

from north to south three miles. Several Greek colonies which settled there before the Christian era were compelled to abandon it in consequence of the violence of the eruptions. First the Erythræans, and afterwards the Chalcidians, are mentioned as having been driven out by earthquakes and igneous exhalations. A colony was afterwards established by Hiero, king of Syracuse, about 380 years before the Christian era; but when they had built a fortress, they were compelled by an eruption to fly, and never again returned. Strabo tells us that Timæus recorded a tradition, that, a little before his time, Epomeus, the principal mountain in the centre of the island, vomited fire during great earthquakes; that the land between it and the coast had ejected much fiery matter, which flowed into the sea, and that the sea receded for the distance of three stadia, and then returning, overflowed the island. This eruption is supposed by some to have been that which formed the crater of Monte Corvo on one of the higher flanks of Epomeo, above Foria, the lava-current of which may still be traced, by aid of the scorïæ on its surface, from the crater to the sea.

To one of the subsequent eruptions in the lower parts of the isle, which caused the expulsion of the first Greek colony, Monte Rotaro has been attributed, and it bears every mark of recent origin. The cone, which I examined in 1828, is remarkably perfect, and has a crater on its summit precisely resembling that of Monte Nuovo near Naples; but the hill is larger, and resembles some of the more considerable cones of single eruption near Clermont in Auvergne, and, like some of them, it has given vent to a lava-stream at its base, instead of its summit. A small ravine swept out by a torrent exposes the structure of the cone, which is composed of innumerable inclined and slightly undulating layers of pumice, scorïæ, white lapilli, and enormous angular blocks of trachyte. These last have evidently been thrown out by violent explosions, like those which in 1822 launched from Vesuvius a mass of augitic lava, of many tons' weight, to the distance of three miles, which fell in the garden of Prince Ottajano. The cone of Rotaro is covered with the arbutus, and other beautiful evergreens. Such is the strength of the virgin soil, that the shrubs have become almost arborescent; and the growth of some of the smaller wild plants has been so vigorous, that botanists have scarcely been able to recognize the species.

The eruption which dislodged the Syracusan colony is supposed to have given rise to that mighty current which forms the promontory of Zaro and Caruso. The surface of these lavas is still very arid and bristling, and is covered with black scorïæ; so that it is not without great labour that human industry has redeemed some small spots, and converted them into vineyards. Upon the produce of these vineyards the population of the island is almost entirely supported. It amounted when I was there, in 1828, to about twenty-five thousand, and was on the increase.

From the date of the great eruption last alluded to, down to our own time, Ischia has enjoyed tranquillity, with the exception of one