothing to say now, as we made no stop at either, but got into the valley of the river Allier, which we crossed at the latter place, passing

over as many French kilometres as amounted to about 140 English miles. As usual there was a lumbering omnibus to take us a mile and a-half into the heart of the city, and we chose that on which was inscribed "Grand Hotel de la Poste;" and this we had no reason to complain of, except in one particular, which as yet the French do not understand, and which I shall mention in due course. I am not going to write the history of Clermont, and my search after antiquities there, was stopped by this suggestive passage in a volume I picked up at the public library:— "Dans la grande irruption des Sarrasins au coeur de la France, Clermont est incendie, et plusieurs de ses églises sont détruites (732)." This paragraph is almost English, and so needs no translation; I shall only say, therefore, that having been a Roman city, it had been destroyed even before the Saracen invasion, and on the old Roman ruins another city arose, the chief fortification of which being on an eminence in the midst of the city, the name of *Clarus mons*, or Clermont arose, for it became a famous place.

We found the "Hotel de la Poste" to be a very spacious building, situated at one end of the Place de Jande, an open space nearly a quarter of a mile long, and therefore a very airy situation. At the opposite end of it is a bronze statue, larger than life, of General Dessaix, who fell "in the arms of victory," as is commonly said, at the celebrated battle of Marengo, which established the fame of the first Napoleon, when fighting for the Republic. Dessaix saved the battle, but was unfortunately killed by a cannon shot as he advanced to the rescue. He was a native of Clermont, and so glory has here placed him on a pedestal with cocked hat and regimentals, as a focus around which a few idle fellows occasionally linger to talk of anything rather than the services of the deceased soldier. Intending to stay several days at Clermont, we made an arrangement with the landlord of the hotel to have all charges included at the rate of eight francs per diem. This made a short bill, and prevented the bougie and other extra exactions, though, as we were several times out all the day, we perhaps did not save much by the bargain.

I shall not make a diary of my stay in Clermont, but state succinctly what is worth seeing, or what I visited in the city; and afterwards describe the visits made to the extinct volcanoes and beds of lava that have given such celebrity to the neighbourhood, and put on so singular and wonderful an appearance. Standing on the ascent from the Place de Jande towards the Hotel de la Prefecture, and then turning westward, the view over the houses to the country, makes the most extraordinary display that I ever beheld. Full in front prominent as a mountain billow on the ocean, appears a long swelling mound of lava, coloured red in places, and which threatens in its progress to overwhelm the city, and it seems wonderful that this mighty mass should have stopped short without overwhelming the place entirely. It has, however, cooled in its passage ere touching the city, but still seems to meditate an advance; behind it higher terraces of basalt connect it with the imposing bulk of the lofty Puy de Dome, which with a cloud cresting its summit, rises to a height exceeding 8,000 feet.

Clermont is a handsome and extended city, with many good streets and places, cathedral, several churches, prefecture, hotel de ville, museum, library, botanic garden, l'hopital general, hotel Dieu, &c. So as may be imagined in the capital of a large province, it displays frequently a good deal of bustle, and as a poetical account of it I saw on a book stall says : —

"Les roues se remplissent,  
Les taureaux mugissent,  
Les fontaines jaillissent  
Du haut de nos monts."  
The streets busy crowds showing  
Where the bulls are bellowing,  
And the fountains keep flowing  
From the lofty hills round.

Bulls or oxen, it must be observed, are generally used in pairs to draw the primitive country carts or low open vehicles that bring rustic produce into Clermont, so that they are a constant feature of the scenery whether in town or country, though their movements are of the slowest. These oxen which seem patient and obedient enough, are also used for ploughing and agricultural purposes. The

Auvergnats, as they call themselves, are a quiet and civil race, and pretty well alive to their own interests, though considerably behind the advance of the age in our own country, and even in Belgium.

The cathedral is cruciform, in the pointed "Early English" style, but makes no imposing show on its exterior, the nave having never been finished, and so looks very rough and dissightly at the western end. The tower also, which is on the north side of the building, is very narrow, by no means lofty, and with a little turret at one corner, at the top of which is a single bell under a cupola, and I believe all that Clermont has to show in the campanalogical way. At the French Revolution in 1793, the cathedral had a very narrow escape from destruction, and would have been demolished had not Verdier Latour, a municipal officer, sensibly suggested that if it would be no more wanted as a place of worship, it might still be extremely useful as a place for the people to assemble in for various purposes. It was thus saved.

Short as this edifice is from the incompleteness of the nave, it is, nevertheless, very impressive within from the loftiness of the arches, and the lightness and elegance of the columns which support the vaulted roof. The triforium is in triple-pointed arcades, and the choir having four arches on either side, terminates in an apse of five narrow arches, above which is a double arcaded triforium, and lancet windows with two dim saints in each, of coloured glass. The transept has a very pleasing effect, each end having a triforium of eight continuous pointed arcades lighted by stained glass and a large circular geometrical window above, filled with rich coloured glass, though apparently modern. The aisles of the nave are double, which has a grand effect, and above the triforium are lofty decorated windows of three lights filled with modern stained glass representing various saints, very well executed. The aisle that runs round the apse at the back of the choir is a very fine feature of this cathedral, having several recesses lighted by three lofty two-light windows in each, filled with vignettes of scripture or legendary subjects in stained glass, which has a very gorgeous effect. These are all original and curious figures, but in some of the windows confusion is apparent from careless reparation, and a few of the lower portion of the lights have been broken and now remain plain. The Lady Chapel is gaudily decorated with coloured paper sides, and roof in blue and gold stars, an image of the Virgin being placed over the altar. Altogether, the painted glass here is well deserving of attentive study. Each of the recesses mentioned, which gives the eastern exterior that irregular picturesque appearance so characteristic of the Gothic style, forms a separate chapel, and the pictures in the windows, as a guide I laid hold of informed me, "represent l'histoire ou la legende du saint auquel est consacrée chaque chapelle." Many of the subjects were a puzzle to me, and no wonder, since besides John the Baptist and St. James, they commemorated the doings of aint Foy, St. Anne, St. Bonet, St. Marguerite, and St. Arthème— holy and illustrious no doubt, but my memory fails me in these haliological matters.

In the north transept is a cumbrous old clock, whose bell — the iron tongue of time — is struck every quarter of an hour in turn by three grotesque figures, said to represent Mars, Tempus, and Faunus. It appears that the clock was given to the cathedral by some fighting man during "the wars of religion," as my informant put it, and I suppose the stroke of Mars on the bell was to intimate that the soldiers of the faith must, when called upon, fight their enemies with carnal as well as spiritual weapons. Strange it is that for such a changeable thing as opinion blood must be shed, because perverse men cannot be satisfied unless they can force others to their own ideas, and so crush, if possible, that independence of thought which however trodden down, like grass in a meadow, ever rises again from the iron heel of tyranny. By this antiquated clock I several times came and sat in the quiet evening hour, while the shadows gathered round the graceful pillars of the structure, and solemnly darkened the pavement studded here and there with kneeling devotees —

"How sweet to me the hour when daylight dies"  
Within some Gothic temple's pillars old,  
And the tall windows to the evening skies  
Grow sad, and dim, and dull, and dark, and cold.

This luxury is lost to a meditative man in a Protestant country, where devotion must cease with the close of day. But in watching the penitents that in the gloom of evening enter a Catholic church – it may be blinded in some degree by superstitious feeling – I have felt inclined to envy their earnestness of purpose and faith that the Virgin or the saint, before whose image they kneel, would really pray for them in heaven, and the comfort that hope inspired in poor, weary, sin-sick, and perhaps degraded souls oppressed with the unnumbered and overpowering troubles of this mortal life. I should have no objection myself to the kind offices of dead saints rather than to the cruel mercies of living sinners, if I could have hope in their intercession and was permitted to pick out from among the noble army of martyrs a patron saint to guide my hesitating footsteps. But believing they are better employed, I can hardly ask them to do what I conceive it is my duty to do for myself – fight the good fight on my own account. But yet, let me move softly as I can by those kneeling figures, and not disturb their thoughts or their devotions; excited fervour, penitence, or obedience, has led them there to make a show of piety at the least, and if they glance at me it is with pity, believing they are nearer to heaven than I am – and I will not disturb that fond opinion by any irreverence.

While I was in Clermont I went one burning hot day that made an excursion into the country almost impossible, to the Museum, for which, however, I had to pay a fee, as it is not open to the public every day as it ought to be. The collection is a very heterogeneous one, in which pictures of no great interest, sculptures, and casts of sculptures, take up a great deal of room, and, to say the truth, none of them made an impression sufficient to rest upon my mind as an extraordinary work of artistic skill can do. There is, however, a quantity of Roman remains deserving of examination, and a case which caught my eager attention, full of those "flint instruments," as now commonly called, that from the astounding theory founded upon their dispersion in chalky gravel, has led to their becoming a subject of conversation and discussion in all intellectual society. I hate theories, and have none to offer on this vexed subject, and shall therefore only describe what fell under my notice. In France these stone knives, chisels, hatchets, or whatever they may have really been, are called *Haches Gaulois*, and it is indisputable that they were used by the old Gaulish tribes for some purpose or other, but lay unheeded for theoretic purposes until exhumed by geologists from a deposit they think of incalculable age. I carefully examined the "haches" in this Museum, which were arranged in five rows according to their size, and varied from a foot in length to only one inch, and some are very much more pointed than others. The Curator stated that these "instruments" were all obtained from the site of the old Gaulish cities at Gergovia and Couronne, the former of which was taken and destroyed by Julius Caesar; and that they were always to be met with in places which the Gauls had in ancient times inhabited. Looking at these rows of rudely ground stones, as arranged by the Curator, it seemed to me that if the larger ones had been used for mechanical or ornamental purposes, it was very unlikely that the smaller ones could have been put to any real use. I was struck, too, by the circumstance that many of the smaller stones (of various kinds, mineralogically speaking), were really perfectly natural as taken from a river or gravel bed, and had no artificial appearance at all. In fact there was a complete gradation from the largest instrument, on which a head had been carved at some time or other, down to small ones as like to a common rounded pebble seen among any gravel in the present day as could possibly be. The Curator had been himself puzzled in classifying the stones according to their size and artificial aspect, and had thrown a lot of them into a promiscuous heap as uncertain whether they were artificial or natural. Many of them were truly as shapen by nature. The finding of so many among the ruins of Gaulish settlements, really suggests to me that they were used as playthings – perhaps in some forgotten game – by the Gauls, which would account for their being thrown about in such numbers, and their getting into such strange situations. If really cherished instruments for use, greater care would have been taken of them, and the fact that many are beyond a doubt shaped by nature, shows that the Gauls selected from gravel beds pretty and curiously shaped stones, as all barbarians are fond of doing. I do not pretend fully to account for the "flint instruments" getting into gravel of presumed great antiquity, which most be left to time to unfold, but I think it more reasonable to presume that some flood or disturbance has fortuitously placed some of the supposed "hatchets" where they have been found, than to determine them as of incalculable antiquity, and used by savage

racers millions of years ago down to the Gauls of Caesar's time, when conquest routed them from their old seats, customs, and recreations, and the "old stones" – memorials of past pleasures – were used no more. (To be continued.)

**Berrow's Worcester Journal, 31 October 1863**

SCRAPS OF CONTINENTAL TRAVEL.  
By A "FAITHFUL" CORRESPONDENT.  
(SECOND SERIES.)

No. VI.

THE EXTINCT VOLCANOES OF AUVERGNE - ASCENT OF THE PUY DE DOME AND PUY  
PARIOU.

"- - - - - Get you gone,  
And at the pit of Acheron  
Meet me 'i the morning."

Shakspeare.

