

THE
FIERY MUSEUM,

OR THE

BURNING MOUNTAINS:

Giving an Account of those wonderful Volcanoes

so well known by the Name of

VESUVIOUS and ÆTNA.

To which is added, a very remarkable Trial concerning a Man who was driven into the

FLAMES OF STROMBOLI,

A Volcano not far from

MOUNT ÆTNA.

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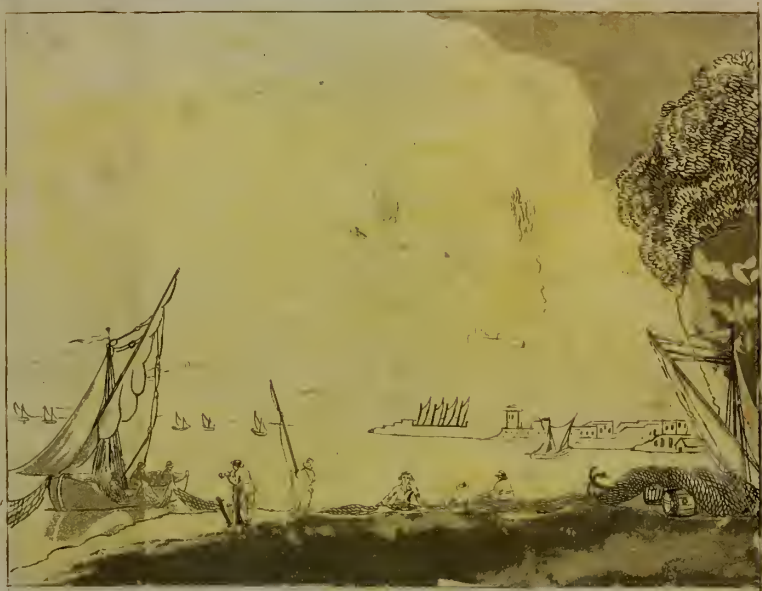
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THE
FIERY MUSEUM,

OR THE
Burning Mountains ;

CONTAINING

Authentic Accounts of those dreadful Eruptions which
have so frequently broke out at

MOUNTS

VESUVIUS and ÆTNA,

With a Circumstantial Narrative of their Eruptions
in one of which, (at Vesuvius) the

TOWN OF OTTAIANO

was nearly

Reduced to Ashes ;

With every particular relative to those great Volcanoes
which have so astonished the surrounding
Nations, and the World.

By *WILLIAM CURK.*

Sugger Press, Lewes :

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. BAXTER.

1808.

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G + S 1808*

THE

MUSEUM

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE

COMMISSION

OF THE STATE OF OHIO

REPORT

FOR THE YEAR

1850

AND

TOWN OF COLUMBUS

1851

PRINTED BY

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COMMISSION

OF THE STATE OF OHIO

1851

DESCRIPTION

OF

MOUNT VESUVIUS.

MOUNT VESUVIUS a celebrated volcano of Italy, is situated six miles from the city of Naples. This mountain has two tops; one of which only goes by the name of Vesuvius, the other being now called Somma; but Sir William Hamilton is of opinion, that the latter is what the ancients called Vesuvius.

The perpendicular height of Vesuvius is only 3700 feet; the ascent from the foot to the top is three Italian miles. One side of the mountain is well cultivated and fertile, producing great plenty of vines; but the south and west sides are entirely covered with cinders and ashes; while a sulphureous smoke constantly issues from the top, sometimes attended with

the most violent explosions of stones, the emission of great streams of lava, and all the other attendants of a most formidable volcano. The first of these eruptions recorded in history took place in the year 79; at which time the two cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were entirely buried under the stones and ashes thrown out. Incredible mischief was also done to the neighbouring country, and numbers of people lost their lives, among whom was Pliny the Elder.

It is the opinion of the best judges, however, that this eruption was by no means the first that had ever happened. The very streets of those cities which were at that time overwhelmed are said to be partly paved with lava. Since that time 30 different eruptions have been recorded, some of which have been extremely violent. In the year 1538, a mountain three miles in circumference and a quarter of a mile in perpendicular height, was thrown up in the course of one night.

In the summer of 1707, there happened another dreadful eruption, attended with such a rumbling and bellowing of the mountain, as far exceeded the report of the largest artillery.

