

between two promontories with great rapidity, and then forms a vast sea, which, without including the Black sea, is about seven times larger than the kingdom of France. Its motion through the straits of Gibraltar is contrary to all other straits, for the general motion of the sea is from east to west, but in that alone it is from the west to the east, which proves that the Mediterranean sea is not an ancient gulph, but that it has been formed by an irruption of the waters produced by some accidental cause; as an earthquake which might swallow up the earth in the strait, or by a violent effort of the ocean, caused by the wind, which might have forced its way through the banks between the promontories of Gibraltar and Centa. This opinion is authorised by the testimony of the ancients, who declare in their writings, that the Mediterranean sea did not formerly exist; and it is further confirmed by natural history, and by observations made on the opposite coasts of Spain, where similar beds of stones and earth are found upon the same levels, in like manner as they are in two mountains separated by a small valley.

The ocean having forced this passage, it ran at first through the straits with much greater