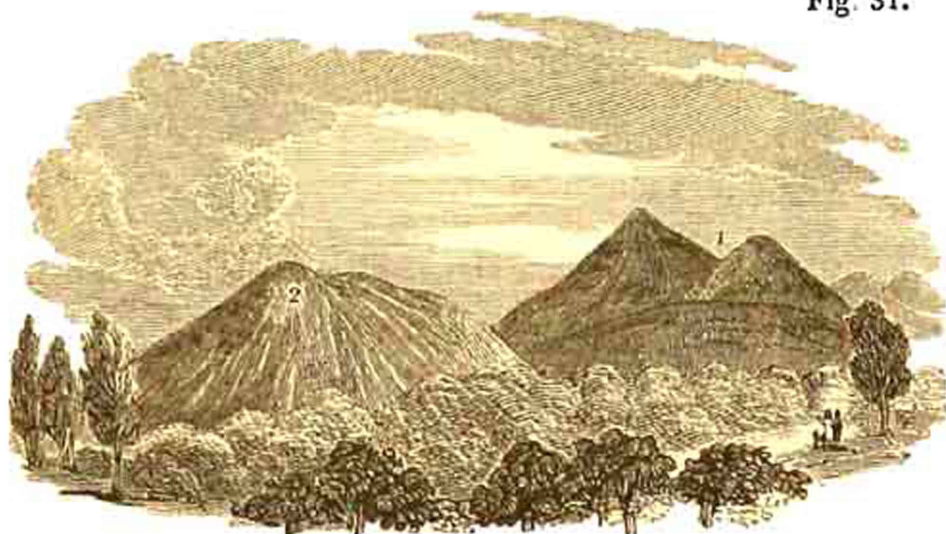


stream of eddy smoke by day—a bright and ruddy flame by night; and burning rocks rolled down with loud uproar into the sea.”

Eruption of 1669—Monti Rossi formed.—The great eruption which happened in the year 1669 is the first which claims particular attention. An earthquake had levelled to the ground all the houses in Nicolosi, a town situated near the lower margin of the woody region, about twenty miles from the summit of Etna, and ten from the sea at Catania. Two gulfs then opened near that town, from whence sand and scorix were thrown up in such quantity, that, in the course of three or four months, a double cone was formed, called Monti Rossi, about 450 feet high. But the most extraordinary phe-

Fig. 31.



Minor cones on the flanks of Etna.

1, Monti Rossi, near Nicolosi, formed in 1669.

2, Vampeluso?*

nomenon occurred at the commencement of the convulsion in the plain of S. Lio. A fissure six feet broad, and of unknown depth, opened with a loud crash, and ran in a somewhat tortuous course to within a mile of the summit of Etna. Its direction was from north to south, and its length twelve miles. It emitted a most vivid light. Five other parallel fissures of considerable length afterwards opened one after the other, and emitted smoke, and gave out bellowing sounds which were heard at the distance of forty miles. This case seems to present the geologist with an illustration of the manner in which those continuous dikes of vertical porphyry were formed, which are seen to traverse some of the older lavas of Etna; for the light emitted from the great rent of S. Lio appears to indicate that the fissure was filled to a certain height with incandescent lava, probably to the height of an orifice not far distant from Monti Rossi, which at that time opened and poured out a lava current. When the melted matter in such a rent has cooled, it must become a solid wall or dike, intersecting the older rocks of which the mountain is composed; similar rents have been observed during subsequent eruptions, as in

* The hill which I have here introduced was called by my guide Vampelara, but the name given in the text is

the nearest to this, which I find in Gemmellaro's Catalogue of Minor Cones.