

of light red and grey vesicular lava, lying in horizontal strata varying in thickness from one to forty feet. In a few places the different masses were rent in perpendicular and oblique directions, from top to bottom, either by earthquakes, or by other violent convulsions of the ground connected with the action of the adjacent volcano. After walking some distance over the plain, which in several places sounded hollow under our feet, we came to the edge of the great crater. Before us yawned an immense gulf in the form of a crescent, about two miles in length from north-east to south-west, one mile in width, and 800 feet deep. The bottom was covered with lava, and the south-west and northern parts were one vast flood of burning matter. Fifty-one conical islands of varied form and size, containing as many craters, rose either round the edge or from the surface of the burning lake. Twenty-two constantly emitted columns of grey smoke, or pyramids of brilliant flame: and at the same time vomited from their ignited mouths streams of lava, which rolled in blazing torrents down their black indented sides into the boiling mass below (see Tab. 143). The existence of these conical craters led us to conclude, that the boiling caldron of lava did not form the focus of the volcano; that this mass of melted lava was comparatively shallow; and that the basin which contained it was separated by a stratum of solid matter from the great volcanic abyss, which constantly poured out its melted con-