

parallel to and near the Aveyron valley ranging southwards from the town of Villefranche. The first and second of the above tracts of country may be regarded as parts of the same range, and are singularly rich in mineral veins, often of large dimensions, some containing marked indications of argentiferous galena, others certainly rich for copper near the surface. This latter metal appears to have been obtained formerly in large quantities.

The condition of the minerals obtained from some of the mines of this group suggested to me the desirability of testing it for gold by Berdan's machine, and I lately obtained from about ninety pounds of a mixed copper and lead ore from Pichiguet a result exceedingly striking, the yield being,—lead, 25 per cent.; copper, 18 per cent.; silver, 27 oz. to the ton of ore, and gold $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. 14 dwts. also to the ton of ore.

The lodes in this part of the mineral field range chiefly north-west and south-east, or within a few points of those bearings, but there are important north and south veins containing much ore. In a number of places there is every indication of lodes having been formerly worked on a very large scale, many of the lodes show strong irony gossans, and the veinstone is usually quartz, the enclosing country being gneiss or gneissic granite. It seems not unlikely that the lead ores may occur chiefly in north and south lodes, while the copper is usually abundant in those having a more east and west range. As a general remark applying to most of the lodes on the west side of the district, I may say that the schists are usually decomposed near contact with ores, that there are numerous quartz threads tinted green and yellow, and a vast quantity of quartz in various states over the whole tract; that the quartz becomes more cellular and promising towards Najac on the south, and Figeac on the north, but especially the former, and that the granite occasionally changes its character, containing small crystals of hornblende. The quartz near the surface I observed to be constantly discoloured with phosphate of lead, frequently forming incrustations.

On the whole, there are unmistakeable proofs of the existence of great mineral wealth in the district now under consideration, and it requires only the application of a small amount of capital to secure very large results. Some few of the veins are already opened, and some no doubt have been partly exhausted, at least near the surface, but there still remains an ample supply



of ore for any one who will search for it with caution and prudence, provided there are the necessary means to carry on mining operations properly and to a sufficient extent, without demanding an immediate return.

There is no appearance of these mines having been stopped from want of water. The alteration of habits, the abstraction of the inhabitants of the valleys during the long and destructive wars of religion in the sixteenth century, and the absence of capital in the district to work the mines on a fit scale, are reasons amply sufficient to account for the cessation of mining work. During the middle ages, it appears, from documentary evidence, that the supply of silver obtained from the district was enough to justify the establishment of a mint in the town of Villefranche, but the introduction of the precious metals in large quantities after the discovery of America appears to have checked and ultimately destroyed this branch of profitable employment for the mining population. It is, however, interesting to observe that in the charter or letters-patent granted, bearing date December 1371, and confirmed by a royal edict dated 7th September 1373, the reason given for granting certain privileges to the town of Villefranche (including that of coining money) is the existence of mines of copper and silver discovered in the neighbourhood; whilst about sixty years later, in 1431, when other local mints were suppressed, that of Villefranche was retained, "en considération des mines d'argent qui estoient aux environs de la ville, et du profit qu'on tiroit du travail d'icelles." The last person who appears to have worked mines in the district was the last Baron de Savignhac, a Huguenot, who was killed, with a large number of his adherents, in the court-yard of his castle, near Villefranche, on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and soon after the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Another rich mineral field is known to exist near the towns of St. Afrique and Milhau on the banks of the Tarn. Here also are ancient workings, and numerous indications of rich and valuable lodes.

Among other curious proofs of the former existence of profitable mining establishments, there is, on the banks of the Tarn, near the small town of St. Rome de Tarn, a small village called *Le Minier*, close to a very remarkable lode which has evidently been opened and extensively worked. The houses of this village,

now occupied by the poorest class of peasants, are built in a style of architecture not known in the district, and with an amount of decoration in carving and other detail indicative of much taste and some wealth. On the capital of a small elegant fluted column, now used as part of a window-frame, I observed the date 1077, with an inscription, and there is good documentary proof that this and adjacent villages have once been of some importance in the district.

Between Le Minier and the pretty and flourishing town of Milhau, on the right bank of the Tarn, are numerous lodes, some of unmistakable value and immediately available, others formerly worked and neglected, besides indications of many others not yet proved. On the left bank of the river, in the jurassic limestone, there are also veins opened, which would probably prove valuable if properly worked.

