

width from six hundred to two thousand feet, and has been overrun in various directions by streams of lava, varying in size from that of a serpent to an immense trunk or tunnel, which, after spreading, pass down into some chasm and are lost. The view around has nothing earthly in it; one cannot comprehend how rock can be thus fused without the agency of fuel. Our notions of the solidity of stone must here undergo a total change; and there appeared nothing belonging to this world at hand with which to form a comparison.

Our party seemed absolutely lost in this immense pit. It takes some time before the eye can embrace the whole, or become in any way accustomed to the scene around; and I therefore ceased to wonder at the discrepancies in the descriptions I had heard of it. From this cause, and the want of any accurate drawings by preceding visitors, I was unable to arrive at any distinct knowledge of the changes it has undergone; but I hope that our observations and survey will prevent this from being the case hereafter.

The varieties of lava that are met with are not the least striking part of this phenomenon. The description which appears to predominate is of a dark hue, and metallic lustre; it lies in a layer a foot thick, and is quite solid: the others are less dense, more vesicular, and vitreous. Each separate flow seems to differ from the succeeding one, and can be easily recognised. It afforded us some amusement to trace the extent and character of the several beds. That which was ignited during our stay was in many parts so vitreous as to be almost obsidian. Pumice is generally found in small lumps on the plain above; but I do not now remember, nor does my note-book make any mention, that pumice had been seen in the crater.

As the layers or strata of basalt increase in thickness, they become more compact. The absence of clinkers and of any flow of lava on the plain, prove conclusively that Kilauea has never overflowed its banks.

The crevice to the south extends for a great distance, and may be traced by the steam issuing from it; it is not, however, to be considered as continuous, for the cracks are of different lengths, and sometimes overlap each other, and again are intermitted for hundreds of yards. Large quantities of Pele's hair was seen covering the plain.

In order to show how difficult it is to fix upon the recollection the actual state of the crater, and the position of things around, I may state, that one of our gentlemen insisted upon it that the large "blowing cone," near the north side of the black ledge, had been thrown up since our first visit, although it was then, as it continued to be, one of the most conspicuous objects in the crater, and likely to attract particular notice. It was difficult to convince him that it had been there