The part of central France through which the rivers Loire and Allier flow, before they form a junction near the city of Nevers, has been the scene of intense volcanic action in ages long past, and though the peaks that were once glowing with fiery redness amidst clouds of cinders and ashes are now covered with herbage or a dense growth of brushwood, and the craters whence flowed torrents of massive lava, are now silent, cold, and grassy, yet broken and irregular piles of basalt, and terraces of basaltic lava extend in long tongues to give features to the present landscape, leaving it a wilderness of blackened ruins where cultivation has not been able to throw a robe of verdure over the nakedness of the land. The wide vallies through which the rivers mentioned now slowly flow, are bounded by lofty calcareous banks divided into strata that are considered to have been deposited by an extensive ancient lake now dried up, while in various places in and around the site of this lake, volcanic cones have been lifted up, piles of scoriae reared, and thick beds of lava poured out at a period so remote that no record exists relating to the phenomena. There are three principal lacustrine basins, those of Auvergne, the Cantal, and Velay. Of these Sir Charles Lyell has remarked in his Principles of Geology - "These deposits appear to be the monuments of ancient lakes which may have resembled in geographical distribution some of those now existing in Switzerland, and may like them have occupied the depressions in a mountainous country, and have been each fed by one or more rivers and torrents. The country where they occur is almost entirely composed of granite and different varieties of granitic schist, with here and there a few patches of secondary strata much dislocated, and which has probably suffered a great denudation. There are also some vast piles of volcanic matter, the greater part of which is newer than the fresh-water strata, and is sometimes seen to rest upon them, whilst a small part has evidently been of contemporaneous origin."

About Cleremont many of the volcanic cones, or "puys," as they are provincially termed, rise up in an isolated, irregular manner, but the greater part of these igneous protuberances are placed upon the granitic platform that forms the fundamental rock of the country, and there extend in a remarkable and irregular ridge nearly twenty miles in length, and two in breadth. The cones are mostly truncated at their summits, after rising to a considerable height, and the craters are many of them preserved entire where the lava has issued from the base of the hill. In many cases, however, the crater is broken down on one side, the lava having flowed out in that direction. The cones are composed of loose scoriae, blocks of lava, or bombs of the same material, lapilli, and puzzuolana, with fragments of trachyte and granite. The lavas can often be traced from the crater whence they flowed to a considerable distance, where they have for a time usurped the channel of the river they have intruded upon, till the accumulated waters have in their turn forced a passage through the lava, and thus, by continued erosion, excavated a deep ravine.

The grand chain of volcanic cones and craters extends along the western horizon about seven miles from Claremont, in a line towards Mont Dore, and grandly towering above the rest, its head often hidden in clouds, is the vast trachytic mass of the Puy de Dome, more than 4,000 feet high. This at once catches the eye of every visitor to Auvergne, exciting the desire at once to explore and ascend it, and the first fine day is generally taken for that purpose. It is rather a long expedition on foot, and those to whom the fatigue of a pedestrian journey is too great, may ride to the base of the mountain, as the roads to Lyons and Mont Dore pass near its base, but the Jarvies of Clermont are rather high in their

charges, unless reduced to terms by a bargain, and are as imposing as their brethren everywhere.

The day after arriving at Clermont, my friend and myself started after breakfast to ascend the Puy de Dome, first going by omnibus to Royat, two miles from the city, which is a little watering-place for invalids who may wish to benefit by the hot springs and large range of baths there. From Royat we were told that we might easily find our way up the valley to the Puy de Dome, which we should see before us; but Royat lies in a deep ravine, and in ascending its sides from the stream we got involved among a labyrinth of vineyards and the low walls that divide them, and as usual in exploring any locality for the first time, found the directions given us imperfectly adapted to the place we had got into. A native who was on the look out for stray waifs soon spied our perplexity, and hastened to offer his services. As he seemed intelligent we thought it best to give him an engagement, and on an offer of three francs, he agreed to show us what was worth seeing in Royat, and then guide us to the summit of the Puy de Dome. He was going to work in the vineyards for only one franc, so he quickly threw down his pruning hook and was at our command – or rather he himself assumed the control of the enterprize we had in view. The fellow evidently knew what he was about, and appeared to be something of a mineralogist, for he first took us to a granite quarry, on the side of the hill, and then led us to the ravine below, where a pile of basaltic lava in immense blocks of singular shape seemed to have been suddenly arrested in its flow. This forms a grand precipitous object, almost inaccessible at top except to a very expert climber, and its upper part was covered with vegetation. Lofty trees shaded this sequestered hollow, the beauty of which was increased by sparkling rills plunging with a splashing sound from the heights above to seek the darkness and quietude of the hollow far beneath. It was beautiful and impressive, and I do not wonder that the spot should excite admiration in any visitor; but whatever any passing stranger may feel an inclination to wish for in such an inspiring spot, he need not inflict his desires upon the whole world, and bring down the ideal of poesy to the grovelling level of £. s. d. Here some booby of an Englishman has actually been at the trouble of painting upon the face of the rock in large characters his most particular wish that fate would allot him –

"An elegant sufficiency; content,  
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, love,  
Ease and alternate labour – useful life,  
Progressive wisdom," &c.

Why this beats the first Lord Lyttelton's idea of spending an age in a romantic part of Wales, "With the woman one loves, the friend of one's heart, and a good library of books." Lord Lyttelton was a poet, and could not stoop to the money part of the business, but this Englishman in Auvergne stipulates for "an elegant sufficiency" before thinking of friendship, love, or "progressive wisdom," a sufficiency being the one thing needful in his estimation, friendship and love, then following as a matter of course. This no doubt is practical philosophy, but who is to estimate the amount of this "elegant sufficiency," which if it is to include a pair of ponies and a tiger, besides "content," friendship and love, may be more easily demanded than obtained. If to be had at all on the easy terms of asking for, the advertising columns of a newspaper would seem a better medium for getting "an elegant sufficiency" than, the face of a basaltic rock in Auvergne, where the great majority of those who see the inscription do not understand it, and those who do are not likely to advance the capital necessary to make the sufficiency.

On leaving this singular mass of lava we crossed the stream, and found a wide-mouthed cavern on the other side formed in travertine which calcareous waters formerly deposited. Just within the cave a washing-place has been formed where a number of women were busily washing and beating the clothes they had to operate on, and at the very back of the cavern a copious stream that never fails pours down the face of the rock. The rock has been perforated, and a passage made which conducts the water by an open course from Royat with but little trouble or engineering to supply the wants of the people of Clermont. As the wanderer pauses here to rest a few moments, a little observant damsel pops out like a naiad from the fountain to offer a glass of the limpid element ever pure and refreshing,

especially on a hot day. On either side of the cavern the massive basalt shows itself in rude rectangular prisms, forming a bulky mass that has nearly filled up the glen, having flowed slowly down from the vicinity of the volcanic hill called Gravenoir. This is a bold eminence composed of loose red porous lava and bombs, that must have had a very peculiar appearance before its sides were planted with larches. The top still remains bare and exposed, the rocks covered with a beautiful little Saxifrage, while here and there the small red Rock Pink (*Dianthus rupestris*) expands under the influence of the sunbeams, and a yellow *Biscatella* is plentiful.

After looking at the curious Byzantine church of Royat, which has a crypt beneath the chancel entered by steps from the nave, our guide led us again across the ravine, and by a secluded rocky path among stones and murmuring rivulets we proceeded on an up hill course towards the Puy de Dome. After progressing about two miles, and mid-day being passed we began to be tired, and so paused at a hamlet called Le Fontaine, or the Source de Fontaine, whence a brook has its origin, and where there is a cluster of rustic habitations. We entered one of them, and enquired if we could have some refreshment, which the good dame of the house undertook to supply, but it was homely enough, consisting of fat rather indigestible ham, brown rye bread, and an omelet without sugar. We got also some good milk. While the ham was broiling, I looked around the spacious apartment, which was parlour, kitchen, and all, and noted down its furniture and ornaments. The floor was of stone, with a spacious fire-place and stone mantel. A long wooden table stood in the centre of the room, with a bureau on one side and tall wooden cupboards on the other. In a corner was a wooden bed, and the only other furniture consisted of rude wooden benches, a high stool, and two chairs with straw seats. The ceiling exhibited eight massive beams of timber depending from which were baskets, shoes, lanterns, twine, fee, as well as a variety of dried herbs; the usual crutch, too, was there, holding sides of bacon, and a number of fragmentary pieces of pig-meat. Then, by the fire-place were round pots, and on one side a square stone stand having a straw beehive-like jar on it containing salt – which at this elevation needs to be kept near the fire. I must add to this interior view the crackling faggot, the ham-hissing in the pan, and the good-natured woman who holds it. But the walls as yet have to be filled in or partially covered, and there characterising the country is a painted representation of an altar with a figure of "our lady" who is here called "Notre Dame D'Orival," for the kind Virgin become localized in the wildest spot where women are to be found. Poetry in some shape finds its way everywhere, and here it is tinted by superstition, for instead of the ballads of "Sweet William" and the "False Lover," always in the past ballad-loving times to be seen in English cottages, here appears a veritable portrait of the "Juif Errant" or wandering Jew, with his hawk's nose and long beard, running along as if he was never to stop ; and as the legend goes he must move on for ever. Beside this there is a wood cut daub of "Damon and Harriette", – a love-tale of course with variations, and a long string of pityful verses, which need not be read, for the tale is obvious. True lovers have got parted, and Damon appears at a convent grate an hour too late, for his true-love believing him dead has taken the vows, and there she is falling senseless into the arms of the lady abbess, while the nuns stand wondering around in their white hoods and black dresses. It is too affecting to contemplate, and the omelette and ham being now ready, I call out to my friend who is looking about for plants, and in allaying our hunger the sorrows of Damon and Harriette are forgotten.

Before leaving Le Fontaine we looked at a bed room or cow-house adjoining the kitchen – for it was both – and excavated entirely out of the lava which has spread about here, and with its pillars and roof looked very much like the crypt of a Norman church. There was a range of cattle-stalls on one side with a tethered calf, and three beds on the other against the wall. To match the calf, too, there was a baby of only three weeks old bandaged in the most primitive cradle conceivable, and looking much like an Egyptian mummy. This little interesting child so attracted my friend that he would fain have carried it off to illustrate his forthcoming lecture on the Auvergne country; and so I left him bargaining with the woman, and went on with the guide, but he followed at last without having succeeded in a conveyance of the bantling.

We now progressed with accelerated speed, the Puy de Dome rising grandly before us with no cloud on its brow, an assurance of enjoying a glorious prospect. One hillock or "mamelon" of lava, as generally called, detained us a short time, as it formed a little botanic garden crowded with the <sup>4</sup>mountain anemone, and several rare flowers, which by some strange sympathy are sure to cluster together like "friends in council" At length we got on heathy ground past all cultivation, and began the ascent of the mountain. Murray recommends a circuitous path to the left, as the most easy, but our guide counselled right on, steep as the ascent appeared to be, and though we occasionally paused to rest, there was no real difficulty to overcome, though the upper part of the cone was trying to the legs. But the ground is covered with grass and bilberry bushes, there are no loose incoherent masses of scoriae to stumble over, and only in a few places is the grey trachyte of which the puy is composed stript of its skin and made obvious. At such spots it is rather slippery, and the steam must be put on accordingly. An auberge at the base of the mountain supplies lemonade and eau de vie for those who need it, and a little of the one or the other gives efficient impulse to the steps which up-hill work necessarily tries, while exertion causes a loss of moisture that must be supplied in some way. It may be right to tell the teetotaller not to look out for springs on the ascent of the Puy de Dome, for there are none, as curiously enough the trachyte or "domite" (for the stone has received a peculiar name from mineralogists), is so porous that it retains no water on its surface, and so no springs whatever rise on its sides. This has its influence upon the vegetation, for except the *Genista pilosa* growing about the base of the puy, and the thicket of dwarf bilberry bushes, we found no plant of any interest here either in ascending or descending, and the summit was quite barren. No incident disturbed our onward course, except a passing scud of hail, the grains of which were very small, so pushing on with but few pauses, we at last gained the top.

The view of volcanic peaks from the summit we had now reached, looking either north or south, is truly astonishing, and, as marking the eruptive action of this portion of the earth's surface in past ages, more remarkable than the prospect from Vesuvius. The Puy de Dome is in the centre of numerous peaks and truncated volcanic cones, that stretch southward in a broad but irregular band for many miles, only a few being out of the line, and all rising abruptly more or less broken at the top, but mostly now covered with a clothing of grass. There are said to be seventy in the whole. Far beyond southward is an horizon of mountains, among which Mont Dore, spotted over with snow near its summit, is very conspicuous. On the east is the wide plain or Limagne of Auvergne, amidst which the widely scattered buildings of the city of Clermont are prominent, and various other towns nestled closely among foliage; and this wide tract, bounded by rising hills, was once a great fresh water lake, although its waters were at an elevation of several hundred feet higher than the present surface of the plain, as attested by the tertiary deposits exposed in numerous places. Westward appears the great volcanic elevation called the Puy de Come, which is covered with wood, and has two craters on its summit, from which lava streams have been poured out over the country as far as Ponjebeau. In this direction the view extends towards Lyons. To the north is the Little Puy de Dome, Puy Pariou, and other volcanic cones, among which the red and bare-sided Puy Chopine is very exciting to the curiosity and demands a visit.

