whose accidental coincidence could alone convert a possible into an actual fact. The view of the original existence of

Gehler, *Neues Physik. Wörterbuche*, bd. vi., abth. 3, s. 2129–2136.) If we could assume volcanic forces to be still active on the Moon's surface, the absence of atmospheric resistance would certainly give to their projectile force an advantage over that of our terrestrial volcanoes; but even in respect to the measure of the latter force (the projectile force of our own volcanoes), we have no observations on which any reliance can be placed, and it has probably been exceedingly overrated. Dr. Peters, who accurately observed and measured the phenomena presented by Ætna, found that the greatest velocity of any of the stones projected from the crater was only 1250 feet to a second. Observations on the Peak of Teneriffe, in 1798, gave 3000 feet. Although Laplace, at the end of his work (*Expos. du Syst. du Monde*, ed. de 1824, p. 399), cautiously observes, regarding aërolites, "that in all probability they come from the depths of space," yet we see from another passage (chap. vi., p. 233) that, being probably unacquainted with the extraordinary planetary velocity of meteoric stones, he inclines to the hypothesis of their lunar origin, always, however, assuming that the stones projected from the Moon "become satellites of our Earth, describing around it more or less eccentric orbits, and thus not reaching its atmosphere until several or even many revolutions have been accomplished." As an Italian at Tortona had the fancy that aërolites came from the Moon, so some of the Greek philosophers thought they came from the Sun. This was the opinion of Diogenes Laertius (ii., 9) regarding the origin of the mass that fell at Ægos Potamos (see note, p. 116). Pliny, whose labors in recording the opinions and statements of preceding writers are astonishing, repeats the theory, and derides it the more freely, because he, with earlier writers (Diog. Laert., 3 and 5, p. 99, Hübner), accuses Anaxagoras of having predicted the fall of aërolites from the Sun: "Celebrant Græci Anaxagoram Clazomenium Olympiadis septuagesimæ octavæ secundo anno prædixisse cælestium litterarum scientia, quibus diebus saxum casurum esse e sole, idque factum interdiu in Thraciæ parte ad Ægos flumen. Quod si quis prædictum credat, simul fateatur necesse est, majoris miraculi divinitatem Anaxagoræ fuisse, solvique rerum naturæ intellectum, et confundi omnia, si aut ipse Sol lapis esse aut unquam lapidem in eo fuisse credatur; decidere tamen crebro non erit dubium." The fall of a moderate-sized stone, which is preserved in the Gymnasium at Abydos, is also reported to have been foretold by Anaxagoras. The fall of aërolites in bright sunshine, and when the Moon's disk was invisible, probably led to the idea of sun-stones. Moreover, according to one of the physical dogmas of Anaxagoras, which brought on him the persecution of the theologians (even as they have attacked the geologists of our own times), the Sun was regarded as "a molten fiery mass" (*μύδρος διάπυρος*). In accordance with these views of Anaxagoras, we find Euripides, in *Phaëton*, terming the Sun "a golden mass;" that is to say, a fire-colored, brightly-shining matter, but not leading to the inference that aërolites are golden sun-stones. (See note to page 115.) Compare Valckenaer, *Diatribe in Eurip. perd. Dram. Reliquias*, 1767, p. 30. Diog. Laert., ii., 40. Hence, among the Greek philosophers, we find four hypotheses regarding the origin of falling stars: a telluric origin from ascending exhalations; masses of stone raised by hurricane (see Aristot., *Meteor.*, lib. i., cap. iv., 2–13, and cap. vii., 9); a solar origin; and, lastly, an