

oily matter, but as the air was still very impure, and contained a great quantity of small particles of terrestrial matter, they by degrees descended on the coat of oil, and formed a terrestrial orb blended with earth and oil; and this was the first habitable earth, and the first abode of man. This was an excellent soil, light, and calculated to yield to the tenderness of the first germs. The surface of the terrestrial globe was at first equal, uniform, without mountains, without seas, and without inequalities; but it remained only about sixteen centuries in this state, for the heat of the sun by degrees drying the crust, split it at first on the surface, soon after, these cracks penetrated farther and increased so considerably by time, that at length they entirely opened the crust; in an instant the whole earth fell into pieces in the abyss, of water it surrounded; and this was the cause of the deluge.

But all these masses of earth, by falling into the abyss, dragged along with them a great quantity of air; these struck against each other, divided, and accumulated so irregularly, that great cavities filled with air were left between them. The waters by degrees opened these cavities, and in proportion as they filled them,
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