As before observed, the Puy de Dome itself is composed of a grey trachyte, and has not a perfect crater at its top, but on the southern side of the small irregular plateau that forms it is a shallow hollow place, which perhaps indicates the remains of an ancient crater whose sides have been broken down. While enjoying the grand and exciting view from this lofty elevation, a rush of clouds came suddenly from the north-east, and for some time enveloped us in a chilling and dense fog. This, however, passed away, and the landscape became clear to the far horizon, till again the envious clouds gathered round still more dense and opaque, and, despairing of their retirement, we began to descend. The scene was now dull as a November day, indicating the unpleasantness, if not the danger, of a fog in a strange country to the wandering tourist, for as the guide and myself pressed on, our companion became invisible, and, lingering behind, we lost him. We shouted

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<sup>4</sup> Hull University Herbarium holds a specimen of this anemone collected by J. H. Thompson on 26 May 1863 bearing the locality "Near Puy de Dome, Claremont."

loud and long, but in vain, and so I felt compelled to send back the guide for fear of some accident, and the missing botanist was at last discovered in a state of perturbation, hoarse with calling, and uncertain which way to proceed. Getting out of this difficulty, we finally got out of the fog, when a splendid view opened upon us illumined by the rays of the descending sun, the limb of an iris gleaming far away above the distant mountains in the east.

There was still time for further exploration, and as the crater of Puy Pariou was only two miles ahead, I determined to advance to it, and the guide was willing to go, but my friend preferred returning to an auberge within view, whence he thought he could get back to Clermont. Quick, then, to the crater of Pariou was my order to the guide, and on we hastened over very irregular ground, one woody portion of which was ornamented by numbers of a beautiful yellow Orchis, then quite unknown to me. We had an unexpected ravine to descend, and to get up the opposite side was stiff work, and then came the ascent of Puy Pariou itself. This was more fatiguing than that of Puy de Dome, and several stoppages were necessary, so that the sun had set before I reached the lip of the crater, and looked down into its solemn concavity. Solemn it looked in the stillness of evening, though its aspect was rather that of an extensive oval amphitheatre, apparently more than a quarter of a mile in diameter, and above a hundred feet in depth. The interior is very regular and perfect, forming a complete bowl all round, so that if the lava broke out at the side, the gap has been filled up. I did not descend into it at this time, as night was rapidly coming on, but left the examination for a subsequent occasion. It is now grass-covered, though masses of scoriae are apparent lying about, and appear wherever the ground is uncovered. From the edge of the crater I took a final look into its gloomy bowl, and then rapidly descended eastward, coming at the base of the cone upon a wide extent of basaltic lava, still barren and rugged after so many centuries of exposure. In the twilight it almost assumed the horrible, especially where its hearings called "mamolons," rose up, dark and frowning, the tumuli of buried fires.

On getting into the main road, we had still nearly eight miles to walk back to Clermont, but this was rather lessened by short cuts over masses of lava in rugged ravines, over which I should certainly have had some falls but for the friendly light given by a young <sup>5</sup>May moon, which was most acceptable. What was gained in space by these cuts added, however, to the fatigue sustained, and I was glad enough, at past ten o'clock, to behold the lights of Clermont, and enter the Place de Jande as tired as I ever remember to have been after any pedestrian effort. (To be continued.)

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<sup>5</sup> It had been full moon on 24<sup>th</sup> May, only two days earlier.

**Berrow's Worcester Journal, 5 December 1863**

SCRAPS OF CONTINENTAL TRAVEL BY A "FAITHFUL" CORRESPONDENT.  
(SECOND SERIES.)

No. VII.

OBJECTS OF CURIOSITY NEAR CLERMONT - THE DAUPHIN'S CASTLE - PLATEAU OF GERGOVIA - REMARKABLE DEPOSITS OF FRESH-WATER STRATA - COMMENCEMENT OF VOLCANIC ACTION AND ITS LATENT CONTINUANCE - ADVENTURE ON THE CONE OF GREVENEIRE.

"There would I linger- then go forth again,  
And hover round that region unexplor'd."

ROGERS.

Volcanic peaks, or "puys," as they are locally termed, may be seen on every side of Clermont, but especially on the side towards the Puy de Dome do long plateaus of basaltic lava approach the city, as if to overwhelm it, but they have cooled in their progress, and thus terminate abruptly in enormous masses, ruptured, broken, and displaced, that in many spots put on the appearance of artificial barriers, or form the outlive of gigantic monsters. During the fortnight we made Clermont our headquarters, we made various expeditions into the country round, every one of which it would be too tedious to detail. One day we visited the ancient Gaulish fortress of Gergovia, and in our way ascended a singular peak of basaltic lava, called "the Dauphin's Castle," where the Dauphins of Auvergne once resided. On its craggy summit is a lofty, though dismantled tower, which, with the fortifications connected with it, must have been originally very strong before it was converted into a ruin by the order of Cardinal Richlieu, in the seventeenth century. The prospect this peak commands is very fine, and it forms a striking object from every point of view. It was a bright and lovely day when we were there, and we rested pleasantly among the ruins, leisurely contemplating the glorious landscape, where the Puy de Dome makes a grand feature in the horizon on the western side of the Limagne. On one side of the Dauphin's Castle is an exposure of basaltic columns in a slanting direction, and broken remnants of pillars and debris are scattered around. While on this volcanic mount we were delighted to perceive quite a flock of the elegant butterfly called <sup>6</sup>*Papilio Podalirius*, circling to and fro at a particular part of the hill. They flew frequently rather low, and often rested, but darted off so swiftly when disturbed, that all my friend's efforts to obtain a specimen of this butterfly, which is so very rare in England, proved entirely abortive. I saw *Papilio Podalirius* on several other occasions, but the Swallow-tailed Butterfly (*P. Machaon*), seemed the rarer of the two in France. The little hoary-leaved cruciferous plant called *Alyssum calycinum*, was very abundant on the rocks about the Dauphin's Castle.

The hill of Gergovia forms a basaltic plateau six or seven hundred feet in height, its lower part being formed of deposited white and green marls intersected by a volcanic dyke, above which are blue, white, and yellow marls, with intercalated layers of volcanic tufa, showing the hill to have been formed when volcanic action was awake in the country. These deposits of marl and tufa are more than three hundred feet in thickness, and may be examined and studied in the ravine above the village of Merdogne.

Gergovia was a city and fortress of the ancient Gauls, and here Julius Caesar attacked them, when they were governed and commanded by their brave king, Vercingétorix. The attack of Caesar was successful, and the fortress was stormed, taken, and dismantled. The surrounding fosse and ramparts may, however, still be traced, though the area is now cultivated. Napoleon III., the present Emperor of the French, who has been long engaged upon a life of the first Roman Emperor, lately visited this locality to trace the route of the great general of antiquity, and a stone obelisk has been erected to commemorate the fact, which bears this inscription: - "Le 9 Juillet, 1862, a Midi, S. M. L'Emp. Napoleon III., apres avoir visité le plateau de Gergovia, s'est reposée a cette place."

We refreshed ourselves at the same spot where the Emperor had sat, but made no memento upon the stone. The old man who was with us, on what authority I know not,

affirmed that part of the former lake of the Limagne was in existence at the time of Caesar's attack; and that he, when a boy, remembered a considerable portion of flat ground, now dry, to be then covered with water. I noticed, indeed, some very low swampy meadows towards the river Allier, that now drains the plain, and it is probable that it was only by a very slow process that the lake was dried up.

On the plateau of Gergovia a great number of curiosities in bronze, iron, and pottery have been at various times discovered, as well as those Gallic hatchets, that as "flint instruments," have lately been so worked up into theoretic use by geologists. They seem to have been extensively used by the ancient Gauls, and are so various in size as to suggest their employment for a variety of purposes, and perhaps even as talismans or playthings – for some are only an inch in length. Nor is the hill of Gergovia less interesting in a geological point of view from the breccias that appear within it, adjoining the igneous dyke, and the volcanic sand and scoriae interstratified with marls and limestone in its upper part. This shows that volcanic action was in progress when these strata were formed, and Sir Charles Lyell has expressed an opinion that "they must have been thrown down like sediment from water, and could only have resulted from igneous action, which was going on *contemporaneously* with the deposition of the lacustrine strata."

Whether the country around Clermont be considered with regard to its fresh-water deposits or volcanic productions, the statement of Delabre must be admitted as true, that "L' Auvergne est un vast cabinet d'histoire naturelle." Its fresh-water formations occupy a tract of country between two primitive parallel ranges, the Foréz and the Mont Domes, with an average breadth of twenty miles, enclosed within which are horizontal strata of sand, sandstone, white calcareous marl, clay, and limestone, which in some places are exposed to a thickness of seven hundred feet, and the entire deposits must be much greater. The green and white marls are thinly foliated, a character which arises from the innumerable plates or scales of the small animal called *Cypris*. A species of it yet exists in waters of stagnant ponds and ditches, and the little creatures reside within two small valves like those of a bivalve shell, and it moults its integuments annually, which conchiferous molluscs do not. This explains the countless myriads of the shells of *Cypris* found within the thin layers of these Auvergne marls. Lyell adduces these thin paper-like layers as "a convincing proof of the tranquility and clearness of the waters, and of the slow and gradual process by which the lake was filled up with fine mud." In a ramble taken by my friend and myself one day to the primitive little village of Couronne, which is seated under a grand ledge of basaltic rock that crests tertiary deposits several hundred feet above the plain through which the shallow river Allier winds its course, we came to a large excavated quarry of calcareous stone, a part of which exhibited a stratum several feet in thickness, composed of innumerable layers almost as thin as tissue paper, and, of course, exceedingly brittle. Between these layers some people who were at work in the quarry pointed out to us a number of the most delicate specimens of skeletons of little fishes. They were not more than an inch in length, some less, and to the naked eye looked like bits of seaweed, but, under a lens, their real character was revealed perfect and complete. We spent some time trolling in the deposited relics of the ancient lake, and carried off many beautiful specimens, but they were so fragile that mine were all broken into fragments by the time I returned home, but I believe my companion succeeded in preserving one or two of his. It was a very hot day when we mounted up to the basaltic rock of Couronne, and I was pleased enough to rest my tired limbs in the upper room of a little auberge in the odd-looking village there, and imbibe some capital and most refreshing "Lemonade Gazeuse." This, certainly, to my palate, is better than the red *Vin Ordinaire* that is imbibed by everybody, both at breakfast and dinner. The basaltic ridge here is craggy and columnar, but commands a splendid view of the valley of the Allier, with an horizon bounded by the snow-banded summits of Mont Dore. There is a cavern in the face of the precipice which it is dangerous work to scramble down to, and a visitor to the place is expected to pay a frank for the chance of breaking his neck in the adventure. I detest all underground work, and so left my friend to tempt his fate by a peep into Tartarus alone.

Among the fresh-water deposits of the Limagne is a curious limestone, called "indusial," from the cases or *indusiae* of the larvae of *Phryganea* (caddis-flies) it contains, great heaps of which have been encrusted as they lay by the travertin

that loaded the waters that were, perhaps, thermal, and converted them into hard rock. Every practical angler is well acquainted with the caddis-fly in its larva state (in some localities called a corbit), which may be seen in, or taken out of the ponds it frequents, when the tubular case it lives in will often be found covered either with little bits of sticks, or very minute shells (mostly *Planorbis*), which the insect has the power of fixing to the outside of its dwelling to give it strength or weight. The species which swarmed in the ancient lakes of Auvergne acted in a similar way, and was accustomed to attach to its case a very minute spiral univalve shell belonging to the genus *Paladina*. In one place between Clermont and Durtul, we were fortunate enough to find a considerable quantity of this curious limestone, and obtained some good specimens of it. The encrusted cases are now seen crowded together as if floated upon water for some distance under the influence of a wind into some part of the lake where the petrifying water consolidated them for ever. When it is considered that twelve or fourteen of the tubes are closely packed together within the space of a cubic inch, with above one hundred shells on each tube, and that this limestone, in some places six feet thick, has been traced over a considerable area, some idea may be formed of the enormous number of insects and molluscs which have contributed their integuments and shells to compose this singularly constructed lacustral rock.

