



## TRAVELS IN ITALY

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The news that an eruption of lava had just commenced, which, taking the direction of Ottajano, was invisible at Naples, tempted me to visit Vesuvius for the third time. Scarcely had I jumped out of my cabriolet,\* at the foot of the mountain, when immediately appeared the two guides who had accompanied us on our previous ascent. I had no wish to do without either, but took one out of gratitude and custom, the other for reliance on his judgment—and the two for the greater convenience. Having reached the summit, the older guide remained with our cloaks and refreshment, while the younger followed me, and we boldly went straight toward a dense volume of smoke, which broke forth from the bottom of the funnel; then we quickly went downward by the side of it, till at last, under the clear heaven, we distinctly saw the lava emitted from the rolling clouds of smoke.

We may hear an object spoken of a thousand times, but its peculiar features will never be caught till we see it with our own eyes. The stream of lava was small, not broader perhaps than ten feet, but the way in which it flowed down a gentle and tolerably smooth plain was remarkable. As it flowed along, it cooled both on the sides and on the surface, so that it formed a sort of canal, the bed of which was continually raised in consequence of the molten mass congealing even beneath the fiery stream, which with uni-

\* Zweiradigen einpferdigen Fuhrwerk.

form action precipitated right and left the scoria which was floating on its surface. In this way a regular dam was at length thrown up, in which the glowing stream flowed on as quietly as any millstream. We passed along the tolerably high dam, while the scoria rolled regularly off the sides at our feet. Some cracks in the canal afforded opportunity of looking at the living stream from below, and as it rushed onward, we observed it from above.

A very bright sun made the glowing lava look dull; but a moderate steam rose from it into the pure air. I felt a great desire to go nearer to the point where it broke out from the mountain; there, my guide averred, it at once formed vaults and roofs above itself, on which he had often stood. To see and experience this phenomenon, we again ascended the hill, in order to come from behind to this point. Fortunately at this moment the place was cleared by a pretty strong wind, but not entirely, for all round it the smoke eddied from a thousand crannies; and now at last we stood on the top of the solid roof (which looked like a hardened mass of twisted dough), but which, however, projected so far outward, that it was impossible to see the welling lava.

We ventured about twenty steps further, but the ground on which we stepped became hotter and hotter, while around us rolled an oppressive steam, which obscured and hid the sun; the guide, who was a few steps in advance of me, presently turned back, and seizing hold of me, hurried out of this Stygian exhalation.

After we had refreshed our eyes with the clear prospect, and washed our gums and throat with wine, we went round again to notice any other peculiarities which might characterize this peak of hell, thus rearing itself in the midst of a paradise. I again observed attentively some chasms, in appearance like so many Vulcanic forges, which emitted no smoke, but continually shot out a steam of hot glowing air. They were all tapestried, as it were, with a kind of stalactite, which covered the funnel to the top, with its knobs and chintz-like variation of colors. In consequence of this irregularity of the forges, I found many specimens of this sublimation hanging within reach, so

that, with our staves and a little contrivance, we were able to hack off a few, and to secure them. In the shops of the dealers in lava I saw specimens labeled simply "Lava"; and I was delighted to have discovered that it was volcanic soot precipitated from the hot vapor, and distinctly exhibiting the sublimated mineral particles which it contained.

The most glorious of sunsets, a heavenly evening, refreshed me on my return; still I felt how all great contrasts confound the mind and senses. From the terrible to the beautiful—from the beautiful to the terrible; each destroys the other, and produces a feeling of indifference. Assuredly, the Neopolitan would be quite a different creature, did he not feel himself thus hemmed in between Elysium and Tartarus.

### MORITZ AS ETYMOLOGIST

Long ago it was truly said by a wise man, "The person unable to cope with the necessary and useful likes to busy himself with the unnecessary and useless!" Many a one might perhaps be disposed to apply this remark to the following:—

Our comrade Moritz, though living in the midst of the highest art and the fairest scenes of nature, would not desist from puzzling and perplexing himself concerning the inward recesses of man, his structure and developments; applying himself principally to the generalities of languages.

At that time, in consequence of Herder's prize-writing, "On the Origin of Languages," and in conformity with the then-prevailing mode of thought, the idea had gained ground that the human race had not, as the offspring of one pair, spread itself from the higher regions of the East over the whole earth; but that at some remarkably productive period of the globe, after nature had in graduated scale produced the most varied animals, the human species in more or less complete structure came to birth in this or

that place, in many favorable situations. In most intimate relation to his physical organs and his mental capacities, language developed as a constitutional faculty of man. There was, therefore, no need, as regards speech, either of supernatural direction or of transmission from one pair downward. In this sense it is we are to seek for a universal language, of which each autochthonic family has endeavored to give a manifestation. The affinity of all languages is rooted in the *unanimity of the idea* in conformity with which the creative power formed the human race and its organization. Hence it follows that, partly from inward impulse, partly from outward inducement, the very limited number of vowels and consonants was rightly or wrongly applied to the expression of feelings and ideas; for it was natural, nay, inevitable, that the most divergent autochthons should partly concur with, partly deviate from each other, and so in the future deprave or improve this or that language. What holds good with respect to the root words would then hold good also with respect to the derivations by which the relations to each other of particular conceptions and ideas are expressed and more precisely distinguished. All this might be so far well and good, and as something unsearchable, and never to be determined with certainty, left to itself.

On this subject I find the following items in my papers:

"It is pleasant to me that out of his state of brooding inertia, out of his dejection and self-distrust, Moritz should turn to some kind of activity; for in that case he becomes quite amiable. His whimsicalities then gain a true basis, his reveries purpose and meaning. He is now busy with an idea which I also have broached, and which gives us great entertainment. The idea is difficult to communicate, so crazy it seems to sound. Yet I will attempt it.

"He has invented an alphabet of the understanding and feeling, showing that the letters are not arbitrary, but have their basis in human nature, all referring to various parts of the inward sense which they respectively express. Languages may now be criticized according to this alphabet, and it is found that all peoples have attempted to express themselves in conformity with the inward sense,