

great platform might be one hundred feet thick, and from ten to fifteen miles broad, exceeding any which can be found in Central France. We may also suppose great tabular masses to occur at intervals, capping the summit of the Cotswold Hills between Gloucester and Oxford, by Northleach, Burford, and other towns. The wide valley of the Oxford clay would then occasion an interruption for many miles; but the same rocks might recur on the summit of Cumnor and Shotover Hills, and all the other oolitic eminences of that district. On the chalk of Berkshire, extensive plateaus, six or seven miles wide, would again be formed; and, lastly, crowning the highest sands of Highgate and Hampstead, we might behold some remnants of the current five or six hundred feet in thickness, causing those hills to rival, or even to surpass, in height, Salisbury Craigs and Arthur's Seat.

The distance between the extreme points here indicated would not exceed ninety miles in a direct line; and we might then add, at the distance of nearly two hundred miles from London, along the coast of Dorsetshire, and Devonshire, for example, a great mass of igneous rocks, to represent those of contemporary origin, which were produced beneath the level of the sea, where the island of Nyöe rose up.

Volume of ancient and modern flows of lava compared. — Yet, gigantic as must appear the scale of these modern volcanic operations, we must be content to regard them as perfectly insignificant in comparison to currents of the primeval ages, if we embrace the theoretical views of some geologists of great celebrity. Thus, we are informed by Professor Brongniart, in his last work, that “aux époques géognostiques anciennes, tous les phénomènes géologiques se passaient dans des dimensions *centuples* de celles qu'ils présentent aujourd'hui.”* Had Skaptár Jokul, therefore, been a volcano of the olden time, it would have poured forth lavas at a single eruption a hundred times more voluminous than those which were witnessed by the present generation in 1783. But this can never have been intended by M. Brongniart; for were we to multiply the two currents before described by a hundred, and first assume that their height and breadth remain the same, they would stretch out to the length of nine thousand miles, or about half as far again as from the pole to the equator. If, on the other hand, we suppose their length and breadth to remain the same, and multiply their height in an equal proportion, the mean elevation of the volcanic mass becomes ten thousand feet, and its greatest more than double that of the Himalaya mountains. It will immediately be granted that, among the older formations, no igneous rock of such colossal magnitude has yet been met with; nay, it would be most difficult to point out a mass of ancient date, distinctly referable to a single eruption, which should even rival in volume the matter poured out from Skaptár Jokul in 1783.

Eruption of Jorullo in 1759. — As another example of the stupendous scale of modern volcanic eruptions, I may mention that of

* Tableau des Terrains qui composent l'Ecorce du Globe, p. 52. Paris, 1829.