The rocks at and near the village of Le Minier, and the small gorge there opening out from the Tarn valley, are in a high degree picturesque. Blocks of a remarkably hard compact conglomerate are picked up in the bed of the little stream, and similar blocks have been formerly employed in grinding and pounding the ore. Veins of jaspery quartz are seen *in situ* close to the village, and a little above a dark blood-red porphyry appears to abound. Reports of native mercury having been discovered are current in the neighbourhood, and the close resemblance of some of the boulders I saw with the porphyritic rocks containing that metal at Obermoschel, in the Palatinate of Bavaria, near the town of Bingen on the Rhine, is a fact sufficiently significant to justify some search for cinnabar.

Perhaps the most remarkable and interesting of all the lodes in this neighbourhood is that of Galés; it is reached from the village of Peyre (where there are also veins) on the right bank of the Tarn, a few miles below Milhau. Crossing at this point a hill of considerable elevation which runs parallel to the course of the stream, we see from the crest of this hill another parallel to it, rising almost immediately, with the intervention only of a narrow valley, through which runs the 'Ruisseau des Lavadous.' Standing immediately opposite, the edges of the harder beds of the oolitic rock project in a bold escarpment beyond the surface, and exhibit in a striking manner a system of disturbances connected with a small axis of elevation bearing nearly north and

south, and running directly into the hill. The disturbances, although less marked, exist also on the face of the hill from which we look, and probably die away towards the river. Northwards they extend for about a mile, and are then also apparently terminated by another hill. Exactly in the axis of elevation, where the rocks have been broken and split up and a kind of chasm formed, the hollow thus produced has been filled by a white vein-stone, which on further examination proves to be a mixture of quartz and barytes, highly crystalline, and loaded with large quantities of blende and argentiferous galena. The top of the hill has been partly worked for ore on the crop of the lode for a long distance; but on opening from the side towards the Tarn, no remains were found of ancient workings, and operations have been carried on to some extent in three levels at a considerable height above the stream. In each of these the lode was at once discovered, and was found to be of large size, in excellent condition and full of ore. The direction of the lode is north and south, and it underlies a little to the west.

At the section of the same lode laid open on the hill-side, numerous indications of copper exist, but few of these appearances are justified by the present workings. The blende is abundant, but the great mass of the metalliferous portion is good argentiferous galena, and some hundreds of tons of rough ore are lying at grass, the value of which, when dressed, would be considerable; but nothing has been done here, in recent times, towards making use of the minerals extracted. There is a remarkable tendency to spheroidal crystallization in the ores of this mine. The magnitude of the lode is very considerable, but irregular, and the whole of the adjacent rock abounds with innumerable threads and small leaders of quartz and sulphate of barytes. Where exposed, the actual lode is about three feet wide, but the quartz threads extend for two or three yards on each side, and sometimes much more. They are generally complicated and follow no regular law. The workings on the lode appear to show a bearing somewhat west of north. The central line of elevation, as indicated by the position and axis of the intersected dome, is to the west of the lode, but not many yards. The ore exists in columnar portions, and the heap of stuff brought out from the lower level was better in appearance than that obtained from the upper part and the crop. The galena is

said not to be very rich in silver, but the specimens should be carefully tried for gold as well as silver*.

Passing on to the top of the hill above the upper level of Galés—a vertical rise of at least 200 to 300 feet—the lode is easily traced by a line of excavations made by the old people, and is clearly seen to bear at first towards north, but afterwards more west.

The soil, and the whole country immediately adjacent, is coloured by iron, having everywhere a deep red tint. The ground is cultivated towards the east to some extent, but presents on the whole a narrow plateau, over most parts of which the naked rock is exposed. The same is the case as far as the next ridge, after which limestone beds become more regular and the New Red sandstone deposits appear at the surface. In a position rather closely corresponding with the continuation of the direction of this lode, but without any visible connection, old works have been traced on the hill next beyond, but I am more inclined to attribute these to the existence of a cross-course containing good ore which has been opened on the road-side. There is certainly a considerable fault here, for the beds cropping out in the next hill are limestones, much higher in the series than the sands in contact with them. The former rocks are nearly horizontal, but the sands dip into the hill.

I noticed many other valuable lodes while traversing the hills and crossing the country in various directions, but as I do not wish to make this chapter a mining report, I will spare the reader further details.

On the whole, I have rarely seen a district more deserving the minute attention of the practical geologist and miner. It abounds with matters not only locally important, but highly suggestive in reference to the theory of mineral veins †.

* This was written before the present excitement on the subject of gold had even commenced. I am more than ever inclined now to advise that this suggestion be acted upon.

