

Within the past few days word has been received from Mr. L. W. De Vis-Norton, at Kilauea Volcano, of the remarkable activity of this famous crater. He states that "tremendous changes are in progress at Kilauea, and there is no indication whatsoever of any cessation of the monumental rising of the entire vast lava column. . . . Over the southwest brink, a wide stream of glistening lava is sluggishly flowing in the direction of the Ka'u Desert, not with the spectacular cascading torrents of the southeastern flows of last March, but with a steady, stealthy gliding, which gains ground slowly at its face, but which piles up into tremendous masses from its source forward. Upon this southwestern side there is no longer any indication of the Hale-mau-mau Pit."

A vivid description is given of the lava plateau which has been heaped up over the former pit; "it is in reality a vast tilted roof which has been built entirely over Hale-mau-mau; broken in four or five places by almost circular spatter-walls erected thereon, within whose circumference are lakes, fountaining heavily and flinging molten torrents outward over the walls to flow onward over the surface of the roof."

The effect is a peculiar one, for as the lava seeks the hollows and fills up irregularities, it is producing an almost perfectly smooth sweep of floor over a mile in circumference. This condition will be stable for several hours, and then, as though the superincumbent weight had become insupportable, vast sections of the plateau will sink inward, releasing from beneath gigantic torrents of crimson and orange liquid lava, which surge upward and roar away over the adjacent surfaces, causing them in their turn to collapse and provide more pyrotechnics upon a tremendous scale, and repeating the process over and over again.

"Were it not for the fact that the southwestern overflow is following a *most unusual process* of damming itself back in walls of its own building as it advances," states Mr. Norton, "we should be witnessing such a torrential discharge of lava as *has never been seen* at Kilauea within the memory of man."

It is becoming increasingly evident that the present Hale-mau-mau rise is the usual equinoctial rise upon a greatly magnified scale, due partly to the abnormal squeezing of the Hawaiian fissure system, and to the unusual smallness of the previous fall after the last solstice, when the lava column withdrew little more than a hundred feet.

Starting its upward movement from a mean level some two hundred feet *above* the normal, it is only natural that the column should have reached

the pit-rim a full month earlier than was anticipated. Since the column will, in the ordinary course of events, continue to rise until the time of the equinox in March next, the overflow may be expected to then attain an unprecedented magnitude.

#### A PROPOSED AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MAMMALOGISTS

A COMMITTEE of representative American mammalogists, including men from different parts of the country in its membership, has recently been at work on plans to organize a society for the promotion of interest in the study of mammalogy. It is intended that the society shall devote itself to the subject in a broad way, including investigations of habits, life histories, evolution and ecology. The plans call for the publication of a journal in which both popular and technical matter will be presented, for holding meetings both general and sectional, aiding research, and engaging in such other activities as may be deemed expedient. It is hoped to secure the active participation of all interested. The organization meeting will be held at the New National Museum, Washington, D. C., April 3 and 4, 1919, sessions commencing at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. No program of papers has been planned for this meeting. The organization committee includes the following: Hartley H. T. Jackson, Chairman, U. S. Biological Survey; Walter P. Taylor, Secretary, U. S. Biological Survey; Glover M. Allen, Boston Society of Natural History; J. A. Allen, American Museum of Natural History; Joseph Grinnell, University of California; N. Hollister, National Zoological Park; Arthur H. Howell, U. S. Biological Survey; Wilfred H. Osgood, Field Museum of Natural History; Edward A. Preble, U. S. Biological Survey; Witmer Stone, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. Further information will be furnished by either the chairman or the secretary, to whom applications for charter membership should be transmitted.

#### SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

THE American Institute of Mining Engineers at its meeting in New York on Febru-