

Herculaneum is situated nine English miles to the westward of Pompeii. It was overwhelmed, as is well known, with material more solid than that which came down upon the latter city. And sheets of fluid have flowed over its site since its first obliteration. So that now the excavations have to be made as in a quarry of solid rock, to a depth varying from 70 to 112 feet. Care is taken, when any additional building has been opened and searched, to throw back the material into its former place—lest the superincumbent mass, on which the present town of Resina is built, should break through. Consequently, the parts which you are enabled to examine are limited. With the aid of torches, the shape and dimensions of the theatre—capable of accommodating 8,000 persons—can be well made out, where it is a curious thing to see the capitals of pillars embedded, like ammonites or portions of the mastodon, in almost solid rock. From Herculaneum have been derived some of the most interesting of the objects in the Museo Borbonico in Naples. In a villa here were found the striking statues of Æschines and Agrippina, authentic busts of Plato, Socrates, Demosthenes, Scipio Africanus, Seneca, and others, with beautiful bronzes—some of them made to look life-like by the insertion of glass eyes. But its most interesting relics are the papyri-rolls, resembling brown charred sticks, two inches in diameter, and from six to eight inches long. Some of them—displayed now under convenient glass-cases—have been successfully unrolled and deciphered. But the regretted decades of Livy and History of Sallust are desiderata still. No works of importance have been discovered, with the exception perhaps, of a treatise by Epicurus, entitled “De Natura.”

Stabie, overwhelmed also in A.D. 79, and situated under a portion of the modern town of Castellamare, four English miles eastwards from Pompeii, has ceased to be examined. Having been reduced to ruins by Sulla in the course of the Marsic war, B.C. 91, is not supposed to be so rich in relics as the two towns which have been excavated. Oplontis, a small Roman village, overwhelmed with its more distinguished neighbours, was cut into during the construction of the Western Railway from Naples, about two miles eastward from Herculaneum; a few mosaics and sculptured animals were found.

We shall now pay a rapid visit to the volcanic district westwards of Vesuvius—appropriately named the Phelgræan fields, “the fields of fire,” if the Greek etymology of the name be the correct one. We shall tread on ground teeming with recollections of illustrious or remarkable men. I shall be pardoned, then, if here and there, though still looking at things in general in a volcanic point of view, I indulge in some brief historical notices as I pass. Traversing the whole length of the ever-lively Naples—where, doubtless, we have before our eyes a picture of an old Greek community, in modernized costume,—we arrive on its western side at a tunnel perforating the mass of ancient volcanic tufa, known as the hill of Posilipo. Here, before you enter, you may leave your carriage for a short time, and ascend by some steps on the left, and examine the dilapidated columbarium to which tradition points as once the receptacle of the ashes of Virgil. It is certain that the poet had a house on this hill, and that therein he composed his Georgics and Eclogues and the greater portion of his