

circumscribed by the two hundred fathom curve or thereabout, and the oceans at greater depth, have from the beginning retained their relative outline and position; the continents having at all times been areas of gradual upheaval with comparatively slight oscillations of rise and subsidence, and the oceans at all times areas of gradual depression with equally slight oscillations. Now that the geological constitution of our continent is satisfactorily known over the greatest part of its extent, it seems to me to afford the strongest evidence that this has been the case; while there is no support whatever for the assumption that any part of it has sunk again to any very great depth after its rise above the surface of the ocean. The fact that upon the American continent, east of the Rocky Mountains, the geological formations crop out in their regular succession, from the oldest azoic and primordial deposits to the cretaceous formation, without the slightest indication of a great subsequent subsidence, seems to me the most complete and direct demonstration of my proposition. Of the western part of the continent I am not prepared to speak with the same confidence. Moreover, the position of the cretaceous and tertiary formations along