

were too near the point of our destination to turn back without fully satisfying our curiosity. We finally reached the second ledge, and soon came to the edge of it; we were then directly over the pool or lake of fire, at the distance of about five hundred feet above it, and the light was so strong that it enabled me to read the smallest print. This pool is fifteen hundred long by one thousand feet wide, and of an oval figure.

I was struck with the absence of any noise, except a low murmuring, like that which is heard from the boiling of a thick liquid. The ebullition was, (as is the case where the heat is applied to one side of a vessel,) most violent near the northern side. The vapour and steam that were constantly escaping, were so rarefied as not to impede the view, and only became visible in the bright cloud above us, which seemed to sink and rise alternately. We occasionally perceived stones, or masses of red-hot matter, ejected to the height of about seventy feet, and falling back into the lake again.

The lake was apparently rising, and wanted but a few feet of overflowing its banks. When I began to reflect upon the position we were in, its insecurity, and the vast and deep fires beneath, with the high basaltic walls encompassing us on all sides, the sulphurous fumes and broad glare, throwing such enormous masses of stone in strong relief by their own fusion, I found it difficult to comprehend how such a reservoir can thus be pent up, and be viewed in such close proximity, without accident or danger. The whole party was perfectly silent, and the countenance of each individual expressed the feeling of awe and wonder which I felt in so great a degree myself, and which the scene was so well calculated to excite.

No one can see all this and yet doubt the theory of the igneous fluidity of the centre of the earth. All combustible causes that we are acquainted with, are totally inadequate to produce such an effect. The whole seemed boiling up like a fountain, differing only in density and colour.

The apparent flow to its southern part, is only because the ebullition on the north side causes it to be higher, and the waves it produces consequently pass over to the opposite side.

We returned to our tents towards midnight, much fatigued, but found sleep impossible after the excitement of such a scene.

At daylight the thermometer stood at 43°, and there was much deposit from the steam-holes. The barometrical height of the encampment on the west side of the crater, was found to be three thousand nine hundred and seventy feet.

The mortar was again fired, and soon after a rebellion was found to