Having thrown up clouds of ashes into the air for several days and nights, and a shower of stones that killed both men and cattle, it began to throw out a liquid torrent of bitumen (a fat glutinous earth) which resembled a gentle stream of fire, and cooling in its progress, became as hard as flint at the bottom, but more porous and spongy on the surface. After this, frequent flashes of fire, like lightning, proceeded from its mouth, followed by loud claps of thunder; and such a thick cloud of ashes hovered over Naples, that the darkness was equal to that of midnight. Next day, by the shifting of the wind, the ashes were driven another way; and the mountain having raged after this manner about fifteen days, the eruption entirely ceased.

A gentleman of the name of Berkley gives the following description of an eruption which occurred in the year 1717. On the 5th of June, the mountain was perceived to throw a little out of the crater, and the same continued the day following. The 7th, in the evening, it began a hedious bellowing, which continued till noon the next day, causing the windows and even the houses in Naples to shake. From

that time it vomited vast quantities of melted matter to the south, which streamed down the side of the mountain like a pot boiling over. On the 10th, it roared and groaned most dreadfully; of which one cannot form a juster idea than by imagining a mixed sound, made up of the raging of a tempest, the murmur of a troubled sea, and the roaring of thunder and artillery confused together. This induced Mr. Berkley, with three or four more in company, to visit the mountain; and they arrived at the burning river about midnight, when the roaring of the volcano was exceeding loud and horrible. There was a mixture of colours in the cloud over the crater, a ruddy dismal light in the air over the fiery torrent, and ashes continually showered upon their heads; all which circumstances, augmented by the horror and silence of the night, made a most uncommon and surprising appearance. "Suppose," says the above gentleman, "a vast torrent of liquid fire rolling along the side of a mountain, and with incredible fury bearing down vines, olives, fig-trees, houses, and every thing that stood in its way." The largest stream seemed half a mile broad at least, and five miles long;

and Mr. B. walked so far up the mountain by the side of this burning river, that he was obliged to retire with precipitation, the sulphureous stream having surprised him, and almost taken away his breath. They returned about three in the morning, hearing constantly the the murmur and groaning of the mountain, which occasionally burst into louder peals, throwing up huge spouts of fire and burning stones, which in their fall resembled the stars in our rockets. Sometimes there appeared two or three distinct columns of flame, and sometimes only a single one that seemed to fill the whole crater. It was judged that the flames and fiery stones were shot more than a thousand feet perpendicular above the summit of the volcano; which continued raging in this manner, more or less, till the 18th, when the mountain remained perfectly quiet.—During the eruption, the cinders showered down so fast at Naples, that the people were obliged to screen themselves under whatever would afford them shelter; and vessels at the distance of twenty leagues were exposed to the same inconvenience.

In the year 1766, Sir William Hamilton,

ambassador to his Sicilian Majesty, began to observe the phenomena of this mountain; and since that time the public has been favoured with much more exact and authentic accounts of the various changes which have taken place in Vesuvius than what were to be had before.

The first great eruption taken notice of by this gentleman was that of 1767, which, though very violent, was mild in comparison with that of 1538.

From this time (1767) Vesuvius never ceased for ten years to send forth smoke, nor were there many months in which it did not throw out stones, scoriae, and cinders; which increasing to a certain degree, were usually followed by lava; so that from the year 1767 to 1779 there were nine eruptions, some of them very considerable. In the month of August that year, however, an eruption took place, which, for its extraordinary and awful appearance, may be reckoned among the most remarkable of any that was ever recorded.

The mountain continued in a state of fermentation during the whole month of July. Explosions and rumbling noises were heard; quantities of smoke were thrown up with great

violence, sometimes with red hot stones, scoriæ, and ashes ; and towards the end of the month, they increased to such a degree as to exhibit, in the night, the most beautiful fire-works that can be imagined.

The volcano appeared most violently agitated on Thursday the 5th of August ; and a white sulphureous smoke issued impetuously from its crater, one puff seeming to impel another ; so that a mass of them was soon accumulated, to appearance, four times the height and size of the volcano itself. These clouds of smoke were exceedingly white, so that the whole resembled an immense accumulation of bales of the whitest cotton. in the midst of this very white smoke, vast quantities of stones, scoriæ, and ashes were thrown up to the height of 2000 feet ; and a quantity of liquid lava, seemingly very heavy, was lifted up just high enough to clear the rim of the crater, and take its way down the sides of the mountain. This lava having run for some hours, suddenly ceased, just before it had reached the cultivated parts of the mountain, near four miles from the spot where it issued. The heat, all this day, was intolerable at the towns of Somma

and Ottaviano; and was sensibly felt at Palma and Lauri, which are much farther off. Red ashes fell so thick on the two former, that the air was darkened, so that objects could not be distinguished at the distance of ten feet. Long filaments of vitrified matter, like spun glass, were mixed and fell with these ashes; several birds in cages were suffocated, and the leaves of the trees in the neighbourhood of Somma were covered with white and very corrosive salt.