† A good deal has been written at various times on the subject of the Aveyron mines, and a detailed account of some of the veins was some time ago drawn up by M. Fournet. Within the last year also a memoir on the same subject appears in the *Annales des Mines*, the author being Monsieur Ad. Boisse, director of the mines of Carmaux. The account given in the text is the result of my own observations in the district, and does not, perhaps, in all respects run parallel to the descriptions referred to, since the

§ 3. THE LIMESTONE PLATEAU.

Overlying the granite, gneiss and other crystalline rocks, and the whole series of carboniferous and triassic deposits, the edge of the wide tract above described and a large district east and west of its southern portion are covered up by a vast capping of limestone of the jurassic period, locally called the *Pays de Causse*, but distinguished more conveniently as the limestone plateau. Forming part of this group of deposits, which are nearly horizontal over a great part of the range, are the iron ores of Mondaluzac already alluded to. The limestone is crystalline or semicrystalline, and very hard; deeply intersected by narrow valleys; and though really without lofty projecting peaks, it has all the appearance of a mountain country to the traveller in the valley or along the high-road. It contains some scenery extremely remarkable for its peculiar and picturesque character. It possesses a special fauna and flora, being the largest continuous tract of nearly pure calcareous rock at a very high level to be found in this part of Europe; and it is in some respects more like the high table-land of the interior of Spain, than the corresponding oolitic plateau of Bavaria, or the tertiary limestones of Carinthia. I have been across the district in several directions and on more than one visit to Southern France, and have lingered in some of the valleys, examining carefully their nature and peculiarities. I will try to give a brief account of the points most worthy of notice.

The rocks here belong to the middle part of the secondary series, and chiefly to the lower part of that series. They are almost entirely limestones,—of considerable thickness and in

tendency of the French mining engineers of the present day is to view all the phenomena of mineral veins in connexion with certain theoretical views of their origin, little appreciated by English miners.

The theory of approximate parallelism of contemporaneous veins, suggested by Monsieur Elie de Beaumont, however ingenious and apparently applicable in many cases, does not seem to me calculated to give real assistance to the mining engineer. The formation and filling up of mineral veins depends on too many local causes to be anticipated without minute inspection in each particular case, whilst the value of the mineral contents cannot be decided, even if their existence is proved, by reference to any view that may be taken of the date of the crevice originally made in the rock, or system of rocks disturbed.

the most magnificent development,—raised by mechanical force from great depths, long after the rocks were consolidated and altered; lifted up in all likelihood slowly and gradually, but cracked and widely fissured during this upheaval. Every important valley, if not every gorge, seems to have been originated by the contraction that took place when the mud, of which they were formed at the bottom of some ocean, first became a compact dry rock, and when, in consequence of drying and thus parting with a large part of its volume, it came to occupy a smaller space, and while shrinking assumed a peculiar series of forms, strictly depending on the action of forces of a chemical nature, not unlike those which determine the construction and texture of crystals.

This great limestone plateau of France occupies several hundreds of square miles, and is a part of a vast calcareous deposit, which in the Alps has been affected by elevations of the first order so far as Europe is concerned, but which elsewhere in Europe has been left comparatively untouched, except by the infinitely slower and smaller upheavals which have just succeeded in bringing it into view in Russia, Germany and England, but have not even lifted it above the sea in other parts where it was deposited, and where it still remains to be subjected, perhaps, to future movements of the same nature. The district we are now considering is a plateau that forms the western extremity of the High Alps, and it shows the final termination of the mighty movements to which Mont Blanc is due, and well illustrates the peculiar structure that seems always to characterize strata that have been long exposed to disturbance, or to contact with disturbed rocks. It is almost surrounded by rocks so highly altered by crystalline action, as to have lost the appearance of mechanical origin. It is elevated several thousand feet above the sea, and is split asunder in many directions by wide gorges and narrow fissures, through some of which considerable rivers pass, while others are dry, wild, and not connected with each other in any way. Much of the whole district is almost bare of any other vegetation than wild herbs, for trees cannot find place for their roots, and for some reason or other, (perhaps the total absence of silica,) grasses do not seem to flourish.