The manner in which objects may be speedily invested by travertin, or matter held in solution by water loaded with it, is well shown in the *Fontaine de Saint-Alyre*, or *Fontaine Petrifiante*, in the Rue du Chat, at Clermont. Here is a spring rising out of volcanic tufa resting upon granite, which has deposited a considerable mass of travertine, which formerly constituted a natural bridge over the rivulet that flows near the spot called Pont de Pierre, and of which a remnant may yet be seen. The ground around and the spring itself are now occupied by an "établissement thermal," but the proprietor has taken advantage of the spring to form a manufactory of petrifications. The water of the spring is conducted over a lofty flight of stairs, on which is placed a variety of articles intended to be encrusted, as birds' nests, medallions, cups, leaves, fruits, &c, and when the investment of travertine is complete, the articles are removed to a large adjoining apartment forming a museum, where they are exhibited in glass cases, and there is always an ample collection of curiosities for sale to visitors. Even animals have thus undergone the process of incrustation, and statues have been formed, but I believe all require protection from the external atmosphere if they are to remain perfect.

It is remarkable that in the lowest deposits of the fresh-water strata of Auvergne no volcanic relics whatever appear, and, as Sir Charles Lyell says :- "No pebbles, therefore, of lava were transported into the lake - no fragments of volcanic rocks embedded in the conglomerate." But at a later period, when a considerable thickness of sandstone and marl had accumulated, eruptions broke out, lava and volcanic tufa were deposited, and at some spots they are seen to alternate with the lacustrine strata. Probably, as Lyell suggests, cold and thermal springs holding different mineral ingredients in solution, became more numerous during the successive convulsions attending this development of volcanic agency, and thus deposits of carbonate and sulphate of lime, silex, and other minerals, were produced. These minerals predominate in the upper-most strata. The subterranean movements possibly continued until they altered the relative level of the country, which caused the waters of the lakes to be carried off, and the further accumulation of regular fresh-water strata to cease.

I did not myself find any exposure of lava alternating with lacustrine marl, but in a section that appeared on the side of a new road in the vicinity of Durtul, I observed an accumulation of large black cinders and ashes, which must have been unequally distributed as they fell through the air, and which were thus arranged :-

Modern superficial soil in depth from the surface, about	5ft. 0in.
Small black cinders of variable thickness, covered with	
Black sand, one foot, or	1ft. 2in.
Larger black cinders	2ft. 6in.
Laver of sandstone	0ft. 1in.
	-----
	8ft. 9in.

Fine black sand, of undetermined thickness at base, remaining uncovered.

The layers of black cinders, both large and small, were quite loose, and as fresh in aspect as if only fallen a few days. This must have been a very late volcanic deposit, as nothing intervened between the black sand and the alluvial soil, but it can only be conjectural how long might be required to accumulate five feet of soil, or how long the cinders might lie before being covered up by the soil.

Dr. Daubeny and Sir Charles Lyell have both expressed an opinion that the Auvergne volcanoes are of such remote antiquity that they could not have been in eruption within the Historic Period, and that if any of them had been in action when Julius Caesar invaded Gaul, he must have noticed them. But I see no force in this argument alone, for if Caesar's army was not interrupted in its movements by volcanic phenomena, there was no necessity for his noticing a distant eruption in the history of a campaign. It would be absurd to infer that the Puy de Dome was not elevated as it now appears because Caesar has not noticed it, and the same reasoning applies to any volcanic outburst that was not injurious to his camp, or interfered with his supplies. Admitting Lyell's allocation of the first outburst of the Auvergne volcanoes to his "Eocene Period," they may yet have continued, though decreasing in intensity, to an epoch even later than the time of Julius Caesar. At one spot, even now, there appears a trace of latent action. This is at the Puy de Poix, or Bitumen Peak, somewhere about four or five miles east of Clermont, where sulphuretted hydrogen is still emitted, and bitumen is always flowing. This Puy, though of small elevation, is remarkable for its appearance as a low mound or tumulus, rising from the plain in an irregular manner, and having a double summit. Superficially, it looks much like a mass of brittle Malvern rock, and is very friable at the surface. Its interior is infiltrated with veins or dykes holding bitumen in a state of liquidity. I examined this puy with considerable interest, and incline to think it one of the most recent, and indicating a continuance of volcanic effort not very remote from the surface. The liquid bitumen is seen in an exposed pit on one side of the puy, but I was told that in an adjoining garden which includes a portion of the rock of which the puy is composed, the bitumen in the summer time often bursts through the ground and flows along the walks. It is rather dirty stuff to handle, and I know not what its temperature may be, but there must be a reservoir of it beneath the surface of the ground.

But I nowhere saw any cinders or volcanic ashes uncovered by soil as I had anticipated from what I had previously read of the extinct volcanoes of central France, though many of the Puys show an abundance of loose scoriae, and what have been called volcanic bombs. This is well exhibited at a little pic called Croix Mory, north-west of Puy Parioux, where the red bombs are very remarkable, entirely loose, and have quite a fresh aspect. This cone is of small elevation, and no doubt of comparatively late protrusion. The lofty hill of Gravenoire, near Royat, has also an enormous accumulation of loose volcanic masses. Scrope intimates that the scoriae, lapilli, and puzzolana of which the cone of Gravenoire consists, have an exceedingly fresh appearance; they are red, reddish-brown, and black, and are often met with in the form of bombs, tear-drops, and long ropy sticks. The puzzolana is in great request as an ingredient in the mortar of all the neighbouring edifices; it is called "gravier noir" by the natives, and hence the mountain's name. No crater is visible; probably it was destroyed during the emission of the last current of lava, which seems to have descended from the very summit of the present cone towards the north in the valley of Royat, stretching thence into the plain as far as Mountjoly and Les Roches. The interior of the bed of basalt in the valley of Royat is disclosed on each side of the vast excavation effected through it in a long course of time by the stream that flows through the ravine. This bed of basalt is 65 feet in thickness, and is divided by vertical fissures into imperfect prisms or polyhedral blocks, strongly resembling in general appearance the forms assumed by many granites. These blocks are sometimes replaced by globular concretionary masses with a concentric lamination.

I climbed up to the crest of the peak of Gravenoire from the lava bed that flows from it, and reached the broken crags that top it without much difficulty, but the descent on its most precipitous side was a very different affair. My friend had left me before the ascent was finished, and, being tired, went back to Royat.

Deceived by the ranks of larches that had been planted among the loose scoriae and bombs, I trusted myself among them, hoping to get down by the nearest route. But I found myself completely entrapped as soon as I had penetrated but a short distance among the larches. I was never in such a fix before. The larches had been planted so close, and their branches had become so intertwined, that it was with the greatest difficulty that I could force ray way amongst them, and I could see neither one way nor another. There was no path, and there seemed no outlet on any side, while the loose scoriae allowed me no footing, but kept urging me on along a steep glacis to the verge of a precipice which the dense umbrage of the trees alone prevented my falling over. Thus stumbling, sliding, pushing, holding, ducking, and calling out lustily, too, in anger and vexation at every false step I made, I struggled on till larch leaves, resin, and vegetable dust had covered me all over, and yet I remained involved in an intricate labyrinth from which I was unable to extricate myself, or see my way out of. At last I pulled out a knife from my pocket to cut down every opposing branch till something like light appeared, and then hugging the hill side, instead of pressing downwards to some dangerous break, I did at length get to the end of the trees, but agitation, perspiration, and desperation had got me into a plight that would have made some mirth had I then entered a drawing-room. But once free from the encumbering masses of trees, I quickly urged my way down the incline of the mountain, though, from the rough and loose sharp scoriae that every step I made set in motion, it was very much like the glacis of a breach where innumerable disturbed fragments have for a moment only settled at an angle of rest. There was no rest, however, for me among them, so I slid as I best could to the bottom, where there was yet a deep watery ravine to cross ere I could get into any regular path leading to Royat. From thence I had still to push on to Clermont, where I was right glad to rush up at once into my chamber at the Hotel de la Poste. (To be continued.)

Berrows Worcester Gazette, 12 December 1863

SCRAPS OF CONTINENTAL TRAVEL.  
BY A "FAITHFUL" CORRESPONDENT.  
(SECOND SERIES.)

No. VIII.

CLEREMONT TO MONT DORE - HOT SPRINGS AND BATHS THERE - EXCURSION TO THE SINGULAR PEAK OF "LE CAPUCIN" - WET WITHOUT, AND CONTINUED MELANCHOLIC WEATHER - ASCENT OF THE PIC DE SANCY.

"In old mossy groves on the breast of the mountain,  
In deep lonely glens where the waters complain;  
By the shade of the rock, by the gush of the fountain,  
I have commun'd with Nature, nor studied in vain,"

BRYANT

The very evening that we arrived at Clermont, we met two English gentlemen at the Hotel de la Poste, who were going on the next day to the Baths of Mont Dore, and they persuaded us to follow them and explore the mountainous region around those hot springs. We lost them, however, by lingering too long at Clermont, though we followed the lead they had given us. They had taken a carriage at the price forty francs, which we thought rather too much for about thirty-five miles, and, on enquiry found that a Diligence went that road on certain days, and so we fixed on our morning to start, and took the coupe to ourselves the whole distance for twenty francs, and found it pleasant enough. In fact the diligence, as is frequently the case in the rural parts of France, broke up (not down), at the little town of Laqueille, where most of the passengers stopped, and for the remainder of the distance (about 10 or 12 miles), we had a separate but smaller carriage entirely to ourselves. The route we took was by La Baraque, under the Puy de Dome, and between many lofty but extinct craters to the town of Rochefort, so called from a castle that frowns on a precipitous basaltic height - in ruins, of course. Here the Diligence stopped to change horses, and we lumped down to look about. In our way to the castle we came to a rushing stream on the outskirts of the town, running in a deep course, with excessively steep banks on one side and a wall on the other, and, looking over, on the very margin of the water, was a tuft of exquisitely beautiful flowers belonging to the <sup>7</sup>*Ranunculus aconitifolius*, which my botanical companion had never seen before. Across a bridge he quickly rushed, and to the wonder of the people thereabout, was soon over the wall and hanging to a very slender support to reach down to the plant, and I fully expected the sound of a plunge into the rapid would soon be heard. But his light weight preserved him from a topple into the stream, and he scrambled back in triumph with his floral prize. But he might have spared his impetuosity, for we afterwards found abundance of the same beautiful plant in the springy vallies about Mont Dore.

Le village de Mont-Dore les-Bains, which we did not reach till five o'clock in the afternoon, though starting from Clermont at ten o'clock, a.m., forms a square, with narrow streets extending therefrom in various directions, and consists, for the most part, of hotels, which are all filled in the summer season. This season only lasts from June 15 to September 15, and many of the hotels are not prepared for company till the opening day. We, however, found good accommodation at the Hotel de Paris, though we were a fortnight before the Baths were open. At this hotel we were pleased to find a party of English, and, to our astonishment, <sup>8</sup>a member of the Malvern Naturalist's Field Club, equally surprised at our advent in Auvergne.

There are here seven "sources minerals," varying in temperature from 15° to 42° (centigrade), and in connection with them is a large "Etablissement Thermal," which has every necessary appliance expected in such a place, whether for "les malades," who must submit to "les prescriptions impitoyables" of Docteur Bertrand, drink their warm water, and keep in hot water too, except when allowed to promenade in front of the baths for a time; or for the tourist who looks about him, takes the indispensable journey to the Pic de Sancy, with as much wine and as

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<sup>7</sup> This specimen, collected by J. H. Thompson on 5 June 1863, is to be found in the Hull University herbarium.

<sup>8</sup> Captain Serecold (see earlier).

little water as he likes, and takes his ease at his inn. I felt obliged to buy a book containing an analysis of the water, with its bicarbonates and sulphates, of which I shall say no more, except that it cures "desgastro-entéralgies simples et rhumatismales," and about fifty other disorders – say anything you like. At all events, numbers come to be cured at these warm springs, and my book says experience an "effet extraordinaire."

