

high authority both as a palæontologist and archæologist.* M. Pictet, after visiting Le Puy and investigating the site of the alleged discovery, was satisfied that the fossil bones belonged to the period of the last volcanic eruptions of Velay; but expressly stated in his important treatise on palæontology that this conclusion, though it might imply that Man had coexisted with the extinct elephant, did not draw with it the admission that the human race was anterior in date to the filling of the caverns of France and Belgium with the bones of extinct mammalia.†

At a meeting of the 'Scientific Congress' of France, held at Le Puy in 1856, the question of the age of the Denise fossil bones was fully gone into, and in the report of their proceedings published in that year, the opinions of some of the most skilful osteologists respecting the point in controversy are recorded. The late Abbé Croizet, a most experienced collector of fossil bones in the volcanic regions of Central France, and an able naturalist, and the late M. Laurillard, of Paris, who assisted Cuvier in modelling many fossil bones, and in the arrangement of the museum of the Jardin, declared their opinion that the specimen preserved in the museum of Le Puy is no counterfeit. They believed the human bones to have been enveloped by natural causes in the tufaceous matrix in which we now see them.

In the year 1859, Professor Hébert and M. Lartet visited Le Puy, expressly to investigate the same specimen, and to inquire into the authenticity of the bones and their geological age. Later in the same year, I went myself to Le Puy, having the same object in view, and had the good fortune to meet there my friend Mr. Poulett Scrope, with whom I examined the Montagne de Denise, where a peasant related to us how he had dug out the specimen with his own hands and

* Bulletin de la Société Géologique de France, 1844, 1845, 1847.

† Traité de Paléontologie, tom. i. p. 152, 1853.