ter, revives in the beginning of the ſpring, and comes abroad in the duſk of the evening. This ſpecies is two inches and a half long, when full grown, and about nine inches in extent ; the fur is of a mouſe-colour, tinged with reddiſh ; it generally ſkims near the ground, with an uneven jerking flight; and often ſeeking for gnats and other aquatic insects, flies cloſe by the ſurſace of water. It breeds in the ſummer ſeaſon, and is preyed on by owls.

Bats are very voracious, if proper food is to be had ; and though moths and other insects be their natural and com­mon food, yet if fleſh, whether raw or roaſted, freſh or cor­rupted, comes in their way, they devour it with greedineſs. In this country they appear abroad early in ſpring, flying about only in the evenings ; but are ſometimes roused from their torpidity by a warm day or two during winter, and will then venture out in queſt of food, but recommence their ſtate of hybernation whenever the cold returns; They re­tire at the end of ſummer into caves, ruined houſes, or the roofs and eaves of houſes, where they remain ſuſpended by the hind legs, and enveloped in their wings, generally in large numbers. Bats may be caught by means of the flower cups of bur-dock, whitened and thrown rap in the way of their flight ; they are attracted by the whiteneſs, and the hooks of the bur, ſticking to their membranous wings, make them fall to the ground.

VESSEL, a general name given to the different sorts of ſhips which are navigated on the ocean, or in canals and rivers. It is, however, more particularly applied to thoſe of the ſmaller kind, furniſhed with one or two marts. See Ship.

VESTA, in pagan worſhip, the ſame with Cybele. See Cybele.

Vesta the Y*ounger,* in pagan worſhip, the goddeſs of Fire, was the daughter of Saturn and Cybele, and the sister of Ceres. She was ſo much in love with chaſtity, that on Jupiter’s aſcending the throne and offering to grant what­ever ſhe asked, ſhe only deſired the preſervation of her vir­ginity, which ſhe obtained.—Veſta was not repreſented in her temple by any image.

VESTALIA, in Roman antiquity, a feſtival celebrated in honour of the goddeſs Veſta, on the 5th of the ides of June ; that is, on the ninth of the month.

VESTALS, among the ancient Romans, were prieſtesses of the goddeſs Veſta, and had the perpetual fire committed to their charge : they were at firſt only four in number, but afterwards increaſed to six ; and it does not appear that their number ever exceeded six, among whom was one ſuperior to the rest, and called *vestalis maxima.*

The veſtals were choſen from six to ten years of age, and obliged to ſtrict continency for 30 years; the firſt 10 of which were employed in learning the ceremonies of religion, the next 10 in the performance of them, and the 10 laſt in teaching them to the younger veſtals.

The habit of the veſtals conſiſted of an head-dreſs, called *infula,* which ſat cloſe to the head, and from whence hung certain laces called *vitta ;* a kind of ſurplice made of white linen, and over it a purple mantle with a long train to it.

VESTIBLE, in architecture, a kind of entrance into a large building ; being an open place before the hall, or at the bottom of the ſtaircaſe.

VESTRY, a place adjoining to a church, where the veſtments of the miniſter are kept ; and alſo a meeting at such place, conſiſting of the miniſter, church-wardens, and chief men of moſt pariſhes, who make a pariſh veſtry or meeting. By cuſtom there are ſelect veſtries, being a cer­tain number of persons choſen to have the government of the pariſh, make rates, and take the accounts of church­wardens, &c.

VESUVIUS, a celebrated volcano of Italy, six miles eaſt from the city of Naples. This mountain has two tops; one of which only goes by the name of V*eſuvius,* the other be­ing now called *Somma* ; but Sir William Hamilton is of opinion, that the latter is what the ancients called V*eſuvius.*

The perpendicular height of Veſuvius is only 3750 feet, though the aſcent from the foot to the top is three Italian miles. One side of the mountain is well cultivated and fertile, producing great plenty of vines; but the ſouth and west ſides are entirely covered with cinders and aſhes ; while a ſulphureous ſmoke conſtantly Issues from the top, ſome­times attended with the moſt violent exploſions of ſtones, the emiſſion of great ſtreams of lava, and all the other attendants of a moſt formidable volcano. The firſt of theſe eruptions recorded in hiſtory took place in the year 79 ; at which time the two cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were entirely buried under the ſtones and aſhes thrown out. In­credible miſchief was alſo done to the neighbouring country, and numbers of people loſt their lives, among whom was Pliny the Elder.

It is the opinion of the beſt judges, however, that this eruption was by no means the firſt that had ever happened. The very ſtreets of thoſe cities which were at that time over­whelmed are ſaid to be partly paved with lava. Since that time 30 different eruptions have been recorded, ſome of which have been extremely violent. In the year 1538, a mountain, three miles in circumference and a quarter of a mile in perpendicular height, was thrown up in the courſe of one night. In the year 1766, Sir William Hamilton, ambassador to his Sicilian Majeſty, began to obſerve the phe­nomena of this mountain ; and ſince that time the public has been favoured with much more exact and authentic accounts of the various changes which have taken place in Veſuvius than what were to be had before.

The firſt great eruption taken notice of by this gentle­man was that of 1767, which, though very violent, was mild in compariſon with that of 1538.

From this time (1767) Veſuvius never ceaſed for ten years to ſend forth ſmoke, nor were there many months in which it did not throw out ſtones, scoriae, and cinders ; which, increaſing to a certain degree, were uſually followed by lava ; ſo that from the year 1767 to 1779 there were nine erup­tions, ſome of them very conſiderable. In the month of Auguſt that year, however, an eruption took place, which, for its extraordinary and terrible appearance, may be rec­koned among the moſt remarkable of any recorded concern­ing this or any other volcano.

During the whole month of July the mountain continued in a ſtate of fermentation. Subterraneous exploſions and rumbling noiſes were heard ; quantities of ſmoke were thrown up with great violence, ſometimes with red-hot ſtones, scoriae, and aſhes ; and towards the end of the month theſe ſymptoms increaſed to ſuch a degree as to exhibit, in the night time, the moſt beautiful fire-works that can be imagined.

On Thurſday 5th Auguſt the volcano appeared moſt violently agitated ; a white and ſulphureous ſmoke iſſued continually and impetuouſly from its crater, one puff ſeeming to impel another ; ſo that a maſs of them was ſoon ac­cumulated, to appearance, four times the height and ſize of the volcano itſelf. Theſe clouds of ſmoke were exceedingly white, ſo that the whole reſembled an immenſe accumula­tion of bales of the whiteſt cotton. In the midſt of this very white ſmoke, vaſt quantities of ſtones, scoriæ, and aſhes, were thrown up to the height of 2000 feet ; and a quantity