After breakfast next morning, my friend and myself started up the valley without any guide, to botanise in the fir forests, and ascend the singular trachytic peak called "the Capuchin," a large exposed rock, one side of which is said to present "une vague ressemblance avec un moine encapuchonné." The figure is not very much like a cowed capuchin now, whatever it once was. The valley forms delightful upland pastures, at this time bright with flowers, and watered by the rapid Dordogne on its progress to the Mediterranean. On either side, east and west, are the precipitous mountains de l'Angle, and l'Uclergue, while in front are the immense trachytic walls constituting "les pics gigantesques du Sancy," flanked by profound gorges bearing the ominous names of Gorge d'Enfer, and Chemin du Diable. So it is that to the ignorant the most sublime scenery has ever inspired terror, and the shepherd and the herdsman have, in olden days, associated deep chasms and monstrous rocks only with the power of evil in every country.

The heights on the west side of the valley are covered with a dense forest of pines, into whose shadowy depths we now penetrated, and began to ascend the steep by a winding path which soon joined several others, and we were dubious which to take. On coming to a cross road we therefore erected a trophy with pieces of rocks lying about, pointing it to the path by which we came, so that in descending we might not lose our way. This proved useful in the sequel. Having noticed the bearing of the white peak of the Capuchin ere we entered the wood, we now broke ground among the pines themselves, ascending as we did so, and botanising as we went along. Many interesting, and some previously unknown flowers, rewarded our search, and the appearance of the red-berried Elder (*Sambucus racemosa*), showed that we had got into the sub-alpine region.

The scenery of an alpine fir forest is very exciting to those familiar only with the copsy deciduous woods of England. The firs cover the ground in stately ranks, generally allowing plenty of room to walk under them, without the growth of briars and brambles so unpleasant in English woods; the fragrant resinous scent the boughs diffuse is grateful, while at intervals some patriarch of the forest is hoary with a growth of pallid wiry lichen (the *Usnea plicata*), that depends from its branches in long tresses almost to the ground. The shade and moisture of these woods is very favourable to the lichen tribe, so that the pitted Lungwort (*Sticta pulmonaria*) encrusts the trunks of the pines with a verdant covering, and the beautiful *Peltidea apthosa* clothes the banks with its sea-green investiture often studded with brown fructification. This proved a capital botanical day, and many interesting plants were gathered. Among others that we collected was the pretty many-flowered Wood-Lily (*Mayanthemum bifolium*), a delicate waxen-flowered *Pyrola*, and a beautiful tall Blue-bell, with very long shining leaves in star-like tufts, called I believe by Linnaeus *Scilla Lilio-Hyacinthus*, and which had not fallen under our observation before.

Our botanical peregrination had brought us among the broken rocks at the very base of the peak of the Capuchin, and it appeared so difficult to get up here, that we felt compelled to work our way round to the west, where the ascent is easier. The Capuchin is one of the most singular rocks that I ever beheld, and I can only compare it to an oval balloon, one side of which has collapsed and broken, forming a precipice, in the middle of which stands out the carious naked rock, fancifully thought to exhibit the semblance of a Capuchin monk, though presenting a very tempest and time-worn aspect at the present time. Having got round to the western side we had but little difficulty in reaching the top of the rock, which instead of being bare we found covered with a dense growth of the little shrub *Vaccinium uliginosum*, at this time covered with its pretty pale purple bell-like flowers. A few other rare plants also rewarded our searches here. We very carefully scanned the old Capuchin, holding by the vegetation as we looked over a precipice that would not be pleasant to fall over, and then glanced upon the prospect around, where, on the adjoining mountain, patches of snow met our view. But,

unfortunately, just at this time, the sun withdrew among clouds, vapours began to gather on all the hills around, and soon increasing and descending, they approached the peak of the Capuchin and covered it with a mist that soon condensed into drizzling rain. Unwillingly we descended from our high position, with the rain on our skirts, and it increased so fast that we determined to shelter in a herds-man's hut that we perceived not far off. But, alas, on reaching it we found the door locked, and the only available place of shelter was a low hovel tenanted by pigs. For some time we bore this, but were about, at last, to rush into the elemental uproar, when a man having charge of the cattle depastured in the vicinity came up, and though obliged to go among the mountains himself, unfastened a more capacious and lofty hovel, tenanted by a calf and a goat, where he left us to amuse ourselves as we best could. We, of course, made acquaintance with the goat, who behaved remarkably civil, especially when he found that we had got some biscuits about us, and twenty times, at intervals of three or four minutes, we looked out to see if the rain had abated. But it kept on incessantly without the glimmer of a hope, justifying a statement we afterwards saw, that at Mont Dore, the mountains are often attired in snow, rain and storms very frequent, and the temperature most variable. At last, tired out and the afternoon waning, and by no means wishing to be detained a night here we prepared for the rainy conflict, bade adieu to the goat, and rushed into the bath that was before us. The ground had become slippery, the trees drenched with moisture wetted us at every step we took, and our downward progress was most uncomfortable. We were not very certain of the way either, except that it was down-hill; but there was no use in considering further, as dripping and half-drowned appeared to be our inevitable lot. By good luck, however, we came upon our stone index made in the morning, so knew where we were and then as rapidly as the ground, now become an actual water-course, allowed, we pressed forward, and though from circumstances obliged to make a considerable detour at last got to the banks of the Dordogne torrent, crossed it, and joyfully reached our hotel, although in a very wretched plight.

Day after day proved unpropitious at Mont Dore, ten succeeding days giving us only two that were really fine, so that as the season had not commenced, and nobody was about, we had for several days rather a melancholy time. In fact, except its baths, and some Roman pillars and other relics of a supposed Pantheon, which have been piled up so as to form a trophy in the middle of the Promenade, there is nothing here to fill up time, if the traveller has not resources of his own. Thus several successive evenings in what ought to have been the bright month of June, we sat crowding over a wood fire, my friend engaged in drying his plants, while I studied maps and formed enterprises that could not be realised.

One fine day allured us to the Pic de Sancy, the highest point of central France, and this really deserved a red letter. We took a guide with us, and provisions, in case of any accident, for in going to a place for the first time there is always a chance of going wrong. It was truly a delicious morning after the rain, and everything proved propitious. About a mile up the valley, "La Grande Cascade" is seen precipitating itself over a pile of basaltic rocks, the haunt, it is said, of wolves, and the startled water then forms a troublous and wandering course through a stony desert of debris, till it reaches the river Dordogne in the valley below. We made many enquiries about wolves, for the cry of "wolf," or *le loup*, was frequently raised in our ears, and a hint given that it was dangerous to go into the woods alone. But disregarding this caution, and from old reminiscences of "Lupus et agnus," in my well-worn school Phaedrus, much wishing a conference with the animal; I looked sharp after him, though all in vain. He never once favoured me with his company. The nearest approach I made to his acquaintance was on this excursion to the Pic de Sancy, when the guide showed us the bones of a horse, which he said had been devoured by a wolf who had stolen upon him under cover of a fog. The guide said that the country people were obliged to be very careful with their sheep and cattle in foggy weather, as then it was that the wolves came from the woods, and taking advantage of the obscurity, stole quietly to the vicinity of their prey, and pounced upon it. Horses, it was stated, were invariably assailed at the tail, and if the wolf once established a hold there, in spite of the kicking and running of the horse, there the wolf kept till the unfortunate beast was tired out, and the wolf killed and devoured him. I presume this is a true tale, and I give it as related by the guide. In summer time the wolf makes himself scarce, but in the dark days and long evenings of winter he becomes daring, and at

times does considerable mischief. Of course there is a hunt after him occasionally, and it seems wonderful; that he is not altogether exterminated by unremitting attacks.

Except the last stiff climb up the peak itself, there is no great difficulty in ascending the <sup>9</sup>Pic de Sancy, but the route is interesting, and occupies on foot about three hours from the Baths. The cliffs of l'Angle that bound the view eastward present a singular appearance, having by some convulsion of nature been separated or rudely torn away from the parent mountain, and form great isolated fortress-like mounds, bare at the sides but covered with trees at the top. Further on, the pretty cascade called the Serpent, from its sinuous course, plunges into the valley among clumps of firs, and then comes a ruined forest, where only a few branchless naked and bleached fir-trees mark the spot with desolation. Now comes the toil of mounting, and hard work it really is, but to the botanist the ascent is joyful, as flowers rise before his view at every step, and these all telling of an alpine locality. I never saw such quantities of the Mountain Anemone as here covered the turfy ground, while occasionally the blue Gentian (*Gentiana Bavarica*) delighted the sight with its azure eyes, as well as the lemon-coloured Narcissus. But the most exquisite floral sight was that presented by the rose-coloured flowers of the little *Androsace camea*, which in considerable abundance adorned the crevices of the rocks of the peak itself, always exulting in its elevated position.

Nor were we less happy in the bright sunshine than the alpine flowers around us, for we threw ourselves down on the mossy turf with patches of snow covering the banks of the ravine below us, and pulling out our provision store, enjoyed refreshment and rest at the same time. Warm with exertion, I rushed to the edge of the snow, and cooled my palate with its frigidity, till warned by the guide of the imprudence of doing so. But still I plunged my hands within it, and oh, how refreshing was the touch to my hot forehead. Another effort with determined energy, and there we were on the pic, and could go no higher without mounting the stone pyramid the French trigonometricians have here placed as a monument of their labours and observations.

To describe an extensive prospect is always difficult, and more so if seen for the first time. For grandeur, I think the view from the Puy de Dome superior, but this is more extensive, and embraces not only the volcanoes between Mont Dore and Clermont, but the snow-robed mountain of the Plomb de Cantal, and its long adjacent trachytic ridges. If the air be pure and calm, as it was on this occasion, the far horizon may be distinctly seen, as well as the nearer basaltic cliffs and extinct craters of the Puys of Auvergne, the blue still waters of various lakes occupying old craters, profound vallies, hanging woods, and the picturesque situation of the villages and hamlets; but in bad stormy weather all is a vast sea of fog, with only volcanic puys rising like islets from a desolate waste, The mind, in the contemplation of such a scene, can scarcely forbear to think of other epochs in what a French writer terms "le terrible enfantment de la terre," when the landscape of Auvergne, now redolent of cultivated riches, was covered with the burning eruptions from volcanic cones, and its sky darkened with showers of cinders and ashes, or the lurid light of flames flashing among vast clouds of sulphureous smoke.

Only a short distance from the trachytic-conglomerate peak which we had climbed, is the celebrated Gorge des Enfers, or the Infernal Glen, which we had nearly lost the sight of owing to the stupidity of our guide. Having got to the summit of the mountain and drank his wine, he wanted to return forthwith; but I said, no, I must look about, upon which he coiled himself up to sleep like a dog, and abandoned us to our desires. So I proceeded along a narrow and somewhat nervous ridge, until a prospect opened upon me of rocks and precipices of the most singular form and startling character. These hemmed in a profound glen that it was both difficult and dangerous to descend to, and I was therefore content to mark the various forms of the towering and immense rocks from the safe position that I had reached. It seemed as if some earthquake had broken up the mountain, and hurled its fragments down the sides of this glen, leaving some of them in positions frightful to

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<sup>9</sup> A specimen of *Anemone alpina* from the summit of Pic de Sancy is dated 9 June 1863.

contemplate, and ready to topple down in ruinous commotion, should another movement take place. This is the infernal chasm, and it would, under circumstances of tempest and darkness, seem a fit temple for unhallowed rites. But now, with the sun shining in its glory upon it, and numerous flowers scattered on the edges of its fearful cliffs, if savage and grand, it yet now only called up admiration and wonder, and I sat down to gaze at leisure on a scene that inspired sublime thoughts. Some of the rocks display piles of basaltic curved columns, and thus assist still more in the awful associations conveyed with the name of the glen.

