

preceding the commencement of the geological record as we consider it. This portion of the earth's history is generally known under the term cosmogony, and under this head we consider the many changes which have transpired previous to the formation of the first solid crust. While of necessity this portion of the earth's history must be treated almost entirely from a theoretical standpoint, it has always been endowed with peculiar interest and the theories connected therewith can be traced back for many hundreds and even thousands of years. Any one who has ever read that great work "Lyell's Principles" must have been astonished and interested in the many curious and diverse views as to the early stages of the earth's history there presented. To enumerate these would form material for many hours talk alone. Thus we learn that the earliest Indian and Egyptian schools of philosophy ascribed the first creation of the world to an omnipotent and infinite Being who had existed from all eternity and by whom the earth and its inhabitants had been repeatedly destroyed and reproduced. The frequent submergence of land beneath the waters of the universal ocean was also held by them, and the act of creation of life was ascribed to that person of the Hindoo Trinity called Bramah, thus: "In the beginning of things the first sole cause created with a thought the waters, and then moved upon their surface in the form of Bramah the creator, by whose agency the dry land was produced and the earth peopled with plants, animals, celestial beings and men." The Egyptian philosophy also held the theory of recurrent creations; the returns of the great catastrophes by which the surface of the earth was destroyed were determined by the period of the Annus Magnus or Great Year, a cycle composed of the revolutions of the sun, moon and planets, and terminating when these returned to the same sign from which they set out at some remote epoch, the duration of which cycle was estimated at from 120,000 to 350,000 years.

While it would be of great interest to examine the many theories propounded for the creation of the world by such men as Pythagoras, Strabo, Aristotle and other early philosophers, lack of time prevents. The idea of repeated inundations of the globe appears to have been held by most of them, the different relative levels of land and sea, had been, even so early as that time, observed. The theories for the repopling of