There is something singularly wild and strange in the impres-

sion produced on entering this country after crossing the fine volcanic district of the Auvergne, generally much more cultivated in consequence of the greater value of decomposed lava as a soil. The scenery indeed changes considerably, and one is fully prepared for the limestone by passing over the dull and barren tracts occupied by gneiss and schists of various kinds. These are bleak, and if grand, are only so in form; but when we reach the calcareous rocks, the character suddenly changes, and if not more cultivated or better draped with vegetation, there is at least more appearance of colour and variety in the objects around. The hills are square or pyramidal, with sharp angles and very bluff precipices: the rocks are of a whitish-yellow or reddish-white colour, and exceedingly broken and rough in appearance: at the foot of most of the hills is a mass of debris constantly increasing and forming a considerable talus, and at the bottom generally runs one of the numerous streams characteristic of the district. Here and there perhaps will be seen some gigantic representation of a fortress, or the fantastic shadow of an old castellated mansion gloomily frowning over an abyss. At a little distance a towering mass of shapeless rock seems suspended, overhanging a narrow valley; in another place an isolated and perfectly detached hill is surrounded by higher bluffs, separated from it only by narrow gorges; and at distant points a few flocks of sheep, with their herdsmen, are dispersed about, but there is rarely a village or human habitation of any kind. The villages are chiefly in the more open parts of the valleys, and no small farm-houses or châteaux break the monotony of the surface.

The chief wealth of this singular district is derived from the sheep pasturage, and this consists almost exclusively of a growth of aromatic herbs, of which thyme and lavender are the most abundant. On an area of more than a quarter of a million of acres are fed about 100,000 sheep and a few thousand goats. A few herdsmen look after these flocks, and are paid a certain sum per flock for superintendence, milking, and making cheese, for which latter purpose there is taken an admixture of one part of goat's-milk to a hundred parts of sheep's-milk, no cow's-milk being added. The cheese, when made, is almost all conveyed to the small village of Roquefort, situated on a very high portion of the plateau some miles from St. Afrique, and

the metropolis of an important trade in a peculiar cheese, which receives its name from this place.

To reach the village of Roquefort requires a long detour and much steep climbing, and it seems at first very extraordinary that a place so difficult of access should have been selected for collecting and selling the cheeses of a large district. On inquiry, however, we find that there is an excellent reason in the existence of cellars cut out of the limestone, the air of which in this particular place appears to retain constantly a peculiar freshness and coolness, even during the greatest heats of summer, permitting the cheese to ripen thoroughly without decaying. This is the more important in the case of cheese made from sheep's-milk, which is always rather strong, and would be disagreeable even to the taste of those most accustomed to strong flavours, if it were allowed to proceed a step too far.

I was desirous of visiting one of these cellars in order to learn the reason of the phenomenon alluded to, which is a good deal talked about in the district, and the details of which are greatly exaggerated. On reaching the immediate neighbourhood and examining the rocks, which are well seen in naked bluffs and are also more or less exposed at the surface, it was evident that there existed a good geological cause for the peculiarity exhibited by the caverns; and on entering the village and seeing some excavations at that time making for new and larger cellars than had before been prepared, I came to a conclusion fully borne out afterwards on going down into an old-established cheese-cellar, and learning the particulars of their construction.

It appears that the limestone in the wide tract I have described is so far metamorphic in its character, and has advanced to such a stage in the process of crystallization, as to have acquired regular and systematic structure, large and very numerous open fissures extending vertically downwards, probably towards the contact of true crystalline rock, and crossing each other in various directions. Through these innumerable open crevices air passes freely, and the temperature of the air in them will necessarily be far less variable than that at the surface, being colder in the warm days of summer and warmer in winter. The cellars are cut out of the rock, and in most cases the walls contain one or more broad cracks, within which if the hand is placed a current is distinctly felt. Such fissures communicate with other crevices, and possibly

in some cases with a vast network of subterranean openings through which the air traversing is cooled down to the temperature of the rock, just as water passing through rocks acquires their temperature, and thus comes out to the surface in Artesian wells, either cooler or warmer than the air according to the time of year and the circumstances of the case. It will easily be understood, that in these artificial grottos, the lower chambers are those in which the air is coolest and the temperature least changeable, and advantage is taken of this in preparing the cheese. In the establishment I visited, there were three stages one below another, in each of which cheeses were placed, being removed gradually to lower cellars as they ripened. Each stage contained from seven to eight hundred cheeses, weighing from two to four pounds each. The cheeses are coloured by a powder obtained from stale brown bread, and streaks of green mould are obtained by mixing occasionally a peculiar moss which is specially prepared for this purpose. About 100 women are employed in the manufacture and preparation of the cheeses, and the quantity made in a year is stated at 30,000 cwt.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE PLAINS OF LANGUEDOC AND GASCONY—THEIR TOWNS, ANTIQUITIES, AND INHABITANTS.