The whole of the ground intervening between the Pic de Sancy and the wondrous rocks of the Val d'Enfers, forms a botanic garden of alpine flowers, among which the delicate-tinted drooping bells of the Jacquinian Oxlip, so rare in England, and the blue serrated-edged petals of the exquisitely beautiful *Soldanella Clusii*, were most conspicuous. Here and there the larger yellow flowers of *Geum montanum* made a fine show, as well as other local plants appreciable by the practical botanist. Finding the spot to have such absorbing interest, I shouted to my companions, and they at length joined me, and we spent some time in collecting plants, the lengthening shadows at last urging our descent. We accordingly turned our backs on the Infernal Glen and the "Chemin du Diable," or Devil's Road, with some regret, not expecting or intending to travel that way again, and making a rapid descent among the dwarf bushes that now interfered with the direct track to the valley beneath, passed a lead mine, or rather the entrance to it, and then crossing the rushing torrent of the Dore, soon met the sister stream of the Dogne, which rises in the infernal gorge, these together forming the Dordogne, whose widening stream increased also by the waters of the grand cascade splashing among innumerable prismatic and trachytic blocks, led us back somewhat tired by an eight hour's pedestrian divarication, to the village of Mont Dore. (To be continued.)

**Berrow's Worcester Journal, 19 December 1863**

SCRAPS OF CONTINENTAL TRAVEL.  
BY A "FAITHFUL" CORRESPONDENT.  
(SECOND SERIES.)

No. IX.

AMONG THE MISTS, ROCKS, AND PINE WOODS OF MONT DORE - CURIOUS MASSES OF PRISMATIC BASALT IN THE VICINITY - HOURNEY THROUGH A BASALTIC COUNTRY TO BESSE - CRATER LAKE OF PAVIN.

"Hollow and dreary o'er the pines  
Like distant ocean, moans the blast;  
The mountains darken at the sound,  
Put on their armour, and anon,  
In panoply of clouds wrapt round.  
Their forms from sight are gone."

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

Action is the life and soul of travel, and, having it, the spirits rise with the blithesomness of mountain wind, that sweep the clouds before them over the mountain tops; but becomes a real misery when abroad upon a tour, and ready with the spur of preparation, to find the heavens ungenial, and the whole landscape cloaked in vapourous gloom while sulky clouds descend remorselessly in rain. So it was at Mont Dore for some days, the mountains hidden from view, the saddened waters themselves rushing away disgusted with the gloomy scene, and no outward objects apparent but a few sturdy Auvergnats enveloped in long cloaks grey as the dissolving vapours themselves, which, when thrown over their heads, made them appear like joyless decorticated trunks loft upon the edge of some desolate wood to rot the winter through. On the afternoon of one dreary day there did appear something like a smiling oasis in the rifted clouds, although towards sunset, and as I failed to rouse my companion I could stand inaction no longer myself, so started off in the direction of the Grand Cascade, with the intent of making a diagonal up the side of the cliffs, and so getting on the ridge above it. As Gray once wrote with regard to a drowning cat -

"Malignant Fate stood by and smil'd;"

so on the present occasion either Fate or Destiny took as grim pleasure in seeing a philosophic observer foiled in his efforts to examine the face of nature, and take advantage of a temporary lull in bad weather. The deceptive gleam allowed me to get about three parts up the face of the basaltic heights, and then looking across the valley I saw an enormous black cloud rolling along, which at once eclipsed the sun, and placed the Baths of Mont Dore below in awful shadow. On it came with a howling blast as a precursor, and I began to wish that I had not abandoned the warm hearth so hastily. Nothing like a hut or artificial shelter was near, but about a hundred yards in front the edge of the hill gave faint sustenance to two or three dwarf beech tress, which, from the exposure they had to every stormy blast, were unable to grow very high; I so, as a Scottish highlander would have done with his plaid in rough weather, they gathered their foliage about their trunks as close and stiff as possible. The storm burst in its fury as I was making for this sylvan harbour, and I had but a narrow escape from tumbling over the cliff, as the tree I came to rather projected over the edge, and the cracked rock round its base gave way at my hurried approach, fragments chasing each other down the glaxis of the steep, and soliciting my company to what geologists call a talus. Feeling the unstable earth giving way, I clung to a bough within reach, and then scrambled as close into the foliage as I could, and being to leeward of the tempest, though it thundered in wind, sleet, hail, and rain, such as I have been rarely exposed to, it was unable to do me much damage, though the cold was extreme and benumbing. But, as I have often heard -

"The fiercer the blast, the sooner 'tis past;" -

and so I maintained my leafy shelter as blast after blast burst upon the mountain, till the aerial artillery was exhausted. The detention prevented my getting on so far as I wished, and I was obliged, as the evening was coming on, to leave the black rocks above the cataract unexamined, and slip downward to the valley.

Disgusted with the miserable weather that Mont Dore had reserved for us, we at once determined to leave its watery recesses, and so sent for a man who kept horses, and made a bargain with him to convey us the next day back to Clermont. We forgot to look at the carriage, and when it came to the door of our hotel the next morning, it was clear that it belonged to the *ancien regime*, and had never been revolutionized. It was something of a cross between a handbarrow and a cart, but very narrow, with no covering, having only a close fit for two in front, and a bit of open space for luggage behind. There seemed no place for a driver, but he did somehow find a kind of bar for his accommodation in front of us. We laughed and murmured, but the man had nothing better to offer, and so, for the sake of the adventure, though foreseeing a terribly long journey when going up-hill, we at length set off. I myself soon got out, for there was a long wearisome hill to surmount, and I could walk much faster than the vehicle progressed. Mist and drizzle attended our upward progress, which was thus anything but pleasant, though, to ensure variety and interest, we had taken a route different to that by which we had entered upon the valley of the Dordogne. This route, by a deep ravine watered by the Chaneau river, proved to be a most interesting one for grand scenery, and getting at last upon level ground, we proceeded quicker. The road, after passing le Lac de Guéry, hugs the mountain side, and about nine miles from Mont Dore, a turn suddenly brings into view the magnificent rocks called La Tuillière, and La Sanadoire, both abruptly rising from a profound woody valley below the road.

The form and aspect of these grand columnar rocks so arrested my attention, that I caused the carriage to stop while I made a sketch of them, and then my friend became like myself, so enraptured with the scenery before us, than instead of proceeding on our journey, we made a new arrangement with our voiturier, and sent him back with the vehicle to say that we should return in the evening to Mont Dore. By this time the weather had improved, and the sight of these singular piles of columns at once roused all our dormant enthusiasm. These natural prisms completely cover la Roche-Sanadoire, from the base to its almost inaccessible summit, in various sizes, and of all dimensions, sometimes strait, at other times curved, or in great bundles, forming bastions, or looking like machiolated towers, and, where broken at the top, put on the appearance of artificial pavements from the closeness of the columnar structure. Hence they have received the name of the Giants' Road or Pavement ("Pavés des geans"), in like manner to the Giants' Causeway in Ireland. La Tuillière presents a completely vertical aspect, and its lofty strait columns appear as Le Coq says in his description of Auvergne, as if they had been at once elevated by a single burst from the earth to their present position. But they are nevertheless divided by transverse parallel divisions. These remarkable prismatic rocks are not formed of ordinary basalt, but of a particular variety known in France as *phonolite*. English geologists give it the name of feldspar-porphry.

In the time of our English Plantagenets, who had various duchies in France, some of their wandering bands penetrated into Auvergne, and made a marvellous strong fortress on the top of Roche Sanadoire, and their ravages in the vicinity became so unbearable that the Duke of Bourbon assembled a body of troops in 1385, and besieged the place, then commanded by Robert Conole. It was taken, at length, by assault, the captain and his officers carried prisoners to Clermont, and the castle so demolished that no remains are now visible. The impenetrable woods around these rocks are now, according to Le Coq, the retreat of a number of wolves, who have succeeded the brigands in their occupation of the ground. But the wolves kept out of our sight.

The whole distance hence to Mont Dore forms a succession of picturesque scenery, the wooded glen by the side of the road, watered by a torrent rising in Lake Guéry, being very profound, and some of the firs and beeches of singular form and great size and age. Among these woody defiles we wandered at our will, botanising as we went along, returning in the evening to our old quarters at the Hotel de Paris, where, as there happened to be no other guests, they were very glad to receive us. But it was perfectly hopeless to attempt excursionizing around Mont Dore, as the following memorandum from my notebook demonstrably proves, "June 11th. Mountains all covered with fog this morning, and a regular drizzle filling

the atmosphere, so there was no chance of a fine day. After breakfast went for a short time to the church, which is a modern imitation of the Byzantine style, common in Auvergne, and is so well adapted for modern appliances of worship when unincumbered by fixed seats, that it might aptly be employed by architects in England as a change from Gothic. The building was crowded with country people, the men mostly in blue blouses, the women generally wearing mob caps, adorned with a broad red or blue ribbon, though many had bonnets. Some of the rustics had come from a distance and brought their rough dogs, and there seemed a general respect for religion, or for religious ceremonial. But tired of the observances going on, which were of the usual glittering Romish Character, I strolled to the open space where the Roman relics of some large edifice not long since discovered, have been piled up together as a trophy of antiquity. The vapours still robed the mountains, and the rain was inflexible, so I returned to meditate sadly within doors."

In the evening, quite melancholy with the monotony of the place I seized an umbrella, defied Aquarius, and mounted into the fir forest at the base of the Capuchin - losing my way of course, and pushing through wet bushes and over rough ground strewn with the volcanic debris of past ages. Still I penetrated on into the depth of the pines, where the ground was strewn with broken branches and fallen lichens. The scene was now sombre and impressive, and I stood a little sheltered by the thick umbrage, though rain continued to fall. But the moisture brought out the lichens with fine effect, particularly *Sticta pulmonaria* covering the boles of the firs with its green rags, while several species of *Peltidea* conspicuous with their brown apothecia, either covered rotten stumps or the moist banks of the turfy ground. The older pines presented the aspect of age and sorrow - either grey branching *Ramalina* covered their rough trunks with a fleecy entanglement mixed with the lobes of lungwort, or long depending masses of pallid wiry *Usnea*, swung from the branches like tails of some animal, giving by their paleness a death-like aspect to the trees. Some of the firs had proliferous nest-like bunches of young shoots on their boughs, and these faded into brown or quite dead, had a portentous appearance in the silent gloom. I felt as in a sepulchral vault, where life and cheerfulness was shut out, and funereal objects only presented to view. Just for a moment the grey rock of the cowed Capuchin rose spectrally over the firs, lost in brooding vapours almost immediately. The gloomy forest scene quite oppressed my mind, and vain regrets, repentant thoughts, and sad forebodings came over me, shadowing both the present and future in reflecting on life's delusions; while the closing period of mortal action was pictured in the battered and lichen-oppressed aged pines rising before me. Slowly I emerged from the awful and depressing gloom - suddenly the rain had ceased, and the opposite mountain lifted its head grandly, only a passing vapour now left on its brow, and the sky showing a last sunset gleam in the west. The landscape had lightened for a moment ere the robe of night was thrown upon it, and with lessened melancholy feelings I descended the hill.

A rhyme echoed back from infantile days often recurs to my memory, which had more reality in it than many that Mr. Halliwell has collected, and is probably in use yet - under moist influences -

"Oh this rain, this rain, of this rain I'm weary,  
Walks I can go none with my little deary."

Rain is tantalizing when one does not want it, and I was weary, my friend was weary, every body at Mont Dore was weary, and nature herself seemed weary of it too, and wept accordingly! So we held a council, to which we called our old guide and voiturier, and at once arranged a journey of two days that would bring us over a considerable extent of country to Champeix, from whence we understood we could reach by Diligence the line of the Clermont Railway. This route was decided upon as enabling us to see the other side of the Pic de Sancy, many fine basaltic outbursts, and the largest of the crater lakes situated near the quaint town of Besse, which we fixed upon as the terminus of our first day's journey. We took the country carriage I have before described, which we found did very well over cross country roads, and as we were observers went fast enough for our purpose.

With the perversity of mundane things, though pleasant to find a change, the morning of departure was singularly fine and bright, and crossing the bridge by

the road to La Tour, we gradually ascended the left bank of the Dordogne, and soon looked down finally on the baths and buildings of Mont Dore. Bounding the narrow valley appeared Pic Gros and the Pic de Sancy (6,171 feet above the sea level), without a cloud on either of them, and then glancing at the grey Capuchin, and the Grand Cascade in its leap over the black basaltic rocks, we gained the high ground, and soon descended into an extensive pine forest that continues for several miles till we came in view of La Roche Vendeix. This rock is a singular heap of columnar basalt, apparently lifted up as a cone-like mass in the midst of an extensive crater-like hollow, to which there is a descent on all sides except towards the west, where the glen opens, and a small stream rising in the pine woods descends by this opening after a sinuous course into the Dordogne. A very rough descent leads from the road to it, and on the northern and eastern sides it is very precipitous, columns rising above columns to the very summit; but on the western side it has a marly and brittle aspect, having a crust that appears overbaked, somewhat like the exterior of the Ivyscar rock at Malvern, and is here easier of ascent. The precipitous basalt is closely covered with the pretty *Saxifraga aizóón*, together with some species of *Hieracium*, while *Sempervivum montanum*, not seen on the Pic de Sancy, here clusters in abundance to the very top of the rock.

