

afforded by the occurrence of basaltic fragments, in which a sphere is enveloped by a polyhedral figure; and from the fact, that when basalt is not

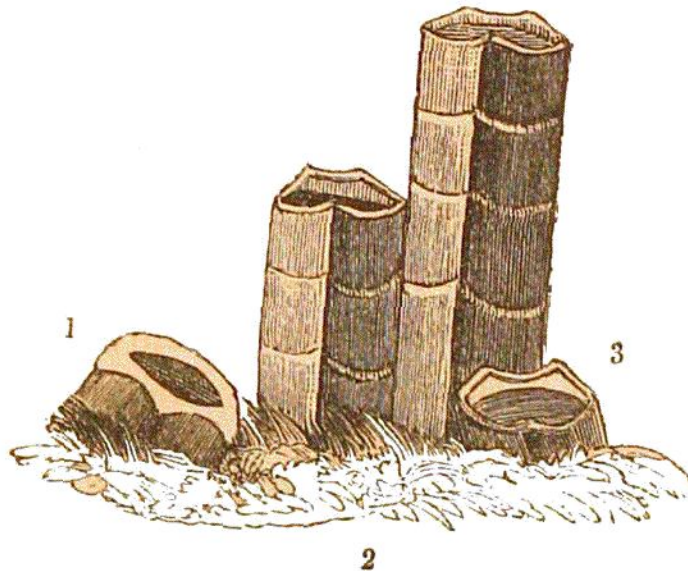


TABLE 146.—BASALTIC COLUMNS, FROM THE GIANTS' CAUSEWAY.

Fig 1. A block partially decomposed, exhibiting the primitive spheroidal figure of the prism. 2. Portions of columns, consisting of several joints. 3. The concave surface of a joint.

divided into regular prismatic columns, it often forms laminated spheroids, which varying in size, constitute by aggregation extensive masses of rock. The position of the columns presents every variety from the perpendicular to the horizontal; this has arisen from corresponding differences in the direction of the cooling surfaces, for the prisms are found to be always at right angles with the surface of refrigeration; the horizontal, inclined, and curved columns of basalt, which occur at Staffa and elsewhere, have originated from this cause. Before passing to the examination of the unstratified rocks,