

a circumference at base of one hundred miles. It rises 10,840 feet above sea-level, and 3,000 feet above the forest-limit. The highest cone is a black and silent waste. The whole mountain, from top to bottom, is a series of frozen lava-sheets piled one above another. Some conception of the age of the mountain may be formed from the fact that *Ætna* has been known from the earliest ages as a volcanic mountain, and eruptions have occurred, on an average, once in ten years, yet, within the historic period its bulk and altitude have not increased to a perceptible extent. The eruptions of *Ætna* are attended by circumstances similar to those of *Vesuvius*. The lava, however, does not escape, in modern times, from the summit crater, but breaks through the wall at some distance below. In 1669, the *Monti Rossi*, so-called, were formed, and 27,000 persons were deprived of all shelter, and many lives were lost in the descending streams of lava. In 1693, an eruption was accompanied by a fearful earthquake which partially or totally destroyed forty towns and caused a loss of sixty to one hundred thousand lives.

One of the greatest eruptions of modern times occurred in 1865. After violent premonitory symptoms two years previously, when the loftiest cone of the volcano opened on the side and emitted a large stream of lava, the wall of the mountain yielded to the pressure of its molten contents. Some subterranean roaring was first heard; slight agitations affected the whole eastern part of Sicily, and the ground was rent open for a mile and a half to the north of *Monte Frumento*, one of the secondary cones which rise on the slope of *Ætna*. This vomited lava for a few hours, when, seeming to be obstructed, fresh outbursts occurred a little lower down, and six cones of ejection were built up. These and smaller ones blended together in an elevation of nearly 300 feet. Soon the two upper craters hurled forth only lumps of stone and ashes, while the lower poured forth lava. Then followed the diversified phenomena of a prolonged eruption, which, however interesting, we have not space to describe. Of the volume of lava something may be said.