

where cursed the land, do but too exactly resemble the terribly destructive issues which are vomited from that abyss of fire of which Vesuvius is the vent.

It is only 6 months or so ago that, after the lapse of five years, Vesuvius again burst forth with most destructive violence. For a year before this last eruption took place, an unwonted stillness had reigned over the mountain. Naples was shaken with occasional earthquakes, and the wells row and then dried up, but Vesuvius showed no signs of an eruption:—till suddenly on the morning of the 1st of May last, at half-past four o'clock, a noise like the discharge of artillery was heard, and fire with stones was thrown up from several new openings in the mountain.

When the evening arrived, "the whole heavens," says an eyewitness of the awful scene, "appeared to be on fire." Scarcely any portion of the mountain was visible, for, as the wind was rather a sirocco, the dense swelling clouds were congregated about its summit and its sides so as to conceal its outline, and render the scene as mysterious as it was grand. The flames, which were thrown up too, were only perceptible from their effects being reflected from cloud to cloud until the sky appeared to be one mass of flame. In the centre only was there any opening, and there might be seen a portion of that burning stream which was now pouring down on the devoted country beneath."

Next night Mr. Henry Wreford, whose account we have been quoting, ascended the mountain:—

"A plair of burning coke, some two hundred feet, was moving on before our eyes, almost touching our feet; until, accumulating in large masses, over it thundered into the valley beneath. Down, down, we watched the red line in the distance, burning and destroying everything it met with. A whole plantation of chestnut-trees yielded to its power; they twisted and screeched, and groaned like martyrs in an *auto da fe*, and then gave signals by a brilliant flame that their sufferings were over. Moving away from this point, we descended a little, by jumping from mass to mass, and crossing channels of fire, until we were in face of the cataract. The noise of the advancing stream was that of an Alpine flood over a shingly bed, sh-sh-sh; such was the continued murmur of the thousands of tons of burning coke which were moving on, and tumbling mass over mass. The outer crust here and there became cooled and blackened, and, then detaching itself, the burst of heat and light was sufficient for a moment to blast and scorch us. Involuntarily we held out our hands as if to shield ourselves; but, unable any longer to resist it, were compelled to retire."