may liken our globe to a shrivelled apple. The skin of the apple does not contract equally. As the internal moisture passes off, and the bulk of the fruit is reduced, the once smooth exterior becomes here and there corrugated and dimpled.

Without entering into this difficult problem in physical geology, it may suffice if we carry with us the idea that our globe must once have had a greater diameter than it now possesses, and that the crumpling of its outer layers, whether due to mere contraction or, as has been suggested, to the escape also of subterranean vapours, affords evidence of this diminution. A little reflection suffices to show us that, even without any knowledge of the actual history of the contraction, we might anticipate that the effects would neither be continuous nor everywhere uniform. The solid crust would not, we may be sure, subside as fast as the mass inside. It would, for a time at least, cohere and support itself, until at last, gravitation proving too much for its strength, it would sink down. And the areas and amount of descent would be greatly regulated by the varying thickness and structure of the crust. Subsidence would not take place everywhere; for, as a consequence of the narrower space into which the crust sank, some regions would necessarily be pushed up. These conditions appear to have been fulfilled in the past history of the earth. There is evidence that the terrestrial disturbance has been renewed again and again, after long pauses, and that, while the ocean basins have on the whole been the great areas of depression, the continents have been the lines of uprise or relief, where the rocks were crumpled and pushed outof the way. Paradoxical, therefore, as the statement may appear, it is nevertheless strictly true, that the solid land, considered with reference to the earth's surface as a

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