

our house. The abyss, which is at a height of 4000 feet, on the side of Mauna Loa, has the appearance of a large pit, which is estimated to be nine miles in circumference. The guides informed us that there was nothing to fear; the edge of the crater was approachable with safety, except during an eruption. After an hour of very difficult climbing and scrambling, the lowest level of the crater was reached. My highest expectations were more than realised, and I can hardly find words suitable to describe my sensations after seeing such a spectacle. All was confusion and commotion; for the lava, like red-hot metal, broke about with a surging noise on the rough craggy cliffs, cooling as it fell over the edge, where it hung in festoons. With all this, I noticed but little smoke or vapour, and what there was seemed carried away by a light breeze.

Here we remained for a long time, so engrossed by the grand spectacle, that when it was decided to return, by some means we got on the wrong track, and were for more than an hour seeking the right road; however, eventually we reached the hotel, nearly tired out.

Kilauea never overflows its vast crater, but appears to burst a passage for its lava through the mountain-side when relief is necessary, and then the destruction is usually fearful. Fortunately this seldom occurs, for it is many years ago that so great an eruption took place: then it rent its stomach, and