

sanction to the Mosaic chronology, by the veneration expressed by him for the Hebrew Patriarchs.*

A manuscript work, entitled the "Wonders of Nature," is preserved in the Royal Library at Paris, by an Arabian writer, Mohammed Kazwini, who flourished in the seventh century of the Hegira, or at the close of the thirteenth century of our era.† Besides several curious remarks on aerolites, earthquakes, and the successive changes of position which the land and sea have undergone, we meet with the following beautiful passage which is given as the narrative of Kidhz, an allegorical personage:—"I passed one day by a very ancient and wonderfully populous city, and asked one of its inhabitants how long it had been founded. 'It is indeed a mighty city,' replied he, 'we know not how long it has existed, and our ancestors were on this subject as ignorant as ourselves.' Five centuries afterwards, as I passed by the same place, I could not perceive the slightest vestige of the city. I demanded of a peasant, who was gathering herbs upon its former site, how long it had been destroyed. 'In sooth a strange question!' replied he. 'The ground here has never been different from what you now behold it.'—"Was there not of old,' said I, 'a splendid city here?'—"Never," answered he, 'so far as we have seen, and never did our fathers speak to us of any such.' On my return there 500 years afterwards, *I found the sea in the same place*, and on its shores were a party of fishermen, of whom I inquired how long the land had been covered by the waters? 'Is this a question,' said they, 'for a man like you? this spot has always been what it is now.' I again returned, 500 years afterwards, and the sea had disappeared; I inquired of a man who stood alone upon the spot, how long ago this change had taken place, and he gave me the same answer as I had received before. Lastly, on coming back again after an equal lapse of time, I found there a flourishing city, more populous and more rich in beautiful buildings, than the city I had seen the first time, and when I would fain have informed myself concerning its origin, the inhabitants answered me, 'Its rise is lost in remote antiquity: we are ignorant how long it has existed, and our fathers were on this subject as ignorant as ourselves.'"

Early Italian writers.—It was not till the earlier part of the sixteenth century that geological phenomena began to attract the attention of the Christian nations. At that period a very animated controversy sprang up in Italy, concerning the true nature and origin of marine shells, and other organized fossils, found abundantly in the strata of the peninsula. The celebrated painter Leonardo da Vinci, who in his youth had planned and executed some navigable canals in the north of Italy, was one of the first who applied sound reasoning to these subjects. The mud of rivers, he said, had covered and penetrated into the in-

* Kossa, appointed master to the Caliph Al Mamûd, was author of a book entitled "The history of the Patriarchs and Prophets, from the Creation of the

World." — Mod. Univ. Hist. vol. ii. ch. iv.
† Translated by MM. Chezy and De Sacy, and cited by M. Elie de Beaumont, Ann. des Sci. Nat. 1832.