

and now lie buried beneath volcanic masses of prodigious thickness, preserve their forms unaltered (page 276)—and the bones of the dodo are found imbedded in marlstone, covered by lava of recent origin (page 120).

23. ICE PRESERVED BY INCANDESCENT LAVA.—

A circumstance of a very extraordinary nature is described by Mr. Lyell—that of the preservation for ages of a glacier, or bed of ice, from having been covered and protected by a flood of red-hot lava.* The intense heat experienced in the south of Europe, during the summer and autumn of 1828, caused the usual supplies of ice entirely to fail. Great distress was consequently felt for want of a commodity, regarded in those countries rather as an article of necessity, than of luxury. Etna was, therefore, carefully explored, in the hope of discovering some crevice, or natural grotto on the mountain, where drift snow was still preserved. Nor was the search unsuccessful; for a small mass of perennial ice, at the foot of the highest cone, was found to be part of a large, continuous glacier, covered by a lava current. The ice was quarried, and the superposition of the lava ascertained to continue for several hundred yards; unfortunately, the ice was so extremely hard, and the removal of it so expensive, that there is no probability of the operations being renewed. Mr. Lyell explains this apparently paradoxical fact, by supposing that a

* Principles of Geology, vol. ii. p. 124.