

Mineralogy or Botany : and will be found to exhibit some of the features of that class of sciences.

Since, then, our History of Descriptive Geology is to include only systematic and scientific descriptions of the earth or portions of it, we pass over, at once, all the casual and insulated statements of facts, though they may be geological facts, which occur in early writers ; such, for instance, as the remark of Herodotus,<sup>2</sup> that there are shells in the mountains of Egypt ; or the general statements which Ovid puts in the mouth of Pythagoras :<sup>3</sup>

Vidi ego quod fuerat solidissima tellus,  
Esse fretum ; vidi factas ex æquore terras,  
Et procul a pelago conchæ jacuere marinæ.

We may remark here already how generally there are mingled with descriptive notices of such geological facts, speculations concerning their causes. Herodotus refers to the circumstance just quoted, for the purpose of showing that Egypt was formerly a gulf of the sea ; and the passage of the Roman poet is part of a series of exemplifications which he gives of the philosophical tenet, that nothing perishes but everything changes. It will be only by constant attention that we shall be able to keep our provinces of geology distinct.

*Sect. 2.—Early Descriptions and Collections of Fossils.*

If we look, as we have proposed to do, for systematic and exact knowledge of geological facts, we find nothing which we can properly adduce till we come to modern times. But when facts such as those already mentioned, (that sea-shells and other marine objects are found imbedded in rocks,) and other circumstances in the structure of the earth, had attracted considerable attention, the exact examination, collection, and record of these circumstances began to be attempted. Among such steps in Descriptive Geology, we may notice descriptions and pictures of fossils, descriptions of veins and mines, collections of organic and inorganic fossils, maps of the mineral structure of countries, and finally, the discoveries concerning the superposition of strata, the constancy of their organic contents, their correspondence in different countries, and such great general relations of the materials and features of the earth as have been discovered up to the present time.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Met. xv. 262.