On the 7th, about 12 at night, the fermentation of the mountain seemed greatly to increase. Several beautiful picturesque effects had been observed from the reflection of the deep red fire within the crater of Vesuvius, and which mounted high amongst those huge clouds on the top of it: when a summer storm, called in that country a Tropea, came on suddenly and blended its heavy watery clouds with the sulphureous and mineral ones, which were already like so many other mountains piled up on the top of the volcano. At this moment a fountain of fire was shot up to a great height, casting so bright a light, that the smallest objects were clearly perceived six miles from

Vesuvius. The black stormy clouds, passing swiftly over, and at times covering the whole or a part of the bright column of fire, at other times clearing away and giving a full view of it, with the various tints produced, by its reverberated light, on the white clouds above in contrast with the pale flashes of forked lightning that attended the tropea, formed such a scene as no power of art can express. One of his Sicilian Majesty's gamekeepers, who was out in the fields near Ottaiano whilst this storm was at its height, was surprized to find the drops of rain scald his face and hands; a phenomenon probably occasioned by the clouds having acquired a great degree of heat in passing through the above-mentioned column of fire.

On the 8th, the mountain was quiet till towards six o'clock in the evening, when a great smoke began to gather over its crater; and about an hour after a rumbling subterraneous noise was heard in the neighbourhood of the volcano; the usual throws of red-hot stones, and scorixæ, began and increased every instant. The crater, viewed through a telescope, seemed much enlarged by the violence of last night's

explosions, and the little mountain on the top was entirely gone. About nine o'clock a most violent report was heard at Pertici and its neighbourhood, which shook the houses to such a degree as made the inhabitants run out into the streets. Many windows were broken, and walls cracked by the concussion of the air on this occasion, though the noise was but faintly heard at Naples. In an instant a fountain of liquid transparent fire began to rise, and gradually increasing arrived at last at the amazing height of ten thousand feet and upwards. Puffs of smoke, as black as can possibly be imagined, succeeded one another hastily, and accompanied the red-hot, transparent, and liquid lava, interrupting its splendid brightness here and there by patches of the darkest hue. Within these puffs of smoke, at the very moment of emission, a bright but pale electrical fire was observed playing briskly about in zig-zag lines. The wind was southwest, and, though gentle, was sufficient to carry these puffs of smoke out of the column of fire; and a collection of them by degrees formed a black and extensive curtain behind it; in other parts of the sky it was perfectly clear,

and the stars bright. The fiery fountain, of such immense magnitude, on the dark ground just mentioned, made the finest contrast imaginable; and the blaze of it reflected from the surface of the sea, which was at that time perfectly smooth, added greatly to this sublime view.

The lava, mixed with stones and scoriæ, having risen to the amazing height already mentioned, was partly directed by the wind towards Ottaiano, and partly falling, still red-hot and liquid, upon the top of Vesuvius, covered its whole cone, part of that of the summit of Somma, and the valley between them. The falling matter being nearly as inflamed and vivid as that which was continually issuing fresh from the crater, formed with it one complete body of fire, which could not be less than two miles and a half in breadth, and of the extraordinary height above-mentioned, cast a heat to the distance of at least six miles round. The brushwood on the mountain of Somma was soon in a blaze, and the flame of it being of a different colour from the deep red of the matter thrown out by the volcano, and from the silvery blue of the electrical fire, still added to

to the contrast of this most extraordinary scene.

The black cloud, increasing greatly, once bent its way towards the city of Naples, and threatened it with speedy destruction; for it was charged with electrical fire, which kept constantly darting about in bright zig-zag lines. This fire, however, rarely quitted the cloud, but usually returned to the great column of fire whence it proceeded; though once or twice it was seen to fall on the top of Somma, and set fire to some dry grass and bushes. Fortunately the wind carried back the cloud just as it reached the city, and had begun to occasion great alarm. The column of fire, however, still continued, and diffused such a strong light, that the most minute objects could be discerned at the distance of ten miles or more from the mountain. A gentleman informed us, that at Sorrento, which is twelve miles distant from Vesuvius, he read the title-page of a book by that volcanic light.

