

over lava, in many places so compact as not yet to be servicable; but where there were plantations, none surely ever looked more beautiful and flourishing.

The road to Nicolosi is certainly the worst I ever travelled over: nor do I see how it is likely to be mended. The rise, however, is so gradual up as high as Nicolosi, that you are quite insensible of it.

Until our arrival at Nicolosi we were in our summer clothing. The temperature there is certainly cooler, but not to any very considerable degree, and, I hear, it is seldom they are visited with snow. The vineyard, however, do not continue much higher, for the woody region commences within three or four miles. I was here surprised to see none but large forest-trees, principally oak and elm, but no bushes or jungle. I noticed this more particularly on my descent the following day, and that the ground was overspread with fern and long grass only. I also observed that every one of these trees (some of them noble ones) were rotten at the core. There is a great sameness in the road through the forest, which may be from six to eight miles across. This has a beautiful appearance in looking at *Ætna* from a distance—a perfect ring being formed, which circumscribes it on all sides so exactly, that it much more resembles the work of art than of nature. The ascent became here considerably steeper, and before we had cleared the wood, we began to feel the cold. We got into the desert region about one o'clock in the morning.

The desert region we found in every respect worthy of the name. Here was a dead void—not only neither tree nor shrub, but not a weed to give us a sign that we were going over ground that had ever been trod by man, or inhabited by the living. There was not even a bird to cross our path. The bat and the owl had never probably been here—and what must be the depth of a solitude shunned even by these? We saw before us nearly ten long miles of black uneven surface, never varying but from loose cinders to rough lava-stone. It was indeed a dreary road. Our horses' hoofs rung with a melancholy sound on our ears. We spoke but little, and felt no inclination to converse. We wrapt our cloaks around us, and shut ourselves up in a "shroud of thoughts." This continued till we arrived at the "Casa Inglese," or English

house, which is a hut useful to travellers who visit *Ætna*, standing at the foot of the cone, and most conveniently situated, inasmuch as the road at this part becomes so bad as to make it scarce passable for any animal. Visitors are obliged to dismount, and pick their way on foot, which they must do very carefully. We encountered a species of lava like nothing we before had passed. This resembled that substance which is thrown out of blacksmiths' shops, vulgarly called 'clinkers.' Our boots here suffered most wofully, nor do I think that the strongest would have lasted half a mile of such a road.

(To be continued)

NATURAL HISTORY

THE ORANG-OUTANG.

Two species of African orang-outang seem to have been described by the earlier writers. These were probably the young and old of the same species seen apart at different times, for later researches do not lead to the belief of there being more than one.

'The greatest of these two monsters,' says Battell, 'is called pongo in their language—and the less is called engeco. This pongo is exactly proportioned like a man—but he is more like a giant in stature—for he is tall, and hath a man's face, hollow-eyed, with long hair upon his brows. His face and ears are without hair, and his hands also. He differeth not from a man but in his legs, and carries his hands clasped on the nape of his neck when he goeth upon the ground. They sleep in the trees, and build shelters from the rain. They feed upon fruit that they find in the woods and upon nuts; they eat no kind of flesh. They cannot speak, and appear to have no more understanding than a beast. The people of the country, when they travel in the woods, make fires where they sleep in the night—and in the morning, when they are gone, the pongos will come and sit about the fire till it goeth out—for they have no understanding to lay the wood together, or any means to light it. They go many together, and often kill the negroes that travel in the woods. Many times they fall upon the elephants which come to feed where they be, and so beat them with their clubbed fists, and with pieces of wood, that they will run roaring away from them.