Roche Vendeix has been artificially levelled at the summit, having two bosses separated by a small platform, with narrow paths conducting to it formed out of the sides of the rock. Here was "l'ancienne forteresse de Vendeix" of the middle ages, and possibly it had been a Gaulish fortification before. Froissard records the exploits of Amerigot Marcel, whom he styles "Roi des pillards," or king of robbers, who occupied this stronghold in the 14th century, from whence he pillaged the country for a long distance round, robbing everybody and defying attack. At last a strong regular force of lances and arbalétriers came against him, and he secretly went off to seek aid from the English, leaving a relative in command, who, after six weeks' siege, surrendered the castle. Amerigot had the misfortune to be betrayed by a friend in whom he confided to the Duke de Berri, and by his orders he was carried to Paris and cruelly executed. Le Coq in his "Description Pittoresque de l'Auvergne," is quite poetical on the present flowery adornment of these prismatic rocks, which, he says, once covered with soldiers, now show no traces of blood except in the red tints of the flowers "de ces jolies joubarbes" (*Sempervivum*); instead of banners there are the rosettes of the leaves of the Saxifrages with their pyramids of white flowers; and the gilded petals of the Stonecrop are bright as the solar rays that shone on the brazen helmets of the warriors.

I need not relate the incidents of the journey to Besse, as no break-down occurred, but in passing round the mountainous mass of the Pic de Sancy, some fine columnar and massive piles of basalt presented themselves, as at the little town of La Tour, which has its castled rock supported by rude columns, and at Picherande, where we rested and refreshed. The columns that rise up boldly near the little modern church at La Tour are about 50 ft. high, triangular, and horizontally divided; above is an horizontal bed of basalt, rough and irregular, with soil above that. The church roof is covered with thin polygonal basaltic slabs. The basalt extends some distance beyond La Tour, dominating on the ridges, while below on the sides of the road the grey granite shows itself for a long way. In one place which had been uncovered, an instructive boss of basalt was unveiled, showing how the basalt must have been lifted up in mamelons more or less elevated all over the country.

The road was down hill after leaving La Tour, and a pleasant country of pastures became apparent, but with terraces and outbursts of basalt in various places till we reached Picherande late in the afternoon. There is a curious church here of Romanesque architecture, with later pointed additions. It consists of a nave and side aisles divided by four round arches having very thick pillars, and an apse with two round-headed windows. The windows are all round-headed, but the side aisles are pointed, having a groined roof. On the capital of one of the exterior pillars of the apse is a grotesque carving of a little skeleton-like figure with large head standing on some non-descript quadruped, pursuing a rabbit who has jumped up into the air. Here is a riddle, which I must leave some ecclesiological symbolist to solve. From the little church-yard there is a most magnificent view

of the chain of Cantal Mountains rising beyond a wide extensive flat of unenclosed verdant meadows.

On the north side of this village is a basaltic hill covered with large blocks of basalt scattered in a state of the greatest confusion. From this wilderness-like hill is the finest view I have yet noted of the Pic de Sancy, Pic Ferrand, and the other eminences comprised under the Mont Dore range, and their sun-illumined sides with the deep shadows upon them, had a very fine effect, while the scattered basalt masses on the hill made a capital artistic foreground. Basaltic hills and outbursts continued for a considerable distance beyond Picherande; while at intervals the Pic de Sancy, Pic Ferrand, and the Tartaret came as grand boundaries impressively, terminating the view.

After leaving Picherande we went rattling down hill for some time, and then slowly up again, the day continuing lovely and bright, but not oppressively warm. Our driver having had his wine, got into a jovial mood, and indulged in several native songs made up of a patois not very intelligible, but it helped to beguile the way sounding mirthfully to the ear. Proceeding leisurely we crossed several streams by bridges, and at one place a pretty waterfall appeared of some width, but not above twenty feet high. We were now on the south side of the Pic de Sancy, which appeared to be not many miles from us, but the intervening flat was probably deceptive as to distance. We had expected before this time to have got in sight of Lake Pavin, the finest piece of water now remaining in Auvergne, and which as filling up the concavity of an old crater, we had a great curiosity to see; but the sun was getting low and yet no lake came into sight, and the orb of day disappeared while we were anxiously straining vision for a first sight of its waters. At last the lake to our astonishment intimated its existence though hidden from our view; for about half-past seven we came to a stream of water that descended an eminence on the right of the road, and our driver announced that this stream flowed out of the lake. So we at once got out of the carriage and progressed up hill towards the water we had been so long looking out for, and which is entirely concealed except from the heights around it.

The sun had set when we reached this crater-lake, which is a beautiful circular piece of water, within a large hollow probably about a mile in diameter. A roseate cloud was reflected in its calm waters, and at its farther or south side, above a dense growth of wood rises the rounded volcanic Puy de Montchalme, which has two craters on its summit, but time did not allow of our then reaching them. We went along a considerable part of the west side of the lake, which has its banks so densely wooded, that except in a few places it is difficult to descend to the water, and on the north side where basaltic rocks rise almost perpendicularly, it is impossible. So deep does the placid water repose in its hollow, that it seems as if no breeze could disturb its tranquility; but it was now gently ruffled rather as if some spring was rising within its bosom than as if any zephyr had stooped to disturb the surface. As we returned from the path we had taken on its western shore among the trees and bushes, the water of the lake became tranquil, beautifully reflecting the blue sky in its centre, as well as two white columnar clouds then towering in the heavens. But nearer the shore a black cloud gave an Acherontic hue to the water, while on the south side the dense wood was reflected darkly solemn. I climbed the cliff on the north side of the lake, and looked down upon the beautiful but quiet scene that presented itself, for twilight -

"Had in her sober livery all things clad;"

and the lake was only a bright and shining object where the cloudless sky could be reflected. The sun had long set, the sunset clouds had faded into dullness, and the woods dark in themselves were made darker still in the deep waters. Descending the steep I took a last meditative view. All was still, but the waters were yet silvery in the centre and on the north side, while even among the shadows which darkened the waters from the savage woods, islets of brightness born of the evening breeze came sailing on, and like poetical thoughts brightening a desolate mind, gave a shining relief to the silent shadowy scene, that like the sterner events of life had become realized into solemnity. If this lake, as generally believed, really occupies the site of an ancient crater, it must be one that for untold years has been cold and silent, for I perceived no late volcanic

productions around it, no black sand, cinders, or pumice, and only in fact basalt in mass, and red basaltic scoriae, the latter perhaps derivable from the undoubted crater of Puy de Montohalme above it.

Quickly descending the hill on which Lake Pavin reposes within its nest, we re-entered our carriage, and the driver rattled rapidly over a very rough and rather dangerously steep road through the deepening gloom, till dark buildings with scarcely a light among them, gave us evidence of vicinity to the little quaint town of Besse, which as it was late we did not actually enter, being finable for having no lamps, but stopped at an inn without the gate that morning showed to be the Lion d'or, and were we were glad to seek refreshment and repose, even in a lion's mouth, to whom of course we were lawful prey. (To be continued.)

**Berrow's Worcester Gazette, 26 December 1863**

SCRAPS OF CONTINENTAL TRAVEL.  
BY A "FAITHFUL" CORRESPONDENT.  
(SECOND SERIES.)  
NO. X.

OF THE SUMMARY OF THE VOLCANIC PHENOMENA PRESENTED TO VIEW IN CENTRAL FRANCE  
- BESSE, AND THE OBJECTS ABOUT IT - JOURNEY TO CHAMPEIX - FROM CLERMONT TO  
MURAT IN THE CANTAL.

- - - - - "Through many a dark and dreary vale  
They passed, and many a region dolorous,  
O'er many a frozen many a fiery Alp,  
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death."

MILTON

I hear my excellent, as well as observant friend and fellow traveller, has been lecturing in another part of the country on his tour in Auvergne, while I have been taking a narration of the same journey in these columns. As a lecture, condensing all the wonders of the scenery into one grand tableau, the subject might be rendered most impressive, but had I taken that in hand, or been called upon so to do, those little events that make up what Baron Humboldt has so well called a "personal narrative," would be necessarily, in a great degree, suppressed. In these papers I have rather extended them for the sake of that diversity and amusement that general readers, all of whom may not be scientific, naturally require and this ought to be considered by any one writing for the public. Yet, ere I drop the pen and conclude my present descriptions, it may be advantageous to glance for a moment at the interest a contemplation of the extinct volcanoes of Auvergne might inspire if discoursed upon by a Phyllis or a Lyell - or may I say by that able geologist and fearless observer who has often so ably expounded the aspect and phenomena of the old volcanic Malvern country, the Rev. W. S. Symonds, himself a honoured Worcestershire resident.

At the present time, nearly three hundred extinct volcanic pics and craters may be noted in Central France altogether, and about seventy occupying a not very broad band in Auvergne alone, thus testifying to a former mighty display of volcanic action. Around Clermont, Volvic and other towns, long terraces of frowning rough lavas studded with tumulus-like "mamelons" yet uncovered by soil or vegetation, almost, but not quite, overwhelming the present towns, demonstrate the continuation of igneous action to a comparatively late geological period - perhaps even to historical times. The craters are, indeed, silent and grass-grown, but the heaps of red scoriae that appear at various heights remain all loose and incoherent as if for a long period they had retained heat within them, preventing every effort of vegetation to take hold upon them, or that there had not been time for soil to accumulate. But, in lower spots, excavations disclose beds of cinders of various sizes, and quantities of black unconsolidated sand, marking what had once loaded the lurid sky when thrown high into air ere falling to cover and conceal what were green and flowery dales. Freshwater tertiary strata now showing alternating beds to a height of five hundred feet, or more, prove long continued depositions of silt and mud, and in these strata, often as thin as leaves of paper, delicate skeletons of fishes are found, as well as countless shells and relics of aquatic insects.

A great lake, then, it is evident, anciently extended itself, which has become in time silted and dried up, but was once filled with life, having animals now unknown sporting on its banks or in its waters, and at a time, we may well feel assured, when the human race was unknown on the earth. Here was beauty and tranquility long before the volcanoes poured destruction on the scene - a vast calm and spreading silvery lake, with gray granite hills of moderate height environing it round as a diamond with a fair border of turquoise stones, pure and ungazed upon by human beings. Slowly and quietly through drowsy centuries the lake dropped the silt to the bottom of its bed, gradually shallowing. Then there came on a time of commotion from the bowels of the agitated earth, that heaved violently with the agitated throes casting up volcanic peaks and bosses of trachyte almost as Milton has depicted the rise of the primitive hills': -

"Immediately the mountains huge appear  
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave  
Into the clouds, their tops ascend the sky."