All this time the miserable inhabitants of Ottaiano were involved in the utmost distress and danger by the showers of stones which fell upon them, and which, had the eruption con-

tinued for a longer time, would most certainly have reduced their town to the same situation with Herculaneum and Pompeii. The mountain of Somma, at the foot of which the town of Ottaviano is situated, hides Vesuvius from the view of its inhabitants; so that till the eruption became considerable it was not visible to them. On Sunday night, when the noise increased, and the fire began to appear above the mountain of Somma, many of the inhabitants flew to the churches, and others were preparing to quit the town, when a sudden and violent report was heard; soon after which they found themselves involved in a thick cloud of smoke and ashes: a horrid clashing noise was heard in the air, and presently fell a vast shower of stones and large pieces of scoriæ, some of which were of the diameter of seven or eight feet, which must have weighed more than a hundred pounds, before they were broken, as some of the fragments which was found in the streets still weighed upwards of 60 pounds. When these large vitrified masses either struck against one another in the air, or fell on the ground, they broke in many pieces, and covered a large space of ground with vivid sparks of fire, which

communicated their heat to every thing that was combustible. These masses were formed of the liquid lava; the exterior parts of which were become black and porous by cooling in their fall through such a vast space; whilst the interior parts, less exposed retained an extreme heat and were perfectly red.

In an instant the town and country about it was on fire in many parts, for there were several straw huts in the vineyards, which had been erected for the watchmen of the grapes; all of which were burnt. A great magazine of wood in the heart of the town was all in a blaze; and had there been much wind, the flames must have spread universally, and all the inhabitants would have been burnt in their houses; for it was impossible for them to stir out. Some, who attempted it with pillows, tables, chairs, the tops of wine casks, &c. on their heads were either knocked down or soon driven back to their close quarters under arches and in the cellars of their houses. Many were wounded, but only two persons died of their wounds.

To add to the horror of the scene, incessant volcanic lightning was whisking about the black cloud that surrounded them, and the sulphu-

reous smell and heat would scarcely allow them to draw their breath. In this dreadful situation they remained about twenty-five minutes, when the volcanic storm ceased all at once, and Vesuvius remained sullen and silent.

Some time after the eruption had ceased, the air was greatly impregnated with electrical matter. The Duke of Cottofiano having held a Leyden bottle armed with a pointed wire, out at his window at Naples, it soon became considerably charged. But whilst the eruption was in force, its appearance was too alarming to allow one to think of such experiments. The Abbe Cagliani says, that his sister, a nun in a convent of Manfredonia, had written to enquire after him, supposing that Naples must have been destroyed, when they, at so great a distance, had been alarmed by a shower of ashes which fell on the city at eleven o'clock at night, so much as to open all the churches and go to prayers. As the great eruption happened at nine o'clock, these ashes must have travelled an hundred miles in the space of two hours.

Nothing could be more dismal than the appearance of Ottaviano after this eruption. The

houses were unroofed, half buried under the black scoriæ and ashes; all the windows towards the mountain were broken, and some of the houses themselves burnt; the streets choked up with ashes, in some narrow places not less than four feet thick; and a few of the inhabitants who had just returned were employed in clearing them away and piling them up in hillocks, to get at their ruined houses. The palace of the prince of Ottaiano is situated on an eminence above the town, and nearer the mountain. The steps leading up to it were deeply covered with volcanic matter; the roof was totally destroyed, and the windows broken; but the house itself, being strongly built, had not suffered much.

An incredible number of fragments of lava were thrown out during the eruption, some of which were of immense magnitude. The largest was 108 feet in circumference and 17 in height. This was thrown at least a quarter of a mile clear of the mouth of the volcano. Another, 66 feet in circumference and 19 in height, being nearly of a spherical figure, was thrown out at the same time, and lay near the former. This last had the marks of being

rounded, nay almost polished, by continual rolling in torrents or on the sea-shore. A third fragment was thrown into the valley between Vesuvius and the Hermitage, measuring 16 feet in height, and 92 in circumference.

An eruption took place in the month of November, 1784, and continued for some time, but without being accompanied with any extraordinary circumstance.

In the summer of 1794, another dreadful eruption took place at Vesuvius, which destroyed many of the adjacent villages, and was attended by many surprizing phenomena. It was preceded by a powerful shock of an earthquake, which extended over the whole of the Campagna Felice, and was plainly felt at the distance of forty miles.

