

Volcanoes, in the cosmogony of Telliamed, are due to the combustion of the oils and fats of the various animals entombed in the sediments of which the mountains have been formed. These volcanoes, by communicating with each other, will ultimately extinguish all life, and finally lead to the total conflagration of our globe, which will then become a true sun, until having consumed all the combustible material that maintained this prodigious heat, it will once more cool down and become opaque.

But the most curious speculations of Telliamed are those in which he discusses the problem of the origin of the various races of animal life. He supposes the plants and animals of the land to have been derived from those of the sea. But the data which he advances in support of his notions of evolution seem to us now almost childishly absurd. He speaks of rose-trees which had their blooms quite red when they were taken out of the sea. He affirms that there exist on land no walking, flying, or creeping creatures which have not their analogues in the sea, and that their transference from one region to the other is not only probable but can be proved by a vast number of actual examples. He illustrates what he conceives to be the natural course of transformation by picturing flying fishes which somehow should fall among reeds or rushes and be unable to resume their flight. Their exertions would increase their aptitude to use their wings, but the dry air would split these membranes and raise up the scales of their bodies into a kind of down, the little fins under their belly, which once helped them to swim,