

creation loved this alluring region, spared it, adorned it, lived in it, died in it."* The inhabitants, indeed, have enjoyed no immunity from the calamities which are the lot of mankind; but the principal evils which they have suffered must be attributed to moral, not to physical, causes—to disastrous events over which man might have exercised a control, rather than to the inevitable catastrophes which result from subterranean agency. When Spartacus encamped his army of ten thousand gladiators in the old extinct crater of Vesuvius, the volcano was more justly a subject of terror to Campania, than it has ever been since the rekindling of its fires.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ETNA.

External physiognomy of Etna — Lateral cones — Their successive obliteration — Early eruptions — Monti Rossi in 1669 — Towns overflowed by lava — Part of Catania overflowed — Mode of advance of a current of lava — Subterranean caverns — Marine strata at base of Etna — Val del Bove not an ancient crater — Its scenery — Form, composition, and origin of the dikes — Linear direction of cones formed in 1811 and 1819 — Lavas and breccias — Flood produced by the melting of snow by lava — Glacier covered by a lava stream — Val del Bove how formed — Structure and origin of the cone of Etna — Whether the inclined sheets of lava were originally horizontal — Antiquity of Etna — Whether signs of diluvial waves are observable on Etna.

External physiognomy of Etna.—AFTER Vesuvius, our most authentic records relate to Etna, which rises near the sea in solitary grandeur to the height of nearly eleven thousand feet.† The base of the cone is almost circular, and eighty-seven English miles in circumference; but if we include the whole district over which its lavas extend, the circuit is probably twice that extent.

Divided into three regions.—The cone is divided by nature into three distinct zones, called the *fertile*, the *woody*, and the *desert* regions. The first of these, comprising the delightful country around the skirts of the mountain, is well cultivated, thickly inhabited, and covered with olives, vines, corn, fruit-trees, and aromatic herbs. Higher up, the woody region encircles the mountain—an extensive

* Forsyth's Italy, vol. ii.

† In 1815, Captain Smyth ascertained, trigonometrically, that the height of Etna was 10,874 feet. The Catanians, disappointed that their mountain had lost nearly 2000 feet of the height assigned to it by Recupero, refused to acquiesce in the decision. Afterwards, in 1824, Sir J. Herschel, not being aware of

Captain Smyth's conclusions, determined by careful barometrical measurement, that the height was 10,872½ feet. This singular agreement of results so differently obtained was spoken of by Herschel as "a happy accident;" but Dr. Wollaston remarked that "it was one of those accidents which would not have happened to two fools."