http://www.geology.19thcenturyscience.org/books/1852-Humboldt-Travels/README.htm

glued to the extremity of the brink. On the west the rock is perforated; and a large opening gives a view of the horizon of the sea. The force of the elastic vapours perhaps formed this natural aperture, at the time of some inundation of lava thrown out from the crater.

The inside of this funnel indicates a volcano, which for thousands of years has vomited no fire but from its sides. This conclusion is not founded on the absence of great openings, which might be expected in the bottom of the Caldera. Those whose experience is founded on personal observation, know that several volcanoes, in the intervals of an eruption, appear filled up, and almost extinguished; but that in these same mountains, the crater of the volcano exhibits layers of scoriæ, rough, sonorous, and shining. We observe hillocks and intumescences caused by the action of the elastic vapours, cones of broken scoriæ, and ashes which cover the funnels. None of these phenomena characterise the crater of the peak of Teneriffe; its bottom is not in the state which ensues at the close of an eruption. From the lapse of time, and the action of the vapours, the inside walls are detached, and have covered the basin with great blocks of lithoid lavas.

The bottom of the Caldera is reached without danger. In a volcano, the activity of which is principally directed towards the summit, such as Vesuvius, the depth of the crater varies before and after each eruption; but at the peak of Teneriffe the depth appears to have remained unchanged for a long time. Eden, in 1715, estimated it at 115 feet; Cordier, in 1803, at 110 feet. Judging by mere inspection, I should have thought the funnel of still less depth. Its present state is that of a solfatara; and it is rather an object of curious investigation, than of imposing aspect. The majesty of the site consists in its elevation above the level of the sea, in the profound solitude of these lofty regions, and in the immense space over which the eye ranges from the summit of the mountain.

The wall of compact lava, forming the enclosure of the Caldera, is snow-white at its surface. The same colour prevails in the inside of the Solfatara of Puzzuoli. When we break these lavas, which might be taken at some distance for calcareous stone, we find in them a blackish brown nucleus. Porphyry, with basis of pitch-stone, is whitened