

were in Hooke's eyes not mere curiosities, but valuable records of the past history of the earth. "I do humbly conceive," he remarks, "(tho' some possibly may think there is too much notice taken of such a trivial thing as a rotten shell, yet) that men do generally too much slight and pass over without regard these records of antiquity which Nature have left as monuments and hieroglyphick characters of preceding transactions in the like duration or transactions of the body of the Earth, which are infinitely more evident and certain tokens than anything of antiquity that can be fetched out of coins or medals, or any other way yet known, since the best of those ways may be counterfeited or made by art and design, as may also books, manuscripts and inscriptions, as all the learned are now sufficiently satisfied, has often been actually practised; but those characters [fossil shells] are not to be counterfeited by all the craft in the world, nor can they be doubted to be, what they appear, by any one that will impartially examine the true appearances of them: And tho' it must be granted that it is very difficult to read them and to raise a *chronology* out of them, and to state the intervalls of the times, wherein such or such catastrophies and mutations have happened; yet 'tis not impossible, but that much may be done even in that part of information also."<sup>1</sup>

Hooke does not appear to have formed any very clear ideas either as to the causes of earthquakes or the nature of volcanic action. He connects the two classes of phenomena together, and in various places

<sup>1</sup>p. 411.