

A moderate disturbance of the mountain is characterized by the ejection of vapors and stones, accompanied by a roar, resembling that of distant artillery. More serious eruptions are accompanied by loud subterranean noises, earthquakes, and vivid electric phenomena.

History records a large number of Vesuvian eruptions. According to Strabo, Vesuvius was once covered by beautiful meadows, except over the summit, which was level and sterile. "It has" he says, "an appearance like ashes, and shows rugged rocks of sooty consistency and color, as if they had been consumed by fire." At the same period the theater of volcanic activity was a few miles toward the west. Ischia, Procida, the Solfatara and the Monte Nuovo were then active craters. About A. D. 63, the volcanic nature of Vesuvius manifested itself; and in 79 occurred the terrific eruption which overwhelmed Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabiae, and other villages in a deluge of ashes and mud. In the eruption of 1631, heavy stones were thrown to the distance of 15 miles. One which fell at the village of Somma had a weight of fifteen tons. The earth was convulsed by a violent earthquake, and seven streams of lava poured from the summit, overwhelming Bosco, Torre dell' Annunciata, Torre del Greco, Resina and Portici. Three thousand persons perished on the occasion. In 1779 a vast number of red-hot stones were hurled to a height of two thousand feet. In April, 1872, after months of threatening, the lava burst forth on every side—on the north-east, south-west, and more particularly at the Atrio del Cavallo, from which a huge stream issued with such suddenness as to overtake and destroy twenty persons out of a crowd of spectators gathered to watch the spectacle. The torrent descended to Massa and St. Sebastiano, passing beneath these villages, which it partially destroyed, in a molten stream 3,000 feet wide and 20 feet deep. At the same time, amidst terrific thundering, the crater hurled forth immense volumes of smoke, mingled with red-hot stones and lava, to a height of 40,000 feet.

Mt. *Ætna* is altogether a more majestic structure. It has