Disco Bay, near 69° N., to the Firth of Igaliko, 60° 43′, the coast has been sinking for four centuries past. Old buildings and islands have been submerged; and the inhabitants have had to put down new poles for their boats, the old ones standing, Lyell observes, "as silent witnesses of the change."

On the North American coast, south of Greenland, from Labrador to New Jersey, it is supposed that similar changes are going on. G. H. Cook concludes, from his observations, that a slow subsidence is in progress along the coasts of New Jersey, Long Island, and Martha's Vineyard, and has deduced, from the positions of buried stumps over large areas along the New Jersey coast, a rate of two feet a century. According to A. Gesner the land is rising at St. John, in New Brunswick; sinking at the island of Grand Manan; rising on the coast opposite, at Bathurst; sinking about the head of the Bay of Fundy, where there are regions of stumps submerged 35 feet at high tide, and about Minas Basin, in Nova Scotia, except, perhaps, on the south side.

On page 149 the reasons are given for believing that coral reefs and islands are proof of a slowly progressing subsidence, as first suggested by Darwin. On the physiographic chart, page 47, the line CCC, extending in an easterly direction from the Pelews, divides coral islands from those not coral. Over the area north of it, to the Hawaiian Islands, all the islands are atolls, excepting the Marquesas and three or four of the Carolines. If, then, the atolls are registers of subsidence, a vast area has partaken in it, — measuring 6000 miles in length (a fourth of the earth's circumference), and 1000 to 2000 in breadth. Just south of the line there are extensive coral reefs; north of it the atolls are large, but they diminish toward the equator, and mostly disappear north of it; and, as the smaller atolls indicate the greater amount of subsidence, and the absence of islands still more, the line AA may be regarded as the axial line of this great Pacific subsidence. The amount of this subsidence may be inferred, from the soundings near some of the islands, to be at least 3000 feet. But as 200 islands have disappeared, and it is probable that some among them were at least as high as the average of existing high islands, the subsidence in some parts cannot be less than 5000 feet. This sinking probably began in the Tertiary era.

During the progress of this subsidence, or since it ceased, there have been many cases of isolated elevation. The following are some examples from the Pacific: Oahu (Hawaiian Islands), 25 feet; Elizabeth Island, Paumotu Archipelago, 80 feet; Metia or Aurora, 250 feet; Atiu, Hervey Group, 12 feet; Mangaia, 300 feet; Rurutu, 150 feet; Eua, Tonga Group, nearly 500 feet; Vavau, 500 feet; Savage Island, 100 feet; Rota and Guam, of the Ladrones, 600 feet. More than 25 others have undergone some elevation. Off the New Guinea coast, some atolls have been raised to a height of 300 or 400 feet, and a central basin 100 feet deep, with vertical walls around, occupies the place of the old lagoon.