

adjacent subsiding regions. The tracts which have thus been, as it were, squeezed out under the strain of contraction have been weaker parts of the crust, and have usually been made use of again and again during geological time. They form the terrestrial regions of the earth's surface. Thus, the continents as we now find them are the result of many successive uplifts, corresponding probably to concomitant depressions of the ocean bed. In the long process of contraction, the earth has not contracted uniformly and equably. There have been, no doubt, vast periods during which no appreciable or only excessively gradual movements took place; but there have probably also been intervals when the accumulated strain on the crust found relief in more or less rapid collapse.

The general result of such terrestrial disturbances has been to throw the crust of the earth into wave-like undulations. In some cases, a wide area has been upheaved as a broad low arch, with little disturbance of the original level stratification of its component rocks. More usually, the undulations have been impressed as more sensible deformations of the crust, varying in magnitude from the gentlest appreciable roll up to mountainous crests of complicated plication, inversion, and fracture. As a rule, the undulations have been linear, but their direction has varied from time to time, having been determined at right angles, or approximately so, to the trend of the lateral pressure that produced them. As the crust has thickened, and in consequence of the structure imparted to it by successive subsidences, certain tracts even of the land have acquired more or less immobility, and have served as buttresses against which surrounding areas have been pressed and dislocated by subsequent movements. Suess has pointed out various