Sir William Hamilton, who has justly been styled the natural historian of Vesuvius, gives us the following account of this eruption:—

On Sunday, the 15th of June, another shock was felt at Naples, but did not appear quite so violent as that of the 12th, nor did it continue so long: at the same moment, a fountain of bright fire, attended with very black smoke and a loud report, issued

from the middle of the cone of Vesuvius. Soon after, a similar one broke out at some distance lower down; and then it appeared as if the lava had taken its course directly up the steep cone of the volcano. Fresh fountains quickly succeeded, and all in a direct line, flowing toward the towns of Resina and Torre del Greco. It is impossible that any description can give an adequate idea of this fiery scene, or of the horrid noises that attended this operation of nature. It was a mixture of the loudest thunder with incessant reports, like those from heavy artillery, accompanied by a continued hollow murmur, like the roaring of the ocean during a violent storm; and added to these was another blowing noise, like that of a large flight of sky-rockets. The frequent falling of the huge stones and scorixæ, which were thrown up to an incredible height, and one of which measured 35 feet in circumference, contributed to the concussion of the earth and air, which kept all the houses in Naples in a tremor for several hours, every door and window shaking, and the bells ringing incessantly. This was an awful moment! The sky, from a bright full moon and star light began to be ob-

scured; the moon gradually seemed to suffer an eclipse, and was soon lost in obscurity; and the prayers and lamentations of a numerous populace parading the streets, added likewise to the general horror.

On the 16th, the lava broke out on the side of the mountain, and ran with such velocity through a wood that it destroyed the whole of it, and overwhelmed and burnt the greatest part of the town of Torre del Greco. It ran but slowly after it had reached the sea, and on the morning of the 17th, its course was stopped, excepting that at times a small rivulet of liquid fire issued from under the smoking scoriæ into the sea, it being red-hot under that surface. The sea-water was boiling as in a caldron, where it washed the foot of a new-formed promontory.

The thick clouds clearing away, on the 18th, from the summit of Vesuvius, it was discover'd that a great part of its crater had fallen in, and that the ashes which before were as fine as Spanish snuff, were now so hard that it was with difficulty they could force their passage. One cloud heaping upon another, seem'd to threaten Naples with immediate destruc-

tion, bending over the city, and appearing much too ponderous to remain long suspended in the air.

The storms of thunder and lightning occasionally attended with heavy falls of rain and ashes, causing the most destructive torrents of water and glutinous mud, mixed with huge stones, and trees torn up by the roots, continued to afflict the inhabitants on both sides of the volcano, until the 7th of July, when the last torrent destroyed many hundred acres of cultivated land between the towns of Torre del Greco and Torre del Annunziata.

The horrid chasms from the spot where the eruption took place in a straight line for nearly two miles toward the sea, cannot be imagined. They formed valleys more than two hundred feet deep, and from half a mile to a mile wide; and where the fountains of fiery matter existed during the eruption are little mountains with deep craters. Ten thousand men in as many years could not, surely, make such an alteration on the face of Vesuvius, as has been made by nature in the space of a few hours.

The inhabitants are far from being alarmed at this mountain's vernal eruptions when they

are not violent ; and the air is so far from being rendered unhealthy, that Barra, a village at the foot of Vesuvius, near the sea, is remarkable for its healthfulness.

The lava, or liquid matter, on its cooling, forms solid masses, surpassing in hardness even that of marble ; whence tables, chimney-pieces, and even snuff boxes are made of it. With this matter the cities of Naples and Rome are paved, as are also a great part of the ancient Roman highways.

DESCRIPTION

OF

MOUNT ÆTNA.

MOUNT ÆTNA, in the Island of Sicily, appears to have been well known to the ancients, on account of its fiery eruptions; for Pindar speaks of it as a volcano, and Plato was invited by Dionysius the younger, to examine the state of the mountain after the sixth eruption. It threw out flames and lava about a hundred times between that time and the battle of Pharsalia, and was remarkably furious while Sextus Pompeius was adding the horrors of a sanguinary war to its terrific devastation. Charlemagne is said to have been at Catania during one of its eruptions; and since his reign we find fifteen more recorded.

As to the dimensions of Mount *Ætna*, it is extremely difficult to extract any thing consistent even from the accounts of modern and truly respectable travellers. Pindar, who flourished about four hundred and thirty-five years before the Christian era, calls it the "Pillar of Heaven," on account of its extraordinary height; and all the moderns agree that it is extremely high and large, but they differ excessively in their descriptions; some making it eight or twelve miles high, and a hundred and eighty miles round, while others reduce it to about two miles in height, and somewhat less than ninety miles in circumference. On these different relations being investigated, it was the opinion of many that the true dimensions of the mountain have not yet been accurately ascertained.

Concerning the general appearance and products of *Ætna*, authors are better agreed; and the journey from Catania to its summit has been recently described by three ingenious travellers—M. D'Orville, Mr. Brydone, and Sir William Hamilton; all of whom affirm, that this mountain affords an epitome of the different climates throughout the world. To-

wards the base it is extremely hot ; farther up more temperate ; and grows gradually more cold, till at length the traveller perceives that its head is enveloped in a mantle of eternal snow.

