

G. M. D.

Clermont Ferrand
Dept. Puy de Dôme, France
June 26. 1882

My dear Father,

I have been here now several days & propose leaving for Le Puy or St Etienne day after tomorrow. This is a town of over 40,000 inhabitants but a very old fashioned sort of place. Most of the streets are crooked, steep & dirty & bordered by houses which seem to have stood much as at present since the middle ages. It is the largest place in the Auvergne district & a sort of Centre from which excursions can be made. I have not yet however been able to find out exactly where the limits of the Auvergne region are, for what

long since here been so called is all
 split up into departments, & the
 name Anversue nowhere appears on
 the map. I was at the Summit of the
 Puy de Dôme yesterday in a fog, but
 there were good views on the way up.
 You go from here to the base ^{of the actual} _{cone}, about
 ten miles, in a carriage, & then to
 the top (in about an hour) either on
 foot or in a two wheeled vehicle
 drawn by two mules in tandem
 rig. The geology of the district about
 here is very interesting, & the
 newest lava flows still remain
 quite rough & unchanged, though
 overgrown with vegetation. Two
 days ago I visited some lead
 mines & smelting works at

a place called Pont Gibaut, a
 most romantic little valley. A
 lava stream has there flowed down
 the old valley, & the river has cut
 out a new bed to one side yet
 something like this -

The rocks below are



Jurassic & schistose, & below the
 basalt is the pebble bed of the old
 stream. There are several thermal
 establishments & numerous
 mineral springs through this
 country, some of which are fashionable
 resorts, but frequented chiefly
 by French people. One of these,
 Royat, is only about two miles
 from Clermont, of which it was

in fact almost be counted a
 suburb. There are quite a number of
 grand hotels, with pretty gardens &
 bathing arrangements. The weather has
 not yet, however, been hot enough to
 bring many people here, & the season
 can scarcely be said to have begun.
 Everywhere Roman remains abound.
 At Royat some baths in very good
 preservation have been excavated. On
 the summit of the Puy de Dore are
 the ruins of an extensive temple of
 Mercury. They were uncovered at
 the time of the erection of the Astronomical
 Observatory now established there.
 The mountains are glorious, not
 very high, but the country is rough
 enough to be very picturesque

The slopes are all well cultivated up to a certain height. Covered with vineyards & little fields, which are sometimes walled or hedged, but more usually quite open. Narrow paths & lanes wind everywhere. The people out of the towns are exceedingly primitive. The women sit out in the fields as they do in Switzerland watching their Cattle, sheep & goats, & spinning or knitting. They speak a nearly unintelligible patois, are frequently affected by goitre, shrivel up at an early age into most interesting specimens, wear immense Sabots, & have all the other picturesque traits of an undomesticated, unhealthy, ignorant & very religious peasantry.

I have not heard from home
for some time, but hope to find some
letters at Le Puy, where I asked
Arthur Crow to forward any which
might arrive up to a certain date.

With love to all

Your affectionate Son

George

P.S. I purchased a collection of
250 small specimens of rocks &
minerals of the Auvergne district, from
a collector here, paying 62 francs for it.
This is at the rate of 25 Centimes per
specimen which I find much cheaper &
better than buying them up for ones self.
The same collection, but composed of
large specimens (about the size of those of
rocks in Sw. Survey Collection) may be
procured at the rate of 50 Centimes per
specimen.