

much larger cloud of dust crossed the mouth of a narrow valley down which we were moving. Waiting a little unperceived, to give the party time to widen their distance from us, we were soon once more upon the great basalt plain.

The last section of our ride proved to be in a geological sense one of the most interesting parts of the whole journey. We found that the older trachytic lavas of the hills had been deeply trenched by lateral valleys, and that all these

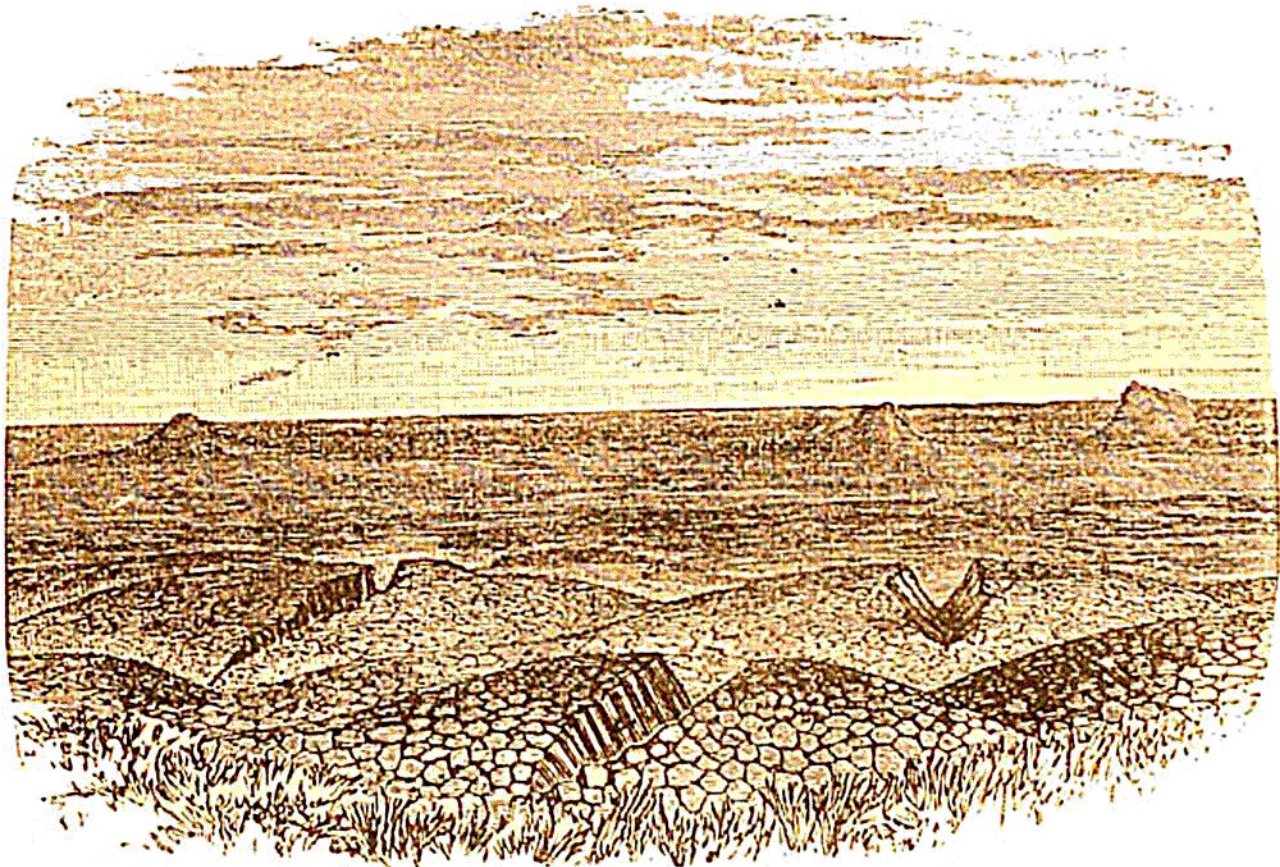


Fig. 29.—View on the Snake River. Basalt Plain with younger volcanic cones.

valleys had a floor of the black basalt that had been poured out as the last of the molten materials from the now extinct volcanoes. There were no visible cones or vents from which these floods of basalt could have proceeded. We rode for hours by the margin of a vast plain of basalt, stretching southward and westward as far as the eye could reach. It seemed as if the plain had been once a great