The top of Mount *Ætna*, being above the common region of vapours, the prospects from thence are peculiarly interesting, and the heavens appear to possess an extraordinary splendor. Mr. Brydone and his companions observed as they ascended at night, that the number of stars seemed to be greatly augmented ; that each of them sparkled with unusual brilliance ; and that the whiteness of the milky-way resembled a pure flame shooting across the skies. To have a clear and ample prospect from this mountain, it is necessary to ascend before sun-rise, as the vapours raised by the sun in the day-time tend to obscure the circumjacent scenery. Here Sir Willam Hamilton and Mr. Brydone had a delightful view of Calabria, in Italy, with the sea beyond it ; the Lipari islands, and Stromboli, a volcano at seventy miles distance, seemed to be just under their feet ; the island of Sicily, with its rivers, towns, and harbours, appeared as dis-

tinct as if delineated on a map ; and the pyramidal shadow of the mountain reached entirely across the island and far into the sea on the other side, forming a visible tract in the air, which is gradually shortened as the sun rises above the horizon.

Ætna is divided into three regions—the Regione Culta, or cultivated ; the Sylvosa, or woody ; and the Deserta, or desert region ; all of which are plainly distinguished from the summit. The Regione Culta is much broader than the rest, and extends on all sides from the foot of the mountain, being bounded by the sea on the south and south-east, and on the other sides by the rivers Semetus and Alcantara. Here terrible devastations are sometimes committed by the eruptions, and the whole region abounds with little conical mountains. The Regione Sylvosa, forms a circle of beautiful green surrounding the mountain on every side, and variegated, like the former, by many mountains of a conical form thrown up by the eruption which burst out of the sides of the volcano. Mr. Hamilton counted forty-four on the Catania side, each having its crater, and being prettily feathered with trees which seem to have ac-

quired a wonderful degree of fertility. The Regione Deserta, is marked out by a circle of snow and ice, which extends on all sides to the distance of eight miles, beginning at the foot of the crater.

In the middle of the snowy region stands the great mouth of the volcano, which Sir William Hamilton describes as a little mountain about a quarter of a mile perpendicular, and situated in the centre of a gently-inclining plain of about nine miles in circumference. In the middle of this little mountain is a large hollow, the inside of which is incrustated with salts and sulphur of different colours. From many parts of this aperture issue volumes of sulphureous smoke, which being heavier than the circumambient air, roll down the side of the mountain, till coming to a more dense atmosphere, it shoots off horizontally, and forms a tract in the air according to the direction of the wind. In the midst of this funnel is the terrific and unfathomable gulph, whence continually issue terrible and confused noises, which, during an eruption, may be heard at a very great distance. Sir William Hamilton and Mr. Brydone found the crater too hot to admit of their

descending into it; but M. D'Orville, and his fellow traveller, having fastened themselves with ropes which some men held at a distance, descended as near as possible to the brink of the gulph; where they saw distinctly a conical mass of matter, which rose to the height of sixty feet, and seemed to be about six hundred feet in circumference toward the base. Whilst they were viewing this substance, the internal roarings augmented, and the mountain began to send forth smoke and ashes, but after a momentary dilation the volcano resumed its former tranquillity.

About a mile below the foot of the great crater, are the ruins of an ancient structure, called *Il Torre del Filosofo*, which some imagine to have been built by the philosopher *Empedocles*, and others suppose to have been a temple of *Vulcan*. These ruins are of brick, and seem to have been ornamented with marble.

The woody region, particularly on the east side, abounds with large chesnut-trees, one of which has been called, from its extraordinary size, *Castagno de Cento Cavalli*, or the chesnut-tree of a hundred horse. Mr. Brydone was

much disappointed at the sight of this tree, as he found it to be only a bush of five large ones growing together; but his guides assured him that all these were once united in one stem; and Signior Recupero asserted, that having caused some peasants to dig round this bush of trees, he had found all the stems united under ground in one root. The space of ground occupied by these five trees measured two hundred and four feet in circumference. Another of these trees, called the Castaga de Galia, rises from one solid stem to a considerable height, and its circumference at a small distance from the ground is seventy-six feet; and Massa, one of the most respectable Sicilian authors, asserts, that he has seen solid oaks there upwards of forty feet round.

