

terranean had once opened a passage for itself by the Columns of Hercules into the Atlantic ; and perhaps the abundance of sea-shells in Africa, near the Temple of Jupiter Ammon, might also be the deposit of some former inland sea, which had at length forced a passage and escaped.

But Strabo rejects this theory, as insufficient to account for all the phenomena, and he proposes one of his own, the profoundness of which modern geologists are only beginning to appreciate. "It is not," he says, "because the lands covered by seas were originally at different altitudes, that the waters have risen, or subsided, or receded from some parts and inundated others. But the reason is, that the same land is sometimes raised up and sometimes depressed, and the sea also is simultaneously raised and depressed, so that it either overflows or returns into its own place again. We must, therefore, ascribe the cause to the ground, either to that ground which is under the sea, or to that which becomes flooded by it, but rather to that which lies beneath the sea, for this is more moveable and, on account of its humidity, can be altered with greater celerity.* *It is proper,*" he observes in continuation, "*to derive our explanations from things which are obvious, and in some measure of daily occurrence, such as deluges, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions†, and sudden swellings of the land beneath the sea ; for the last raise up the sea also ; and when the same lands subside again, they occasion the sea to be let down. And it is not merely the small, but the large islands also, and not merely the islands, but the continents which can be lifted up together with the sea ; and both large and small tracts may subside, for habitations and cities, like Bure, Bizona, and many others, have been engulfed by earthquakes.*"

In another place, this learned geographer, in alluding to the tradition that Sicily had been separated by a convulsion from Italy, remarks, that at present the land near the sea in those parts was rarely shaken by earthquakes, since there were now open orifices whereby fire and ignited matters, and waters escape ; but formerly, when the volcanos of Etna, the Lipari Islands, Ischia, and others, were closed up, the imprisoned fire and wind might have produced far more vehement movements.‡ The doctrine, therefore, that volcanos are safety-valves, and that the subterranean convulsions are probably most violent when first the volcanic energy shifts itself to a new quarter, is not modern.

We learn from a passage in Strabo §, that it was a dogma of the

* "Quod enim hoc attollitur aut subdit, et vel inundat quædam loca, vel ab iis recedit, ejus rei causa non est, quod alia aliis sola humiliora sint aut altiora ; sed quod idem solum modò attollitur modò deprimitur, simulque etiam modò attollitur modò deprimitur mare: itaque vel exundat vel in suum redit locum."

Posteà, p. 88. "Restat, ut causam adscribamus solo, sive quod mari subest sive quod inundatur ; potiùs tamen ei

quod mari subest. Hoc enim multò est mobilius, et quod ob humiditatem celerius mutari possit."— Strabo, Geog. Edit. Almelov. Amst. 1707. lib. i.

† *Volcanic eruptions*, eruptiones flatuum, in the Latin translation, and in the original Greek, *αναφουσηματα*, gaseous eruptions ? or *inflations* of land ? — Ibid. p. 93.

‡ Strabo, lib. vi. p. 396.

§ Book iv.