

an altitude of nearly two miles, the circumference of its base exceeding 180. Compared with this prodigious mass of igneous products, Vesuvius sinks into insignificance; for while the lava-streams of the latter do not exceed seven miles, those of Etna are from fifteen to thirty miles in length, five in breadth, and from fifty to one hundred feet in thickness.* The grand feature of Etna is the *Val del Bove*, a vast plain, partially encircled by subordinate volcanic mountains, some of which are covered with forests, while others are bare and arid like those of Auvergne. This plain, which is five miles in diameter, has been repeatedly deluged by streams of lava, and presents a surface more uneven and rugged than that of the most tempestuous sea; it is inclosed on three sides by precipitous rocks, from 2000 to 3000 feet high. The face of these precipices is broken by vertical walls of lava, which stand out in relief, and are exceedingly picturesque, and of immense altitude.† The base of Etna, for an extent of twelve miles upwards, is richly cultivated, and abounds in vineyards and pastures, with towns, monasteries, and villages. The middle region is woody, being covered with forests of oak and chestnut, and a luxuriant vegetation. From about a mile below the summit, all is sterility and desolation, and the highest point is covered with eternal snow.

* Daubeny on Volcanoes.

† Lyell's Principles of Geology, vol. ii. p. 416.