Chapter 9.

THE INCREASE AND DECREASE OF THE PLANETS.

For a long time the unequal size of the planets was a mystery. To-day it is possible to assert with confidence that planets would not remain of equal size even if, by some coincidence, they should suddenly become of the same size.

It is well known that our planet receives each year meteoric bodies, and there is no doubt that these bodies come from other planets. But how it was possible for these bodies to go adrift from other planets remained a puzzling mystery, so much so that some scientists contented themselves with a mere assumption and held that meteoric bodies were thrown off by planets as a result of too rapid revolution. This assumption has, of course, no foundation, and we shall have to look elsewhere for an explanation of the origin of meteors.

Suppose we recall the manner in which the Rocky Mountains were formed and then take into account the tremendous air-pressure that was created by the collision of two planets. We shall then be obliged to concede that the separation of the two planets, following their collision, necessarily produced a rarefication of the air. When the colliding