

pregnant remark as to the connection of the present with the past. In regard to the interchange of land and sea in former periods he held firmly to the doctrine so clearly expounded by the earlier philosophers. "Every one will admit," he writes, "that at various periods a great portion of the mainland has been covered and again left bare by the sea." "All things are continually in motion and undergo great changes, much of the land being turned into water, and much of the water changed into land. Some parts of the earth now inhabited by man once lay beneath the sea, while some portions of the bed of the sea were once inhabited land."¹

The poet Ovid (B.C. 43-A.D. 18), who flourished about the same time as Strabo, in a well-known passage in the 15th book of his *Metamorphoses* represents Pythagoras as himself expounding his view of the system of Nature. This philosopher's doctrines have only come down to us reported and perhaps distorted by others. As Ovid introduces into Pythagoras' discourse allusions to some incidents which took place long after the philosopher's death, the narrative cannot be regarded as historically accurate, or as more than a digest of what, in the time of Augustus, was believed to be the Pythagorean philosophy. The sage is represented as maintaining that the world is eternal and consists of the four elements—air and fire above, water and earth below. "Nothing in this world perishes but only varies its form; to be born is merely to begin to be something different from what we were before, and to die is to cease to be that same

¹ Book xvii. i. 36.