

of Aristotle was favoured, or the common belief in subterranean accumulations of sulphur and other combustible substances.

Coming down to the beginning of the Christian era, we turn to the pages of Strabo, who besides availing himself of the labours of his predecessors, more particularly of those who wrote in Greek, travelled over a considerable part of the ancient world, with observant eyes as to what he himself saw and a critical judgment as to what he heard from others. Though his great work is mainly a description of the topographical and political geography of his day, it is interspersed with acute observations and reflections regarding the physical features of the various countries, and the natural processes whereby these features have been produced or altered. His *Geography*, therefore, contains not a few important statements of fact in regard to the general effects of subterranean energy. Thus he cites a number of earthquakes by which chasms in the ground were formed, thousands of people were destroyed and cities were swallowed up. He also gives some information regarding volcanic eruptions which had taken place within the historical period in the Mediterranean region. In his time Mount Vesuvius was not only quiescent, but was not known to have ever been active. His quick eye, however, detected the true origin of the mountain. From the aspect of its summit, he inferred that it was once a volcano, with live craters which had become extinct on the failure of the subterranean fuel, and he compared its slopes to the ground around Catania, where the ashes thrown out by Etna have formed