

alarm without doing much damage, but ever and anon as appalling calamities that have prostrated cities and destroyed thousands of their inhabitants. Moreover another phase of subterranean energy has from time immemorial been conspicuously developed in the same region. Two distinct and widely separated volcanic centres exist in the Mediterranean basin, and have had their eruptions chronicled by poets and historians from a remote antiquity. One of these centres lies in the Aegean Sea, where the isle of Santorin still remains an active volcano. The other and much the more important area extends from the Phlegraean Fields around Naples to beyond the southern coast of Sicily, and includes the great cones of Etna and Vesuvius, besides other smaller but active vents. From the dawn of history the inhabitants of Greece and Italy have witnessed the awe-inspiring eruptions of these volcanoes which notably coloured some parts of the old mythology.

Again, the Mediterranean region contains within its limits a remarkable diversity of climates, and consequently a varied and abundant development of all those geological processes over which climate exerts a controlling influence. The mountain chains, from the far Pyrenees on the one hand to the distant Caucasus on the other, with their snow-fields and glaciers, their cloud-caps and storms, display the extremes of winter cold, and of rainfall, tempests and landslips. On the southern side of the basin lie wide tracts of country with little or no rain, and passing inland into vast sandy deserts of almost tropical heat. From the mountains innumerable torrents gather into lakes and