

The total superficies of the earth amounts, as we have already stated, to about 150,000,000 square miles, or 41,000 square degrees. The water occupies nearly three-fourths, or 30,000 degrees; the dry land covers an area of upwards of one-fourth, or 11,000 degrees—nearly 38,000,000 of square miles.\*

Much uncertainty prevails as to the exact territorial extent of the continents, the labours of modern geometers daily introducing important changes into the estimates put forward in our geographical treatises. It was thus, for example, that at the commencement of the present century the map of the Ottoman empire was so modified by the astronomers Beauchamp and Zach, that the territory of the Sultan gained an addition of 500,000 square yards.

[Taking as our guide the map of the world as laid down by Berhaus and Keith Johnston, in their Physical Atlas, we arrive at the following conclusions:—That Africa is about three times larger than Europe, America four times, and Asia five times. The great continent—by which we mean Europe, Asia, and Africa—has an area of 24,000,000 square miles, while the extent of the New World is 11,000,000, and that of Australia, with its islands, scarcely 3,000,000. The superficies of the continents is twenty-three times greater than that of all the islands taken together. The following table may be of assistance to the reader, since it gives a more precise estimate:—

	Area in Square Miles.
Europe. ... ..	3,700,000
Asia, ... ..	17,500,000
Africa, ... ..	12,000,000
America, North. ... ..	8,600,000
America, South, ... ..	7,000,000
Australia, ... ..	3,00,0000

The distribution of the land is, however, very unequal. One half the earth is almost wholly covered with water; in the other, land largely predominates; so that we may, not inaccurately, speak of an *aqueous* in opposition to a *terrestrial hemisphere*. The quantity of land in the northern hemisphere is, in fact, three times greater than in the southern, as the most cursory glance at a map of the world will show the reader. In the latter it occupies only one-sixteenth of the area between the Antarctic Circle and the thirtieth parallel of south latitude; while between the Arctic Circle and the corresponding parallel of north latitude the extent of land and water is nearly equal. Let us suppose our earth divided into two hemispheres by a meridian passing through the island of Teneriffe: what is the result? That to the *east* of this imaginary demarcation the land greatly predominates; and to the *west* the water.

From this startling inequality it arises that England, as Sir John Herschel, we believe, first pointed out, is nearly in the centre of the greatest mass of land; and London, therefore, becomes the natural focus, as the industry of its sons has made it the artificial capital, of the civilized world. Our antipodes, or, roughly speaking,

\* [According to Mr. Gardiner's computations, the extent of land is about 87,578,000 square British miles, independently of the South Polar continent; and the sea occupies 110,842,000. Hence the sea is to the land as 4 to 1 nearly.]