

of fishes, or the contents of their intestines, still retaining the form of the tortuous tube in which they were lodged. To these remarkable fossils he has given the name of *Cololites*. (Pl. 15' is copied from one of a series that are engraved in Goldfuss. *Petrefacten*, Pl. 66.) He has also found similar tortuous petrifications within the abdominal cavity of fossil fishes, belonging to several species of the genus *Thrissops* and *Leptolepis*, occupying the ordinary position of the intestines between the ribs.* (See Agassiz *Poissons Fossiles*, liv. 2, Appendix, p. 15.)

* As these *Cololites* are most frequently found insulated in the lithographic limestone, M. Agassiz has ingeniously explained this fact by observing the process of decomposition of dead fishes in the lakes of Switzerland. The dead fish floats on the surface, with its belly upwards, until the abdomen is so distended with putrid gas, that it bursts: through the aperture thus formed the bowels come forth into the water, still adhering together in their natural state of convolution. This intestinal mass is soon torn from the body by the movement of the waves; the fish then sinks, and the bowels continue a long time floating on the water: if cast on shore, they remain many days upon the sand before they are completely decomposed. The small bowels only are thus detached from the body, the stomach and other viscera remain within it.

We owe this illustration of the nature of these fossil bodies, whose origin has hitherto been inexplicable, to the author of a most important work on fossil fishes, now under publication at Neuchatel. His qualifications for so great and difficult a task are abundantly guaranteed by the fact, that Cuvier, on seeing the progress he had made, at once placed at the disposal of Professor Agassiz the materials he had himself collected towards a similar work.