

its rotation about the mass till the oscillations to which it was subjected produced a rupture, when the whole material of the ring gathered itself together in another globe of igneous vapor revolving around the first.

In progress of time the principal mass, under the influence of inevitable refrigeration and acceleration of its motion, threw off another ring, which, on rupturing, became another revolving globe. From time to time the process was repeated; and a series of globes was thus left at varying distances from the centre of the system. These globes became the planets, and the residual mass is the sun. We come into existence, and gaze upon the series of planets, on one hand, and the sun upon the other, and think, because no perceptible change transpires in a generation or two, that all things are stable—that creation is completed—that all things were made at first as we see them, and are destined so to remain. Vain thought! The movements of matter are even now in progress. The residual mass—the sun—is still cooling and shrinking, and may yet throw off other rings, the germs of other planets within the orbit of Mercury—if, indeed, Lescarbault be not correct in asserting the existence already of an intramercurial planet.

But what of the detached globes of matter? The largest are the remoter, being formed of rings detached when the parent mass was largest. Each has continued to revolve in an orbit which marks the periphery of the parent mass at the time of the planet's separation. All continue to revolve in the same direction as the parent mass and the resultant sun. All revolve very nearly in the plane which must always have been the plane of the equator of the mass—the astronomical ecliptic. All continue to revolve upon their own axes in the same direction as required by the motion of the parent mass. Can all these things be so by chance? Can these planetary movements thus corre-