

what would be found by explorers in the very heart of Africa. His theory, now abundantly confirmed by African travellers, was, that the central portion of Africa is basin-shaped, consisting of a great plateau intersected by huge lakes and marshes, and bounded on the east and west by elevated ridges. The drainage of this huge plateau, it is now ascertained, falls down the southern watershed to the Tanganyika Lake; towards the north-west, the drainage is into the Niger and Lake Tchad; while the Victoria and Albert Nyanza Lakes are the fountains of the mighty and mysterious stream of the Nile. Sir Roderick Murchison tells us that Equatorial Africa bears marks of a higher antiquity than any other region of the globe, and that the animals and races of man inhabiting it are probably older than any upon the earth. In an address to the Geographical Society, Sir Roderick said, "Such as South Africa is now, such have been her main features during countless ages, anterior to the creation of the human race; for the old rocks which form her outer fringe unquestionably circled round an interior marshy or lacustrine country, in which the *Dicynodon* flourished, and at a time when not a single animal was similar to any living thing which now inhabits the surface of the globe. The present central and meridian zone of waters, whether lakes or marshes, extending from Lake Tchad to Lake Ngami, with hippopotami on their banks, are therefore but the great modern residual geographical phenomena of those of a mesozoic age. The differences, however, between the geological part of Africa and her present state are enormous. Since that primeval time the lands have been much elevated above the sea-level, eruptive rocks piercing in parts through them; deep rents and defiles have been suddenly formed in the subtending ridges through which some rivers escape outwards."

Thus, according to Murchison, the vast plateau of Africa has never been submerged, nor does it appear to have undergone any changes, either by volcanic or aqueous action. The absence of all marine deposits of tertiary and detrital age shows that this region has never been under water, in any of those geological periods during which we have such evidences of vast depressions, elevations and denudations in other portions of the globe. It could not have been by former glaciers that those vast lake-basins were excavated, for under the equator such action is impossible, and, moreover, there are no moraines or transported debris which invariably

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