belt of snow-white vapour. The stones, striking against each other in their aërial courses, produced a noise like that of a heavy shower of hail. The crater emitted no flames; but electric coruscations and lightnings shot across the black smoke which it exhaled, and in the womb of the cloud incessantly rolled loud peals of thunder.

These paroxysms never lasted less than from eight to ten minutes, sometimes even an entire hour; then all again became tranquil, and the balloon-vapours, white as snow, alone dominated over the silent crater.

Hoffmann published in the German journals the narrative of his curious visit to Ferdinanda, which he described as from 50 to 90 feet high, and about threequarters of a mile in circumference.

Figure 158 represents the island from a water-colour drawing taken on the spot, in the month of August 1831, by an Italian painter, M. Kellin, and given by him to M. Constant Prévost. We are indebted for the communication to M. Desnoyers, librarian of the Museum of Natural History.

On the 3rd of August Ferdinanda was sighted at a distance by Captain Savy de Mondiol. It appeared to him to lie very low, and an enormous column of smoke was incessantly issuing from it. According to other accounts, its elevation, on the 4th of August, exceeded 200 feet, and its circumference measured from 5500 to 6600 yards.

After this date, the islet began to give way before the incessant action of the waves. The materials composing it were essentially movable. The scoriæ, the basalts, and the other volcanic discharges were not connected by an intermediary adhesive material, or by a natural cement. They were consequently unable to resist the billows for any considerable length of time. On the 25th of August, it did not exceed 4400 yards in circumference; and when it was visited, on the 3rd of September, by Captain Wodehouse, its circuit was already reduced to about 1100 yards. At this date, its greatest elevation above the water was 110 feet, and its crater measured 800 feet in circumference.

The eruptions ceased completely on the 12th of August, but at the same time the public mind began to be disturbed by apprehensions, the offspring of a thousand wild hypotheses.

The sun, which for a month had lighted up the novel scene, had invested itself in those sickly hues which the ancients regarded as ominous of great disasters. The sky, obscured during the day, was furrowed during the night by electric flashes; it seemed to carry on with the abyss a frightful colloquy, on which the destiny of nations depended. What was really the signification of this new volcano, this island which had so unexpectedly emerged from the bosom of the waters? Was the already difficult communication between Italy and the East about to become further impeded? Would new reefs and banks narrow that Sicilian channel, which is hemmed in by such dangerous coasts? Was this recently elevated land only the first visible point, the precursor, the commencement of a long submarine chain, which, in due time, would rise above the surface of the waters and form a natural bridge, connecting Sicily with Africa? Would the Straits of Messina become for the Mediterranean what the Dardanelles is for the Euxine, and so modify the rela-