

depth; but it was covered over by an eruption which took place two years ago, when also the small crater was formed; and it is over that crust that we are now walking." I sounded again, and listened to the hollow echo. "And is it so?" I exclaimed; "and if this thin crust were to give way, should we be precipitated fifteen hundred feet into the fire beneath?" "Yes, indeed," he replied; "and there are many pre-sages of an approaching eruption; for the mountain is very uneasy at present. Put your hand here!" I did so, but instantly withdrew it; for a stream of the hottest vapour emanated from a fissure in the pavement. "Proceed," I said; for my feet were burning by this momentary stoppage, although they were guarded by a strong pair of boots.

We walked onward, and I mused upon the uncertainty of human events, and the suddenness with which destruction often arrives; and thought of the necessity of being always prepared for a future world, lest the crust of life should suddenly break through, and we should be precipitated into a more fearful flame than that which now raged beneath my feet. We soon reached the foot of the small crater, which was involved in much sulphureous smoke, arising in a multitude of little jetties from the side of the volcano. The ascent was therefore difficult, both from the lava and ashes on which we trod, and the suffocating atmosphere which we were compelled to breathe. Salvador informed me that this crater was four hundred feet in circumference, and was now in a very unsettled condition, of which I had speedily ocular demonstration; for, upon our first looking down into its mouth, it was comparatively clear of smoke, a small half-stilled flame only arising in one of the corners of the bottom. I asked Salvador if it was not practicable to descend into the crater. He informed me that this could only be effected by having two men to hold the adventurer with a rope tied round his waist; but that no person would be so inconsiderate as to attempt it in the present state of the volcano. He had scarcely finished speaking, when it was suddenly filled with a dense sulphureous vapour, which must have proved fatal to any living creature in the hollow, as it even obliged us to turn away from the brink, in order to recover breath. Respiration was, however, difficult in any situation, and I quickly requested my guide to descend.

It is thus that many toil after the grandeur and honour of this changing world; and when, by dint of much labour, they have reached the desired distinction, and raised themselves to that state of eminence which they had envied as being the pinnacle of human bliss, they turn away with discomplacency from the attained possession, and sigh after the humbler condition in which they once enjoyed a richer quiet and security. Let those who are engaged in the pursuits of ambition remember that they are but climbing up the crater of a volcano which is at all times insecure, and where pure enjoyment is impossible, and the descent from which is sometimes fearfully rapid.

We retraced our steps, and again passed over the encrusting top of the large crater; but crossed in a different direction from that formerly taken, that we might descend by another side. "Look at your watch," said Salvador; with which I immediately

complied, and marked the precise minute of time. "Follow me!" and away he sprang like a bounding stone driven down a hill. I followed him, wondering at his boldness at thus dashing down so very steep a place; but speedily discovered that this side of the crater was covered with the finest dust of lava, so that treading upon it was like standing upon wool. We leaped down, every jump carrying us twice as far as the spring which we took, by reason of the yielding nature of the ground; and had we fallen headlong, we could not have been injured, so soft was the almost impalpable dust which lay thickly over this part of the descent. We stopped once to take breath, as the velocity with which we proceeded was really fearful; and arrived at the bottom in five minutes. I again mounted the donkey, and proceeded to Resina, and thence to Naples. Next day I sailed for Messina, in company with a gentleman with whom such an arrangement had been previously made. Six days after my visit to Vesuvius, how changed was the scene! The little crater was no more. The pavement, upon which we had stood and listened to the echo of our own feet, had been thrown into the air, and in its place one immense volume of flame and smoke rose up in awful grandeur to the clouds. When I heard of it, (a few hours after the eruption took place, from a gentleman who himself witnessed it at a distance,) I shuddered with amazement. I had probably been one of the latest visitors of the old crater, and I found that Salvador's prognostications were speedily verified. But the word of God prophesies a similar destruction to this globe which we inhabit; and soon all that we behold,—

—"All, all shall perish,
And like the baseless fabric of a vision
Leave not a wreck behind."

And is it so? And shall my sojourn on earth shortly appear like my visit to Vesuvius? a dream when it is passed? Then let me "seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God;" for though "the fashion of this world passeth away," yet "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

HONOURS TO MEN OF SCIENCE.—Sir John Herschel is, we believe, the first Englishman who has ever received a baronetcy purely on account of his scientific acquirements. His father was only a Hanoverian knight, which was also the honour enjoyed by himself, previous to the late coronation. Sir Edward L. Bulwer is only the second literary baronet, having been preceded by Sir Walter Scott. No great inventor has ever received a similar honour; Richard Arkwright was indeed knighted, but that was not on account of his mechanical merits, but in the usual routine, as the bearer of an address of congratulation on his Majesty's escape from the knife of Peg Nicholson, or on some equally important occasion.

TRY AND TRUST.—There are two little words in our language which I always admired, try and trust. You know not what you can or cannot effect, until you try; and, if you make your trials in the exercise of trust in God, mountains of imaginary difficulties will vanish as you approach them, and facilities will be afforded which you never anticipated."—*Williams.*