Among the many eruptions of this volcano, the one in the year 1669, deserves to be recorded. In that year the summit was observed to send forth great quantities of smoke and flame; the top had fallen in, so that the mountain was much lowered; the islands of Vulcan and Stromboli, two volcanoes to the westward of Sicily, were observed to rage more than usual. - Eighteen days before the eruption the

sky was very thick and dark, with thunder, lightning, frequent concussions of the earth, and dreadful subterraneous bellowings. On the 11th of March, sometime before the lava got vent, a rent was opened in the mountain twelve miles in length, into which, when stones were thrown down, they could not be heard to strike the bottom. Burning rocks, 60 palms (15 of our feet) in length, were thrown to the distance of a mile; others of a lesser size were carried three miles off; the internal noises of the mountain were exceedingly dreadful, and the thunder and lightning from the smoke scarce less terrible than they. When the lava got vent, it burst out 20 miles from the crater, and sprung up into the air to a considerable height. Here it formed a mountain of stones and ashes, not less than half a mac perpendicular in height, and three miles in circumference. For 54 days neither sun nor stars had appeared: but soon after the lava got vent, the mountain became very quiet. The terrible effects of this fiery stream may be imagined from its amazing extent; being no less than fourteen miles long and in many places six in breadth. In its course it destroyed the habi-

tations of 30,000 persons; and meeting with a lake four miles in compass, it not only filled it up, though several fathom deep, but made a mountain in the place of it. Having reached Cataniá, it destroyed part of its walls, and ran for a considerable way into the sea, forming a safe and beautiful harbour; which, however, was soon filled up by a fresh torrent of the same inflamed matter.

It is not easy for those who have never been present at those terrible operations of nature, to represent to their minds, the horror which must attend the breaking forth of the lava; for though the giving vent to this burning matter generally produces a cessation of the violent efforts of the internal fire, yet at the very instant of its explosion scarce any thing can be conceived so dreadful.

A description of the lava that issued from this volcano in the year 1669 was sent to the court of England by Lord Winchelsea, who at that time happened to be at Catania in his way home from an embassy at Constantinople. His account is not now to be procured; but Mr. Hamilton found a copy in Sicily, and hath given an extract, part of which follows.

“ When it was night, I went upon two towers in divers places ; and I could plainly see at ten miles distance, as we judged, the fire begin to run from the mountain in a direct line, the flame to ascend as high and as big as one of the greatest steeples in your Majesty’s dominions, and to throw up great stones into the air ; I could discern the river of fire to descend the mountain of a fiery or red colour, and stones of a paler red to swim thereon, and to be some as big as an ordinary table. We could see this fire to move in several other places, and all the country covered with fire, ascending with great flames in many places, smoking like to a violent furnace of iron melted, making a noise with the great pieces that fell, especially those that fell into the sea. A cavalier of Malta, who lives there, and attended me, told me, that the river was as liquid, where it issues out of the mountain, as water, and came out like a torrent with great violence, and is five or six fathom deep, and as broad, and that no stones sink therein.”

From the 1st to the 10th of July, in the year 1787, there were signs of another eruption. On the 11th, after a little calm, there was a

subterraneous noise, like the sound of a drum in a close place, and it was followed by a copious burst of black smoke. It was then calm till the 15th, when the same prognostics recurred. On the 17th, the subterraneous noise was heard again; the smoke was more abundant, slight shocks of an earthquake followed, and the lava flowed from behind one of the two little mountains which forms the double head of *Ætna*. On the 18th, while the spectators were in anxious expectation of a more severe eruption, all was quiet, and continued so more than twelve hours: soon after they perceived some new shocks, accompanied with much noise; and the mountain threw out a thick smoke, which, as the wind was westerly, soon darkened the eastern horizon: two hours afterwards a shower of fine black-brilliant sand descended: on the east side it was a storm of stones; and, at the foot of the mountain, a deluge of flashes of fire, of scoria and lava.

These appearances continued the whole day; at the close of which the scene was changed. A number of conical flames rose from the volcano; one on the north, another on the south, were very conspicuous, and rose and fell alter-

nately. At three in the morning the mountain appeared cleft, and the summit seemed a burning mass. The cones of light which arose from the crater were of an immense extent, particularly the two just mentioned. The two heads seemed to be cut away: and at their separation was a cone of flame, seemingly composed of many lesser cones. The flame seemed of the height of the mountain placed on the mountain; so that it was probably two miles high, on a base of a mile and a half in diameter. This cone was still covered, with a very thick smoke, in which there appeared very brilliant flashes of lightning, a phenomenon which *Ætna* had not before afforded. At times, sounds like those from the explosion of a large cannon were heard seemingly at a less distance than the mountain. From the cone, as from a fountain, a jet of many flaming volcanic matters were thrown, which were carried to the distance of six or seven miles: from the base of the cone a thick smoke arose, which, for a moment, obscured a part of the flame, at the time when the rivers of lava broke forth. This beautiful appearance continued three quarters of an hour. It began the next night with

more force; but continued only half an hour. In the intervals, however, Ætna continued to throw out flames, smoke, stones ignited, and showers of sand. From the 20th to the 22d, the appearances gradually ceased. The stream of lava was carried towards Bronte and the plain of Lago.

