

lake or sea of molten rock which surged along the base of the hills, entering every valley, and leaving there a solid floor of bare black stone. We camped on this basalt plain near some springs of clear cold water which rise close to its edge. Wandering over the bare hummocks of rock, on many of which not a vestige of vegetation had yet taken root, I realised with vividness the truth of an assertion made first by Richthofen, but very generally neglected by geologists, that our modern volcanoes, such as Vesuvius or Etna, present us with by no means the grandest type of volcanic action, but rather belong to a time of failing activity. There have been periods of tremendous volcanic energy, when, instead of escaping from a local vent, like a Vesuvian cone, the lava has found its way to the surface by innumerable fissures opened for it in the solid crust of the globe over thousands of square miles. I felt that the structure of this and the other volcanic plains of the Far West furnish the true key to the history of the basaltic plateaux of Ireland and Scotland, which had been an enigma to me for many years.

At last we reached the railway that had been opened only a week or two before. Andy rode on ahead to the terminus, to intimate that we wished to be picked up. In a short while the train came up, and as we sat there in the bare, desolate valley, the engine slowed at sight of us. Our two companions were now to turn back and take a shorter route to Fort Ellis, but would be at least ten days on the march. We parted from them not without regret. Rough, but kindly, they had done everything to make the journey a memorably pleasant one to us. We took our seats in the car, and from the window, as we moved away, caught the last glimpse of our cavalcade, Andy in front with a riderless horse, and Jack in the rear with another.