

Ovid alone, perhaps, alleges it with this view among the illustrations of the above doctrine, which he has put into the mouth of Pythagoras; his words have been so frequently cited, that it is almost unnecessary to repeat them.

“ Vidi factas ex æquore terras,
Et procul a pelago conchæ jacuere marinæ.”

In some of their general physical notions we may almost fancy we see the germ of more modern theories; thus that of the displacement of the sea, afterwards adopted and adorned by Buffon, may be traced in Aristotle, who appears to have considered it as a periodical revolution of nature;‡ and the wild but splendid conception embraced by many of their schools, but particularly by the Stoics, that the Earth had experienced frequent destructions and renovations from the agency of igneous devastations (ecpyroses) and inundations (cataclysmi) recurring after intervals of distant ages, reminds us in so many respects of the Huttonian theory* that we might almost suppose it to have been adopted from the consideration of the same natural appearances: but it is more consistent with the general genius of their philosophical speculations to believe that it was deduced from the principles they assumed on the high priori road, than introduced by any train of inductive reasoning grounded on observation.

that from youth to age, by which its moisture dried up; from the earlier habitation of the cities in the upper than lower regions of Egypt and Greece; the formation of the former in great part from the Nile; the gradual filling up the Palus Mæotis, &c. and the necessity that such changes, though unobservable to the eye of man which contemplates but a moment, must yet take place in the lapse of time, which he believed to be of infinite duration. Meteorologica. l. 1. 14.

‡ *ἔκ ἀεὶ τὰ μὲν γῆ τὰ δὲ θαλάσσια διατελεῖ πάντα τὸν χρόνον ἀλλὰ γίγνεται θαλάσσια μὲν ὅπῃ χερσὸς ἐνθα δὲ νῦν θαλάσσια πάλιν ἐνταυθα γῆ. κατὰ μὲντοι τίνα τάξιν νομίζειν χρὴ ταῦτα καὶ περιοδῶν.* Meteor. l. 1. 14.

* See particularly Lipsius de Physiologia Stoicorum. This writer quotes the following passage from Censorinus, a philosopher of that school:—*Est preterea annus quem Aristoteles maximum potius quam magnum appellat, quem solis & lunæ vagarumque stellarum orbes conficiunt, cum ad idem signum ubi quondam simul fuerant unà revertuntur. Cujus anni hiems summa est Cataclysmus quem nostri diluvionem vocant; æstas autem Ecpyrosis quod est mundi incendium. Nam his alternis temporibus mundus tum exignesere tum exaquescere videtur.* The reader who wishes for a fuller account of this doctrine, may be referred to a chapter dedicated to its investigation in Dr. Prichard's Egyptian Mythology, which ably condenses all the collections of Lipsius, and to which we are indebted for the above quotation. The whole of Dr. Prichard's work is a model of judicious, sober, and philosophical criticism, applied to subjects where we are accustomed to meet only with extravagant conjectures, and still more extravagant etymologies.