

Æneid, which I am now reading in Annibal Caro's translation; there Agrippina mourned Germanicus; and there her daughter fell a victim to her monster of a son. At our feet lay the lovely little Island of Nisida, the spot on which Brutus and Portia parted for the last time before the battle of Philippi.

To the south of the bay the scenery is not less magnificent, and scarcely less dear to memory: Naples, rising from the sea like an amphitheatre of white palaces, and towers, and glittering domes: beyond, Mount Vesuvius, with the smoke curling from its summit like a silver cloud, and forming the only speck upon the intense blue sky; along its base Portici, Annunziata, Torre del Greco, glitter in the sun; every white building—almost every window in every building—distinct to the eye at the distance of several miles: farther on, and perched like white nests on the mountainous promontory, lie Caltel a Mare, and Sorrento, the birthplace of Tasso, and his asylum when the injuries of his cold-hearted persecutors had stung him to madness, and drove him here for refuge to the arms of his sister. Yet, farther on, Capua rises from the sea, a beautiful object in itself, but from which the fancy gladly turns to dwell again upon the snowy buildings of Sorrento.

This is the last day of the Carnival, the last night of the opera: the people are permitted to go in masks, and after the performance will be a ball. To-day, when Baldi was describing the excesses which usually take place during the last few hours of the Carnival, he said, "the man who has but half a shirt will pawn it to-night to buy a good supper and an operaticket: to-morrow for fish and soup-maigre—fasting and repentance!"

Saturday, 23d.—I have just seen a most magnificent sight; one which I have often dreamed of, often longed to behold, and having beheld, never shall forget. Mount Vesuvius is at this moment blazing like a huge furnace; throwing up every minute, or half minute, columns of fire and red hot stones, which fall in showers and bound down the side of the mountain. On the east, there are two distinct streams of lava descending, which glow with almost a white heat, and every burst of flame is accompanied by a sound resembling cannon at a distance.

I can hardly write, my mind is so overflowing with astonishment, admiration, and sublime pleasure: what a scene as I looked out on the bay from the Sante Lucia! On one side, the evening star and the thread-like crescent of the new moon were setting together over Paussilippo, reflected in lines of silver radiance on the blue sea; on the other the broad train of fierce red light glared upon the water with a fitful splendour, as the explosions were more or less violent: before me all was so soft, so lovely, so tranquil! while I had only to turn my head to be awe-struck by the convulsion of fighting elements.

I remember, that on our first arrival at Naples, I was disappointed because Vesuvius

did not smoke so much as I had been led to expect from pictures and descriptions. The smoke then lay like a scarcely perceptible cloud on the highest point, or rose in a slender white column; to-day and yesterday, it has rolled from the crater in black volumes, mixing with the clouds above, and darkening the sky.

Half-past twelve.—I have walked out again: the blaze from the crater is less vivid; but there are now four streams of lava issuing from it, which have united in two broad currents, one of which extends below the hermitage. It is probable that by to-morrow night it will have reached the lower part of the mountain.

Sunday, 24th.—Just returned from chapel at the English ambassador's, where the service was read by a dandy clergyman to a crowd of fine and superfine ladies and gentlemen, crushed together into a hot room. I never saw extravagance in dress carried to such a pitch as it is by my countrywomen here,—whether they dress at the men or against each other, it is equally bad taste. The sermon to-day was very appropriate, from the text, "Take ye no thought what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or what ye shall put on," and, I dare say, it was listened to with singular edification.

5 o'clock.—We have been driving along the Strada Nuova, in L**'s britchka, whence we had a fine view of Vesuvius. There are tremendous bursts of smoke from the crater. At one time the whole mountain, down to the very base, was almost enveloped, and the atmosphere round it loaded with the vapour, which seemed to issue in volumes half as large as the mountain itself. If horses are to be had we go up to-night.

Monday night.—I am not in a humour to describe or give way to any poetical flights, but I must endeavour to give a faithful, sober, and circumstantial account of our last night's expedition, while the impression is yet fresh on my mind; though there is, I think, little danger of my forgetting. We procured horses, which, from the number of persons proceeding on the same errand with ourselves, was a matter of some difficulty. We set out at seven in the evening in an open carriage, and almost the whole way we had the mountain before us, spouting fire to a prodigious height. The road was crowded with groups of people, who had come out from the city and environs to take a nearer view of the magnificent spectacle, and numbers were hurrying to and fro in those little flying *corricoli* which are peculiar to Naples. As we approached, the explosions became more and more vivid, and at every tremendous burst of fire our friend L** jumped half off his seat, making most loud and characteristic exclamations,—“By Jove! a magnificent fellow! now for it, whizz! there he goes, sky high, by George!” The rest of the party were equally enthusiastic in a different style; and I sat silent and quiet from absolute inability to express what I felt. I was almost breathless with wonder, and excitement, and impatience to be nearer the scene of action. While my eyes were fixed on the mountain, my attention was, from time to time, excited by regular rows