

lat.  $32^{\circ} 55'$  N., long.  $47^{\circ} 58'$  W., indicating a chasm between the coast of America and the Western Islands, which might easily engulf the whole range of the Himalayas. This space probably represents the deepest part of the North Atlantic; but there is little doubt that these depths are greatly exaggerated. The average depth of the ocean bed does not appear to be much more than 2,000 fathoms (12,000 feet), about equal to the mean height of the elevated table lands of Asia.

The thin shell of water which covers so much of the face of the earth occupies all the broad general depressions in its crust, and it is only limited and more abrupt prominences which project above its surface as masses of land with their crowning plateaux and mountain ranges. The Atlantic Ocean covers 30,000,000 of square miles and the Arctic Sea 3,000,000, and taken together they almost exactly equal the united areas of Europe, Asia, and Africa—the whole of the old world; and yet there seem to be few depressions in its bed to a greater depth than 15,000 or 20,000 feet—a little more than the height of Mont Blanc—and except in the neighbourhood of the shores there is only one very marked mass of mountains, the volcanic group of the Açores.

The central and southern parts of the Atlantic appear to be an old depression, probably at all events coæval with the deposition of the Jurassic formations of Europe, and throughout these long ages the tendency of that great body of water has no doubt been to ameliorate the outlines, softening down asperities by the disintegrating action of its waves