found. He asks in reply whether any one had yet explored the depths of the ocean, or how many animals, hitherto unknown, remained still to be discovered in the New World. "Is it not to be presumed," he enquires, "that in the great changes which the earth has undergone a great many animal forms have been transformed?" After describing a number of instances in which a succession of strata has been ascertained to contain different platforms of organic remains, pointing to advances and retreats of the sea, he concludes his treatise with these words: "Thus Nature fills for us the place of history; while on the other hand, our history pays back to Nature this service, that it takes care that her illustrious works, so far as we have been able to perceive them, shall not remain unknown to our posterity."[1]

We have now to notice the work of a writer of an utterly different type from the two philosophers just spoken of. Though hardly deserving to be regarded as a man of science, Benoit de Maillet (1656-1738), French diplomatist and traveller, was a keen and shrewd observer of Nature, and his speculations were not without their influence on the progress of geology. In the course of his long life he saw much of the countries bordering both sides of the Mediterranean basin, and gathered together stores of information regarding the physical aspect and historical changes in the surface of these countries. Being led to speculate on the probable origin and future fate of this globe and its inhabitants, he arrived at conclusions which were at least conspicuously unorthodox.

[1] *Protogaea*, p. 86.