THE South of France, especially the wide tract extending between the Mediterranean and the Bay of Biscay, forms a kind of neutral ground between France and Spain. The people and their language are more Italian and Spanish than French, while the cities and public monuments exhibit such frequent and perfect remains of ancient Rome as to give them a peculiar interest simply on this account. The noble amphitheatres, beautiful temples, gigantic aqueducts, handsome bridges and other Roman antiquities, often on a large scale, and so common as to be characteristic of the district, contrast strongly with Byzantine and semi-Moorish constructions, while the inhabitants show a corresponding mixture of races in their dark eyes and hair, the great beauty of their features, and often by a singular admixture of various styles of beauty due to the successive presence in the country of very different tribes.

Thus Arles has long been remarkable for the Moorish blood retained in the principal families, and this is perfectly manifest even to the passing traveller. Nîmes is no less interesting for its Roman antiquities, in which it is excelled by few towns out of Italy. Its origin dates back to the most remote antiquity, and one of its monuments consists of a strange conical tower called the *Tour magne*, now in ruins, rising almost like the fragments of a huge and lofty glass-house, and belonging to that rather extensive class of old buildings, some specimens of which are found in most countries of Northern Europe, in which the absence of any perceptible utility keeps alive the curiosity of antiquaries by an endless series of conjectures. It is placed on a considerable natural elevation, and has long served as a watch-tower. From its present summit, no doubt much below the original one, the coast-line of the Mediterranean is seen near Cette, and the greater part of the Delta of the Rhone is within the range of vision. There is still about 90 feet of the original

building left standing, and the form of the building as well as its ruined state combine to render the ruin highly picturesque.

The most remarkable object seen from this tower is a noble Roman amphitheatre immediately below and half-buried among the buildings of the town. Hardly any public edifices exist, which bring so vividly before the mind's eye the essential peculiarities of the great Roman people, as these fragments of amphitheatres when in a tolerably complete state. The strongest and most unchanging nationality seems always to have been preserved amongst the colonists so frequently drafted off from the parent city, and even the faults of such a people as the Romans, bad as they often were individually, generally assumed a character both grandiose and magnificent, reminding one of the state whence they sprung.

But the amphitheatre of Nîsmes is really in itself a noble building and a highly picturesque ruin. Its state of preservation, in spite of the numerous accidents to which it has been exposed in the course of seventeen or eighteen centuries, and the more injurious barbarisms of those who have used this as well as others of the noblest works of ancient art as mere quarries, conveniently supplying materials for the construction of houses, palaces or churches, is still extremely good. Its external preservation is even more perfect than that of the great Coliseum of Rome. Whole ranges of seats yet remain, rising in regular tiers one above another. Each range is constructed of a number of enormous square blocks of stone, some of which retain marks and notches indicating the amount of space allotted to each spectator. We may still see the noble galleries, varied in their style of architecture, but all good, and many of them uninjured by time or violence,—the magnificent stairs and passages admitting of the free access and egress of the vast multitude, and the complete division of different classes distinctly and unchangeably preserved.

So perfect are many parts of this building, that one may sit down and without much indulgence of the fancy carry back one's thoughts to the time when the charm of novelty was added to those intrinsic beauties we can now recognize, and when the old Roman spectator occupying the same seat was waiting with anxiety and intense interest to see the cruel and ferocious sports then thought manly, and considered absolutely essential to keep up the national character. Seated near the centre of

