

## CHAPTER II

**GROWTH** of geological ideas in the Middle Ages—Avicenna and the Arabs: Baneful influence of theological dogma. Controversy regarding the nature of fossil organic remains. Early observers in Italy—Leonardo da Vinci, Falloppio, Steno, Moro. The English cosmogonists—Burnet, Whiston, Woodward. Robert Hooke, John Ray, Martin Lister, Robert Plot, Edward Lhuyd.

**DURING** the centuries that succeeded the fall of the Western Empire such learning as survived in Europe was to be found only in the monasteries and other ecclesiastical establishments. But it concerned itself little with natural knowledge, save in as far as this was contained in the works of the writers of antiquity. From about the middle of the eighth century onwards for some five hundred years, the Arabs kept alive the feeble flame of interest in researches into the secrets of Nature. With great labour and at large cost, they procured as much as they could obtain of the literature of Ancient Greece and Rome, and studied and translated into their own language the works of the best writers in philosophy, medicine, mathematics and astronomy. They were thus able to some extent to enlarge the domain of these subjects. One of the most