

to forty feet in height. It measures about eighty feet in length and sixty in breadth, and is filled to the brim with a perfectly clear and limpid water, which, owing to the snowy whiteness of the stalactites on its borders, appears of a rich turquoise blue, occasionally *rain-bowed* with lustrous opal tints.

On the edge of the basin the thermometer stands at 183° F.; in the middle, where the water rises to an elevation of several feet, the thermometer stands at boiling point (212° F.)

Immense clouds of vapour, reflecting the exquisite blue colour of the basin, swirl and hover above it, and impede the curious gaze; but the hoarse sound of the boiling waters is ever distinctly audible. Sometimes, according to the natives, the entire mass of seething fluid is ejected with almost inconceivable force, and then, at a depth of thirty or forty feet, may be seen the empty basin, which, however, fills very speedily. If this fact be true, the spring of the Té-ta-Rata is undoubtedly a geyser, acting at long intervals, like the Great Geyser of Iceland; only here, the basin being much larger, the quantity discharged must necessarily be more considerable.\*

The water has a brackish flavour, but not strongly disagreeable, as in the springs of Iceland. The deposit is a silicious stalactite. In overflowing the basin, this thermal water has formed a series of ledges, or stages, which, white, and, as it were, hewn out of Parian marble, present a *coup d'œil* beyond all description. You must have ascended these alabaster steps, O reader! and examined the peculiarities of their structure to comprehend their wonderful magnificence.

The foot of the hill stretches far forward into the Rotomahana: above commences a range of terraces, containing several basins, whose depth corresponds to the height of the steps of this gigantic staircase. Each step is bordered by a slightly elevated rim, over which a host of beautiful stalactites falls upon the step underneath; and each presents a platform of greater or lesser extent, enclosing one or more basins of an exquisite azure. These are so many natural baths, which

\* [Hochstetten, *Voyage à la Nouvelle Zélande*, in the "Tour du Monde;" vol. for 1866, p. 303.]