Thus, and probably with cataclysmic uproar, was the Plomb de Cantal, the Pic de Sancy, with its kindred rocks, and the majestic Puy de Dome elevated, as they now appear in the snowy region of the atmosphere. But if not at one upheaval, the movements, together with the rise of the various volcanic puys, continued going on for an undetermined time, and while this lasted, what a scene of terrific grandeur must have been displayed. The strata deposited by the lake must have been uplifted, and the troubled waters unable to remain in their bed drained off, and enormous piles of basaltic lava were poured over the now abandoned bed of the lake, while serrated masses of uplifted basalt chrystallized in the singular regular-sided columns, straight or curved, that now in various situations tower in air, like palaces, or frowning bastions reared by giants. How abounding is such a prospect in the most vivid interest and what a history of Nature's own romance all this is, and requiring no poetical touches of imagination to enhance the majesty of its reality. The composition of the trachyte and basalt at different points, the solid or porous nature of the lavas according to the gravity that has solidified them beneath, or left them in bubbled scoriae when exposed to air, as well as the course taken by such slowly moving masses, and their points of arrest, offer abundant scope for observation and remark. The height and vast bulk of some of the cones of eruption – the Puy de Dome for instance – and the depth of their craters, with the streams of lava traceable from them, suggest volcanic action on the grandest scale for a long continued period. Lyell has well remarked, that long existent as the conical volcanic hills of Auvergne and Velay have been, their forms are often very perfect. "Some, however, have been compared to the mere skeletons of volcanoes, the rains and torrents having washed their sides, and removed all the loose sand and scoria, leaving only the harder and more solid materials. By this erosion and by earthquakes, their internal structure has occasionally been laid open to view, in fissures and ravines; and we then behold not only many successive beds and masses of porous lava, sand, and scoriae, but also perpendicular walls, dikes, as they are called, of volcanic rock, which have burst through the other materials. Such dikes are also observed in the structure of Vesuvius, Etna, and other active volcanoes. They have been formed by the pouring of melted matter, whether from above or below, into open fissures, and they commonly traverse deposits of *volcanic tuff*, a substance produced by the showering down from the air, or incumbent waters of sand and cinders, first shot up from the interior of the earth by the explosion of volcanic gases." But I can developpe this indication no further at present, and like the showers of volcanic sand thrown up in air that of necessity soon retrograde from their aerial height, so it becomes my journalising pen to exchange the cosmical sublime for the common incidents of tourist life, and almost for the ridiculous in resuming the incidents of my journey.

The first evening on leaving Mont Dore placed us, as before stated, at the little town of Basse, and within the hostelry of the Lion d'or, or Golden Lion – meaning perhaps that gold, if possible, is exacted there. We had at any rate to pay gold for our accommodation, which was but indifferent. We here experienced what is the case in all the lesser towns of France, the difficulty of getting a good cup of tea, and the impossibility of obtaining it at the time wanted. The French do not at all understand tea-drinking; it is not to their taste, and they will only let strangers have it they think it ought to be had. Tea at an English hotel, with the accompaniment of a broiled fowl, mutton-chops, or even a cold joint is enjoyable, and is understood, if ordered; but in France they will not comprehend, and the never-failing soup must be swallowed, with various other nondescripts, before the tea itself comes – with slop basins to pour it in – and then there is a bill for "souper" and "thé," as two distinct items, although the tea under any circumstances is but wretched stuff. At one place in the Cantal, having previously had dinner, I did contrive to get a basin of tea without soup, but on asking for something to eat with the tea, a fruit-pie was produced. In good truth, however, this pie was the best that came under palatable review while I was in France.

Up early the following morning to inspect the town of Besse, which is the very dirtiest I ever sojourned in, the houses old and dingy, and the streets very

narrow. There is a little roundabout square or place d'armes in the centre of the town with two or three fountains of a wretched character, yet with water coming from them sufficient to cleanse the streets, if there was any disposition to do so. The place was formerly fortified, and one of the entrance gates yet remains, with some machiolated walls, forming parts of modern houses at present. There are also relics of an old stine mansion, having a fine geometrical staircase with groined roof, but the doors from it now opening on rooms of squalid wretchedness, though here Margaret, the first wife of Henry IV., at one time resided. The church is a curious and ancient cruciform Byzantine pile, having a domed tower in the centre, with round-headed windows above the circular arches that support it; but the presbytery has been Gothicised in early times, having pointed arches built upon the rounded pillars. The presbytery, as well as the nave, has side aisles, and is vaulted with stone, and beyond the altar is a recess forming a lady chapel. Here, over the altar, is placed what to my profane eyes appeared to be a little, dumpty, ugly, black-faced doll, covered with an embroidered robe, and holding in her arms a little black-faced infant, both wearing crowns on their heads glittering like silver. Early as it was in the morning, many women came to kneel and pray before this image, and my curiosity thus excited respecting it, I made enquiries, and found that there was something miraculous attached to it, which caused me to look again more reverently at the figure. "The story goes" that this said image was found under remarkable circumstances by a peasant of Vassivières, a little village among the mountains, where it was placed in a chapel to which pilgrims resorted to be cured of various diseases. The fame of "Notre dame de Vassivières," as it was named, quickly spread, and the inhabitants of Besse put in a claim for the Virgin, and carried her off, but the same evening she returned through the air, "without hands," to Vassivières, to the grief and consternation of the inhabitants of Besse. A feud now arose for the possession of the image, and after some quarrelling, it was determined (according to an authority I met with), that each place should possess in turn, three months at a time, and it is greeted with fetes and processions while at either side of places where it sojourns. These black-faced Virgins of Catholic churches are, I presume, symbolical, but they have a very queer look. In the window of this Virgin chapel is a view of Vassivières, to remind the Bessys of Besse that "notre dame" prefers the former mountainous spot, and is only here as a favour.

This queer little town is seated on an eminence, and a deep ravine, called the Valley of Besse, comes up beside it, and extends some distance beyond it, watered by the stream that has one of its sources in Lac Pavin. Having extricated ourselves from the Lion, or rather lioness, for it was a *femme de charge* who victimised us on this occasion, we started on our route for Clermont. Scarcely anything can exceed the grandeur of the volcanic scene a short I distance on the road towards St. Diéry. A long terrific ridge I of basalt rises on the north, forming inaccessible precipices crowned with columns, probably reaching an altitude of 600 feet, and on the opposite side of the valley is a terrace of rough lava, beyond which towers a lofty pic covered with wood that looks like some great fortification. The profound valley on the right has its width lessened by the intrusion of lava, and in one place where a lava stream has suddenly stopped from its solidity and cooled, the perpendicular wall exhibits a grand mass of columns, which, from their remarkable figure and isolation, bear the name of "the Organ of Besse," and the part it once played is here irrevocably scored down. Further on, this stream of lava (derived, probably, from the great pic before noticed), assumes a very black and barren aspect, and is but slightly cultivated. Higher upon the right, after proceeding some distance, a vast mass of red lava appears, which seems as if it had suddenly consolidated, and forms a conspicuous precipice in whose face numerous habitations have at some time been hollowed out, having the appearance of square caverns, but whether now inhabited, I was unable to ascertain. Farther on, the lava is exposed to view in some bare fissured places looking vividly red. On every side volcanic effects present themselves on a grand scale, and some distance farther, on the left, several singularly narrow glens open into and among the lava beds offering a horribly barren and desolate appearance. It is hardly possible to believe but that some of these eruptive beds are of a later period than geologists generally imagine. Although the lava occupies the heights, and thus appears to be very thick, yet, wherever the rock is exposed, trachyte appears below, thus showing the superior antiquity of the latter.

We took a last view of the snowy rocks of the Pic de Sancy, and the puys near it, and then commenced a rapid descent from the table land we had been on towards the plains below. The basalt, trachyte, and the grey granite were soon lost sight of, and we kept going down till we came to the white tertiary deposits. Corn-fields and cultivation now came into view, instead of wild waste boggy places covered with globe flowers, or flossy cotton-grass; and the fields of corn showed on their sides abundance of the purple Venus's Looking-glass, the blue Corn-flower, and the Cockle. Ere we quite left the lava beds, the valley appeared very much narrowed, and the little stream that gurgled through it had scarcely room to flow, and was probably quite burned up and overwhelmed in olden times. At last, rapidly descending from the basaltic heights, leaving on our right a lofty little town, with its ruined chateau, we progressed on down the valley, where a tributary of the river Allier rattled gaily along, rejoicing to get among trees and civilisation, and we accompanied it to the town of Champeix, where we slopped.

We had to stay three hours in the town, and the change was great from the stormy climate of Mont Dore. Here it was most oppressively hot, and to walk about was almost unbearable. Though it was market-day, and some traffic going on, there was really but little worth observing, except the trachyte rocks which environed the place, and which on one side rise up precipitously, crowned by a little turreted-kind of citadel or possibly convent, bearing on its top a conspicuous bell-turret. Till the diligence was ready to start that conveyed us to Veyre, on the line of rail to Clermont, I looked about the town and market, while my friend got into a school, where he found some nuns busy with the young idea, and he had an idea that he could impress them with truths that it would be to their advantage to know. On this point there was a difference of opinion, and I believe his attempts on the nuns came to nothing. We got back to Clermont again in the evening.

After a few days' rest, drying plants, studying the numerous stained glass windows in the cathedral, &c., on looking I over Scrope's elaborate account of the volcanoes of central France, we felt dissatisfied that we had not penetrated into the Cantal, where the display of basaltic columns is very imposing, and, therefore, determined to proceed there. The rail took us to Massiac, where it terminates at present, and thence to Murat we took the diligence, which really, with six horses, three abreast, or with three and two, carried us "summa diligentia" to the town of Murat with a speed that I could have had no idea of. Nearly the whole distance from Massiac to Murat is on the side of a narrow valley, whose lofty hills on the opposite side of a small rushing river rise to the clouds with a fine effect, and the scenery has quite a Welch character comparable to that of Pont Aberglasslyn, but continues for many miles, the hills very irregular and covered with wood. Murat is situated in a hollow that gradually rises upwards to the basaltic rock that dominates above it westward, while on the opposite side is the singular volcanic mass of Bredon topped with an old irregular church of transition architecture. We took our first ramble to Bredon, and the volcanic rock is here soft enough for perforation, and has many habitations formed in it. We examined some of them, having only a door and a single window, but with various conveniences inside. A bed was in one that we looked into, with fire-place, various shelves, &c. The roof was the lava rock, and the man who occupied it said characteristically that it would keep out four days' rain, but not fourteen. In another rock dwelling, a cow-house and the kitchen were under the same roof, and of equal dimensions, the latter having two beds, or rather bed-boxes, both on the same line with each other against the wall, and closed up with wooden shutters, except a narrow entrance over which a curtain could be drawn. The church, from its height and small windows, with central tower rising but little higher than the roof, rather resembles a fortress at a little distance, but is of transition date, exhibiting early pointed arches on round clustered pillars, and very plain capitals. The pillars of the choir are round, and the entrance to the church is round-headed, with a remarkable, but battered head in the centre.

The rock of Murat behind the town is very precipitous, and rather difficult of ascent, displaying on its face a range of slender, regular, and very lofty basaltic columns, a portion of which radiate on either side in a most singular and beautiful manner, like a Gothic roof rising from its supporting columns. The rook of Le Chastle, about four miles west of Murat, is still more remarkable. This last

is an abrupt and irregular mass of basalt columnar almost throughout, the prisms all in disorder on the summit, in some places on the declivity stretching out nearly horizontal, but jammed and crushed together. On the east side of Le Chastle the columnar structure is most wonderfully shown, the columns leaning in various ways, pressed closely together, and broken off at the base. I descended this side with some difficulty, a talus of broken prisms covering the ground like the ruins of some battered down fortress. Gazing from this craggy mass of basalt westward, evidences of past volcanic action still appear as far as the eye can take in the view. A long basaltic ridge, with a steep precipitous face, is very evident, having a wilderness of ruin at its base, and further to the south a huge broad and bare cone occupied the horizon, from which a mighty lava stream – once smoking like

- - - - - " Fierce Phlegethon,  
Whose flames of torrent fire inflame with rage" -

has rushed forth and half filled up the valley below, over whose scattered debris a foaming stream has some difficulty to force its way, but still ploughing deeper into the ravine when reinforced by winter floods. Eastward is the great rock of Murat, beyond which is the tabular lava mass on which the old church of Bredon is perched.

Though the Celtic tribes that in early times, colonized Auvergne had perhaps little notion of the igneous power that had elevated these frowning piles of basalt, they yet regarded them with wonder and respect, and to these lofty altars they resorted to perform those rites of worship which have made "high places" ever revered as connected with superstitious observances, which perhaps rendered it necessary when paganism was exchanged for an imperfect Christianity, that the spots honoured of old, as dedicated to the worship of grim idols, should be retained as accustomed places of worship if with another consecration. Here is a lone chapel on this crag, although the dwellings of visiting worshipers are far away, and in this and other cases, doubtless a Christian structure was raised to turn the current of men's feelings from the old idolatry, while the locality known to memory and tradition was unchanged. Or, if not a mount of worship, the basaltic ejection became a fastness garrisoned by the armed retainers of some savage chieftain quarrelling with all his neighbours, plundering them whenever he could, and only prepared to unite with other occupiers of similar forts when the invasion of their country by a common enemy tendered it necessary. (To be continued.)

The National Newspaper Archive does not hold Berrow's Worcester Journal for 1864

Which is a shame ...