

these fishes may resemble the ichthyolites of Monte Bolca.*

40. TERTIARY VOLCANOES OF FRANCE.—In the former lecture I alluded to volcanic action as being still in activity, and as having taken place in more ancient periods; and we have abundant proof that during the immense lapse of time comprehended between the earliest and the latest of the tertiary formations, the internal fires of our globe were not dormant. I have already had occasion to observe, how rarely the former geographical relations of a country are preserved, and that although we may be able to pronounce with certainty that this spot was once dry land,—that there flowed a river,—that here is the bed of an ancient sea—yet we can seldom ascribe limits to the one, or trace the boundaries of the other. But there is one remarkable exception—a district, where the most important and striking geological mutations have taken place, and yet the area of those changes still preserves its ancient physical geography—that district is Auvergne, a province in central France.

Nearly a century since, two French academicians, MM. Guettard and Malesherbes, on their return from an exploration of Vesuvius, arrived at Montelimart, a small town on the left banks of the Rhone, where Faujas St. Fond, a distinguished naturalist, was sojourning. These savans were struck with

* See Lecture VIII.