

series of picturesque gorges and rapids. Looked at from any point on its surface, it appears as a vast level plain like that of a lake-bottom, though more detailed examination may detect a slope in one or more directions, and may thereby obtain evidence as to the sites of the chief openings from which the basalt was poured forth. The uniformity of surface has been produced either by the lava flowing over a plain or lake-bottom, or by the complete effacement of an original and undulating contour of the ground under

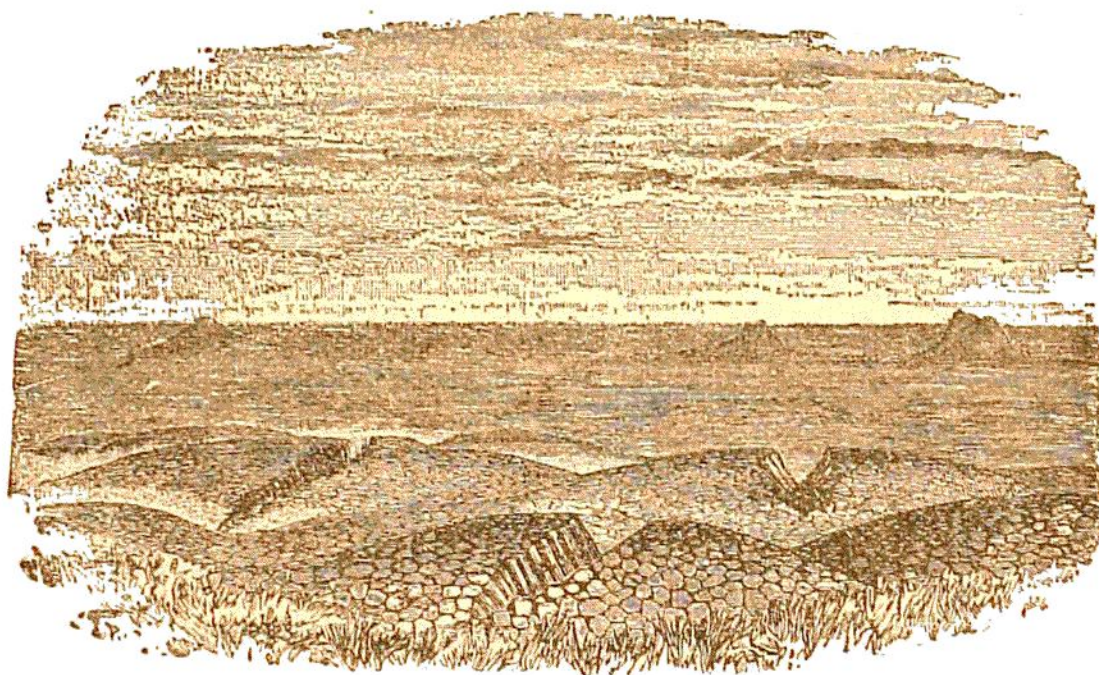


Fig. 70.—View of the great Basalt-plain of the Snake River, Idaho, with recent cones.

hundreds of feet of volcanic rock in successive sheets. The lava rolling up to the base of the mountains has followed the sinuosities of their margin, as the waters of a lake follow its promontories and bays. The author crossed the Snake River plain in 1879, and likewise rode for many miles along its northern edge. He found the surface to be everywhere marked with low hummocks or ridges of bare black basalt, the surfaces of which exhibited a reticulated pavement of the ends of columns. In some places, there was a percep-