

through these numerous craters into the upper reservoir. The sides of the gulf, though composed of different strata of ancient lava, were perpendicular for about 400 feet, and rose from a wide horizontal ledge of solid black lava of irregular breadth, but extending completely round. Beneath this ledge the sides sloped gradually towards the burning lake, which was, as nearly as could be computed, 300 or 400 feet lower. It was evident that the large crater had been recently filled with liquid lava up to this black ledge, and had, by some subterraneous canal, emptied itself into the sea or under the low land on the shore. The gray, and in some places apparently calcined, sides of the great crater; the fissures which intersected the surface of the plain; the long sulphur-banks on the opposite side of the abyss; the vigorous action of the numerous small craters on its borders; the dense columns of vapour and smoke that rose at the north and west end of the plain, together with the ridge of steep rocks by which it was encircled, and which in some places were probably 300 or 400 feet in perpendicular height; combined to form an immense volcanic panorama, whose effect was greatly augmented by the constant roaring of the furnaces below.

The gigantic crater of Kilauea seems to realize the ancient fable of Phlegethon,

“ Whose waves of rushing fire inflame with rage.”

The American naturalist, Dana, says that the glow of the lava is so intense as to irradiate the passing rain-clouds with beautiful iris-bows. He describes the lava as an agitated sea, which is nearly as liquid as water, whose waves clash like breakers on the edges of the terraces, and, sometimes rising to the height of the topmost crag, is precipitated over it in seething cascades. Isolated jets are frequently thrown up to an elevation of 60 and 70 feet. After such an explosion the molten lava subsides, congeals, and grows black: but suddenly the crust is broken anew, and traversed by fissures of dazzling radiance; black fragments, upheaved, float on the boiling surface, like masses of ice on a river at the epoch of its floods. Yet all this change and commotion take place—so vast is the orifice of the crater—in a complete silence, and without any convulsion of the ground.

Of the mountain, Mouna Loa, itself, a fearful eruption took place in 1840, and it has since given repeated evidences of its activity. An eruption also occurred in 1843 from a crater about 2000 feet below the summit. A river of lava pouring down the mountain-side, rolled over the elevated plain between Mouna Loa and Mouna Kea for a distance of five-and-twenty miles. But this was exceeded during the eruption of August 1855, when the “fire-stream” continued to flow for many months, and by July 1856 had accomplished a distance of sixty miles from its source. In January 1859 the volcano was again in convulsion, flinging up shafts of *white-hot* lava to the estimated height of 800 or 1000 feet. Numerous streams went hissing, burning, and destroying down the mountain-sides, and carried desolation in every direction.

An eruption also occurred in 1865, accompanied by the usual phenomena; by leaping jets of lava, whose wild eëry play continued for twenty days and nights, and by explosions so loud that they were heard at a distance of forty miles.