

A VOLCANO THAT NEVER ERUPTED.  
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By

U. S. G. S.

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An incipient volcanic eruption that came near being a live volcano in the remote past is described in a geologic folio on the Apishapa region, Colo., a publication of the Department of the Interior, Geological Survey. The region is part of the semiarid plains and mesas that lie at the east foot of the Rocky Mountains near Pueblo. The rocks at the surface are largely soft shales and thin limestones that give rise to flat-topped mesas and "badlands." In the center of the area thick resistant sandstones rise in a low dome, into which Apishapa and Huerfano rivers and their tributaries have cut deep, vertical-walled canyons. Small vertical dikes of ancient lava cut these rocks at many places and point toward the towering Spanish Peaks, to the southwest, once a great center of volcanic activity.

In the sharp dome in the midst of the nearly flat strata of the area some of the lower rocks of the region are exposed, and it is believed that this doming of the strata was caused by an injection of lava beneath the rocks now exposed, which, if it could have burst through this cover, would have formed a volcano. Similar domes not far distant in the Great Plains have been eroded deeply enough to expose the intrusive lava. These "volcanoes" that never reached the eruptive stage are common in many portions of the West.

The Apishapa folio tells the story of the accumulation, millions of years ago, of the thick layers of sedimentary rocks in a great inland sea in which strange marine animals lived, of the formation of coal and fire clay in the hard sandstone strata that contain imprints of prostrate trees and of the leaves of the coal-forming plants, of the great gorges that were cut through sandstone hills and ridges of hard rock, and of the way in which the porous rocks store water that is tapped by deep artesian wells. The folio contains 3 maps of the region and 13 half-tone scenic views, besides numerous pen sketches of interesting features. It is sold by the Geological Survey for 25 cents.