



DAY OF NAPLES AND VESUVIUS.

Vesuvius is one of the largest and most active volcanoes in the world. It has been burning and smoking, and committing devastations on the surrounding country for at least two thousand years, and probably for many centuries before. Situated within a few miles of the sea, its ravages have extended across the intermediate space, laying waste vineyards and fields, and destroying the villages and cities which lie in the course of its eruptions.

The earliest eruption of Vesuvius on record and one of the most fatal, took place in the year 79 of the Christian era, being the first year of the reign of the Emperor Titus. All the southern part of Italy was alarmed by its violence; and Campania, as the adjoining district is called, was devastated to a great distance. —On this occasion the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii were overwhelmed and lost, and the greater part of their inhabitants killed.

So extensive and thick was the cloud of smoke and ashes which filled the atmosphere, that it was visible in Africa and Syria, and at Rome turned the light of day into the darkness of night, to the consternation of the inhabitants.

In June, 1794, an exceedingly violent eruption occurred, and overwhelmed the town of Torre del Greco. This eruption was vividly described by Sir William Hamilton in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks, and from this source we draw the following particulars. Early in June, the wells of Torre del Greco and its neighborhood began to dry up, a usual signal of an approaching eruption, and the shock of an earthquake was felt at Naples and for many miles around. On the night of the 15th, after another shock, Vesuvius sent forth clouds of black smoke, and with a loud noise there issued from its sides streams of red-hot lava, which poured down the flanks of the mountain. "It is impossible," says Sir William, "for any description to give an idea of this fiery scene, or of the horrid noises that attended this great operation of nature. It resembled the loudest thunder, accompanied by a continued hollow murmur, like that of the roaring of the ocean during a violent storm; and added to these sounds was another blowing noise, like that of the going up of a large flight of sky-rockets. The frequent falling of the huge stones and scorice, which were thrown up to an incredible height from some of the new mouths, and one of which, having been since measured, was ten feet high and thirty-five in circumference, contributed undoubtedly to the concussion of the earth and air, which kept all the houses at Naples for several hours in a constant tremor, every door and window shaking and rattling incessantly, and the bells ringing. This was an awful moment! The sky, from a bright full moon and starlight, began to be obscured; the moon had presently the appearance of being in an eclipse, and soon after was totally lost in obscurity. The murmur of the prayers and lamentations of a numerous populace, forming various processions, and parading the streets, added likewise to the horror.

"The lava ran but slowly at Torre del Greco after it had reached the sea; and on the 17th of June, in the morning, when I went in my boat to visit that unfortunate town, its course was stopped, excepting that at times a little column of liquid fire issued from under the smoking scorice into the sea, and caused a hissing noise and a white vapour smoke; at other times a quantity of large scorice was pushed off the surface of the body of the lava into the sea, discovering that it was red-hot under that surface; and even to this day the centre of the thickest part of the lava that covers the town retains its red heat. I observed that the sea-water was boiling as in a caldron, where it washed the foot of a new-formed promontory; and although I was at least a hundred yards from it, observing that the sea smoked near my boat, I put my hand into the water, which was literally scalded; and by this time my boatmen observed that the pich from the bottom of the boat was melting fast, and floating on the surface of the sea, and that the boat began to leak: we therefore retired hastily from this spot, and landed at some distance from the hot lava."

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GRACE DARLING,

A name famous in the annals of heroism, was the daughter of William Darling, lighthouse-keeper on Longstone, one of the Faroe Islands off the Coast of Northumberland. On the morning of the 7th Sept., 1838, the *Forfarshire*, which, with 65 persons on board, had been wrecked among the Faroe Islands, was seen by Darling, about a mile from the lighthouse, lying broken on the rocks. So fearfully had the waves beaten against the rock, that the boatmen refused to push off, and Darling himself shrank from the peril. Not so his heroic daughter. At her solicitation he yielded; and, the mother helping to launch the boat, the father and daughter each took an oar; and so they rowed this fearful mile, at each instant in danger of being cramped by the waves. By wonderful strength and skill, they brought their boat to the sufferers, rescued them, and bore them in safety to Longstone. Such an undertaking, so daring in itself, and successfully carried out, filled every one with the warmest admiration. The lighthouse of Longstone, no longer solitary and peaceful, was visited by the many and great. Presents, testimonials and money were heaped at the feet of the heroine. But the noble girl who prompted the generous action did not long survive. She died of consumption, after a year's illness, on the 20th October, 1842.