

ened the whole surrounding district, and which descended in a whirlwind of ashes. On the 10th of May, innumerable fountains of fire were seen shooting up through the ice and snow which covered the mountain; and the principal river, called the Skapta, after rolling down a flood of foul and poisonous water, disappeared. Two days after, a torrent of lava poured down into the bed which the river had deserted. The river had run in a ravine, 600 feet deep and 200 broad. This the lava entirely filled; and not only so, but it overflowed the surrounding country, and ran into a great lake, from which it instantly expelled the water in an explosion of steam. When the lake was fairly filled, the lava again overflowed and divided into two streams, one of which covered some ancient lava fields; the other re-entered the bed of the Skapta lower down; and presented the astounding sight of a cataract of liquid fire pouring over what was formerly the waterfall of Stapafoss. This was the greatest eruption on record in Europe. It lasted in its violence till the end of August, and closed with a violent earthquake; but for nearly the whole year a canopy of cinder-laden cloud hung over the island; the Faroe Islands, nay, even Shetland and the Orkneys, were deluged with the ashes; and volcanic dust and a preternatural smoke, which obscured the sun, covered all Europe as far as the Alps, over which it could not rise. It has been surmised that the great Fire-ball of August 18, 1783, which traversed all England and the Continent, from the North Sea to Rome, by far the greatest ever known (for it was more than half a