After the eruption, the top of the mountain on the western side was found covered with hardened lava, scoria and stones. The travellers were annoyed by smoke, by showers of sand, mephitic vapours, and excessive heat.

These are the most remarkable circumstances that have been collected concerning this mountain, which, it is hoped, will give the reader an adequate idea of this most extraordinary and wonderful volcano.

The following Particulars, it is presumed, will be found worthy of a Place in the Accounts of these wonderful Burning Mountains, as the subject relates to Volcanoes in general.

OF all the volcanoes recorded in history, Stromboli, seems to be the only one that burns without ceasing; it is seventy or eighty miles distant from Ætna. The burning mountains already described often lie quiet for many months, even years without the least appearance of fire; but Stromboli is ever at work, and has for ages past been looked upon by many as the greatest wonder in nature. A most singular occurrence was met with by about thirty seamen at this mountain, in the year 1687, which was the cause of a trial in the Court of King's Bench.—The following is an account of it:—

MRS. BOOTY, v. CAPT. BARNABY.

THIS was an action brought by the Plaintiff, to recover the sum of 1000l. as damages, for the scandal of Defendant's assertion, that he had seen her deceased husband, a receiver, driven into Hell!

When this extraordinary trial commenced, several witnesses were brought forward who proved the words to have been spoken by Captain Barnaby, and afterwards by his wife. The defence set up was, that the Defendant had spoken no more than had been seen by a number of persons as well as himself; to prove which, the Journal Books of three different ships were produced in court, and the following passage recorded in each, submitted, amongst others, to the Court and Jury, by the Defendants counsel.

“Friday, May 15.—We had the observation of Mr. Booty this day: Capt. Barnaby, Capt. Bristow, Capt. Brown, I, and Mr. Ball, merchant, went on shore in Captain Barnaby’s boat to shoot rabbits upon Stromboli: and when we had done, we called all our men together by us, and about half an hour and fourteen minutes after three in the afternoon, to our great surprize, we all of us saw two men come running towards us with such swiftness, that no living man could run half so fast as they did run; when all of us heard Captain Barnaby say, ‘Lord bless me, the foremost is old Booty, my next door neighbour; but he said he did not know the other that ran behind; he

was in black clothes, and the foremost was in grey; then Captain Barnaby desired all of us to take an account of the time, and put it down in our pocket books, and when we got on board we wrote it in our journals, for we none of us ever saw or heard the like before; Captain Barnaby said, he was certain it was old Booty whom he saw running over Stromboli, and into the flames of Hell."

After they arrived in England, and were lying at Gravesend, Captain Barnaby's wife came on board the 6th of October, at which time Captain Barnaby and Captain Brown, sent for Captain Bristow, and Mr. Ball, merchant to congratulate with them, and, after some discourse, Captain Barnaby's wife started up and said, " My dear, I will tell you some news, old Booty is dead ;" he directly made answer; " We all of us saw him run into Hell."

Soon afterwards, Captain Barnaby's wife told a gentleman of his acquaintance in London, what her husband had said; who acquainted Mrs. Booty, with the whole affair; whereupon Mrs. Booty arrested Captain Barnaby in a thousand pounds action, for what he had said of her husband; Captain Barnaby gave bail to it, and it came to trial in the

Court of King's Bench. Mr. Booty's wearing apparel was brought into Court, and the sexton of the parish, and the people that were with him when he died. The journals were then sworn to, and the time when the two men were seen, and Booty died, coincided within about two minutes; ten of the seamen swore to the buttons on his coat, and that they were covered with the same sort of cloth of which his coat was made: and so it proved.

The jury asked Mr. Spinks (whose hand writing appeared in the journal that was read) if he knew Mr. Booty? He answered, "I never saw him till he ran by me on the burning mountains. The judge immediately made use of the following remarkable expressions:—
"Lord have mercy upon me! and grant that I may never see what you have seen—one, two, or three may be mistaken, but thirty never can be mistaken."

The widow lost her cause.

THE END.

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