

probable ; at least one who attributes earthquakes and chasms to that god would say that this gorge was his work. It seemed to me to be quite evident that the mountains had there been torn asunder by an earthquake.”¹

By the beginning of our era, supernatural interpretations of geological features had still further gone out of fashion among the writers of the day, and it was now thought unnecessary even to allude to them. Strabo (B.C. 54—A.D. 25) simply refers the Vale of Tempe to the effects of an earthquake, as if its origin were so manifest as to offer no reasonable ground for any doubt. In no respect do the writings of this geographer differ more conspicuously from those of Herodotus than in their attitude towards the myths of the olden time. The difference no doubt marks the general progress of public opinion on the subject in the course of five centuries. Strabo usually passes over the legends in silence, and when he takes occasion to refer to them, it is not infrequently to reject them with contempt. He will not believe the story that the River Alpheus flows under the sea and rises again to the surface as the fountain of Arethusa at Syracuse, and the reasons which he gives for his refusal are such as a modern man of science might use.² Referring to a statue at Siris, in Southern Italy, which was alleged to have been brought from Troy after the siege and to have closed its eyes when certain suppliants were forcibly dragged away from its shrine, he sarcastically remarks that some amount of courage is required to believe this tale, and also to admit that so many statues

¹ Book VII. 129.

² VI. II. 4.