

the site of the British Islands, rose up in so many thousands of fissures, and poured forth at the surface over so wide an area in the northwest.<sup>141</sup>

In Africa, basaltic plateaus cover large tracts of Abyssinia, where by the denuding effect of heavy rains they have been carved into picturesque hills, valleys, and ravines.<sup>142</sup> In India, an area of at least 200,000 square miles is covered by the singularly horizontal volcanic plateaus of the "Deccan Traps" (lavas and tuffs), which belong to the Cretaceous period and attain a thickness of 6000 feet or more.<sup>143</sup> The underlying platform of older rock, where it emerges from beneath the edges of the basalt table-land, is found to be in many places traversed by dikes; but no cones and craters are anywhere visible. In these, and probably in many other examples still undescribed, the formation of great plains or plateaus of level sheets of lava is to be explained by "fissure-eruptions" rather than by the operations of volcanoes of the familiar "cone and crater" type.

#### § 4. Geographical and geological distribution of volcanoes

Adequately to trace the distribution of volcanic action over the globe, account ought to be taken of dormant and extinct volcanoes, likewise of the proofs of volcanic outbreaks during earlier geological periods. When this is done, we learn, on the one hand, that innumerable districts have been the scene of prolonged volcanic activity, where there is now no underground commotion, and on the other, that volcanic outbursts have been apt to take place

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<sup>141</sup> Trans. Roy. Soc. Edin. xxxv. (1888), p. 21.

<sup>142</sup> Blanford's "Abyssinia," 1870, p. 181.

<sup>143</sup> Medlicott and Blanford, "Geology of India," p. 299.