

explosions cause earthquakes and volcanos; the force of these inflamed and confined matters in the bowels of the earth is beyond compare; by it cities have been swallowed up, provinces overturned and mountains overthrown. But, however great this force may be, and prodigious as the effects appear, we cannot assent to the opinion of those authors who suppose these subterraneous fires proceed from an immense abyss of flame in the center of the earth, neither can we give credit to the common notion that they proceed from a great depth below the surface of the earth, air being absolutely necessary for the support of inflammation. In examining the materials which issue from volcanos, even in the most violent eruptions, it appears very plain, that the furnace of the inflamed matters is not at any great depth, as they are similar to those found on the side of the mountain, only disfigured by calcination, and the melting of the metallic parts which they contain; and to be convinced that the matters cast out by volcanos do not come from any great depth, we have only to consider the height of the mountain, and judge of the immense force that would be necessary to cast up stones and minerals to the height of half a league;