

among the extensive forests below, even through the midst of the fertile region which reposes at its base, until they pour into the sea; and interspersed with these are broad dismal beds of ashes and scoriæ—the seat of eternal desolation. Beneath the Bosco, and around the base of Etna, the boundary of the region subject to its effects may be distinctly traced. Beyond, in all directions, extend the fertile plains and mountains of the island; the latter, however, of an aspect little less wild and desolate than that of Etna itself. The range of the view is almost boundless—Catania, Syracuse, and even, when clear, Malta itself are visible. Castro Giovanni stands up on its rock, conspicuous in the centre of the island. The expanse of sea is most magnificent, with the distant mountains of Calabria and Apulia, and the entrance to the Faro di Messina.

Our description of Etna will conclude with some notices of its eruptions in modern times.

A remarkable convulsion occurred in 1169, totally destroying Catania, and overwhelming 15,000 persons in its ruins.

We read of outbreaks of a fearful character as taking place in 1329, 1408, 1444, 1536, 1537, 1564, and in 1669—the latter a calamity almost unparalleled in its effects, to which we shall presently allude.

Eruptions are also recorded in 1766, 1787, 1809, 1811, and May 1830—when several villages perished, and showers of ashes were projected almost as far as Rome.

Again, in November 1832, when the town of Bronte was ruined.

Again, in August and September 1852, the streams of lava flowing, and the torrents of scoriæ and ashes continuing for many days.

The last occurred in 1865. It was remarkable for its duration, beginning on the 1st of February, and not terminating until the following July.

It should be noticed that Etna is generally most active when Vesuvius is in repose, though there are several instances of the two volcanoes setting in motion their latent forces simultaneously.

The eruption of 1669, to which we have previously referred, was preceded by an earthquake, which devastated the town of Nicolosi, situated about ten miles inland from Catania, and about twenty from the summit of Etna. Soon afterwards an enormous rent or chasm suddenly opened in the flank of the mountain, extending from a point within a mile of the top of the great cone to a point very near Nicolosi.* It was twelve miles long and about six feet wide, but of unknown depth. It opened with a horrible clang, and gave forth a vivid light. Five other parallel fissures of the same size opened afterwards, and from these vast clouds of gases and vapours proceeded,

* [Dr. Daubeny, "On Volcanoes."]