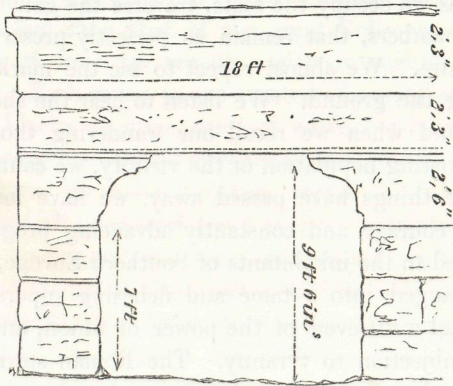
the lower range of seats not far from the imperial throne—part of the iron-work enclosing which is still to be seen—some proud senator looks around him on all that is noble and distinguished in the ancient city of Nemausus, and watches the representative of majesty, or majesty itself, clothed in purple, mounting to the imperial throne. Above him on the next tier are the knights; above them the Roman citizens—Roman at least by law, though few if any had ever seen Rome—and above them again the bondsmen and slaves, who in those days were not only allowed to partake in the amusements of their masters, but had their allotted places with the rest. More than 20,000 human beings are seated quietly around awaiting a signal. Soon a small door opens—the place of that door is now visible—and there rush out wild beasts to combat either with each other, or with those gladiators, whose gloomy chambers are also preserved, and who, one must imagine, were scarcely more civilized or domesticated than their victims in the arena. These fights would, however, soon be succeeded by others more terrible. Men against men,—the condemned criminal and the innocent Christian, led out of other dungeons, are cruelly tortured and put to death for the amusement of their fellow-men. Such are the scenes that suggest themselves as we occupy the seats, traverse the galleries or visit the small chambers, that remain so perfectly preserved in this noble structure. We almost expect to see the marks of blood still staining the ground. We listen to hear the shouts of the multitude, and when we recall our wandering thoughts, and watch the existing population of the vicinity, we cannot but feel that if these things have passed away, we have lost also the indomitable courage and constantly advancing progress which once belonged to the inhabitants of Southern Europe, but which has now changed into a tame and debasing superstition, involving a total want even of the power of union, and the most degrading subjection to tyranny. The Roman spirit of proud independence has either passed away or has become mingled with many other less valuable and less hopeful ingredients, but the tendency to cruel and bloody amusements is apparently still in existence, and may at any time reappear when the passions are excited and circumstances are favourable for its development. These reflections can hardly appear out of place, as they suggest themselves but too readily to any one acquainted with the former

history and present condition of the French, Spanish and Italian people, especially as illustrated in Provence within the last half-century.

In this amphitheatre, the interior of the arena, occupied by the combatants, is a very well-proportioned oval, the longer axis being 437 feet and the shorter 332 feet. The total height of the building is 70 feet. The number of ascending ranges of seats was thirty-four, and the total number of persons accommodated with seats is estimated at 22,000. Of the seats almost all those of the middle part are now destroyed, but the upper and some of the lower are quite perfect.

Among the most remarkable points of detail may be mentioned the galleries or corridors, especially of the middle or knights' tier. These are constructed in the thickness of the wall, and are formed in some cases by single blocks of stone measuring as much as 18 feet long. An idea of the effect of these flat-topped arches may be obtained by looking at the annexed cut (fig. 5), where the opening of the arch as represented measures 10 feet in width.

Fig. 5.—Square arch in the gallery of the Knights, formed of solid blocks of stone.



The whole of the masonry of the building is composed of smoothed blocks of stone simply placed together without cement; but it must be observed, that in doing this, the architect has shown a perfect knowledge of the kinds of stone obtainable in the neighbourhood, that which is selected being well adapted both for the quarrying of large blocks, and for their being perfectly

smoothed at small expense. In some places, especially at the sides of the staircases leading to the people's gallery, the stones have been polished by the frequent crowds formerly pressing through the narrow passages.

A curious contrast must be offered, when, as is sometimes the case, this amphitheatre is made subservient to the fêtes of the present inhabitants of Nîmes. We saw placarded on the walls, notices of a contest between two modern gladiators to take place in a few days, and the young oxen of the marshes are occasionally driven into the arena to be tormented and branded for the satisfaction of those who choose to pay a few sous for the sight.

There are other hardly less interesting objects in this town. An exquisitely beautiful though small temple of late Roman architecture is now converted into a museum. It has passed through many phases between the date of its consecration by Augustus and the present time, but retains much of its beauty in spite of all. Few more striking examples can be desired of the taste of the former inhabitants of this place, and it is not necessary to look far, if we wish for a contrast in the more modern buildings around. Other temples also exist in the neighbourhood, one of which dedicated to Diana is in ruins, but still highly interesting; it abounds with fine specimens of delicate workmanship, and appears to have been connected with adjacent very extensive baths, also of Roman workmanship.

The old town of Nîmes appears to afford picturesque objects of various kinds. A long double canal with about 150 washerwomen exercising their vocation in the open air, reminds one forcibly of the peculiar tastes and tendencies of the inhabitants of this part of France. Bright colours and loud voices are certainly not confined to Provence, but they here assume a kind of individuality easy to recognise, and very characteristic of the district.

Many objects of interest in the vicinity of the town are well worth a careful examination, and of these the celebrated aqueduct called the Pont du Gard is certainly the most remarkable. It is a construction of almost Cyclopean grandeur, crossing a wild valley some twelve miles from Nîmes, and evidently intended to convey a supply of water to the town, with which it is connected at sundry points. Seen from the road the appearance is very striking, as there is a singular admixture of vast and