

the natural inferences to which they lead. Thus he entered fully and sagaciously into the theory of springs, quoting his own experience at his country home, and showing conclusively, in opposition to Hooke, that it is not by dews condensed on the mountains but by the water supplied by rain that springs are fed. He watched, too, the effects of running water, especially the manifest action of "rains continually washing down and carrying away earth from the mountains," and the destruction of the shores by the perpetual working of the sea, and he believed that in the end, by the combination of these processes, the whole dry land might possibly be reduced below the sea-level.¹

When Ray came to discuss "formed stones," or "sea-shells and other marine bodies found at great distances from the shores," he was obviously no longer free to do so untrammelled as to what conclusions he might draw from them. He caustically criticises Woodward's diluvial theory, remarking that he suspected that author to have invented part of his theory to solve supposed facts which are not generally true. But though he had "spent many thoughts" on this subject, he confesses that he could not fully satisfy himself as to the nature and real origin of the "formed stones." He balances the arguments for and against their truly organic origin, seeming at one moment to agree with those who regarded them as

¹ *Miscellaneous Discourses concerning the Dissolution and Changes of the World*, by John Ray, Fellow of the Royal Society, London, 1692, pp. 44-56, and *Three Physico-Theological Discourses*, 4th Edit., 1721, pp. 89-114, 245.