

visible along our whole rout. Lava, in all stages of hardness, or decomposition, surrounded our path. When it first flows out of the crater it has the consistency of a very thick paste; but in the process of cooling and hardening, it breaks down into masses of various sizes, which are gradually decomposed by the influence of the atmosphere, and at length an excellent soil for the growth of vines is produced. In some places we beheld a sweep of destruction extending from the mountain to the very sea; in others, plains of lava, gradually mouldering to dust; and in others, small vineyards, growing luxuriantly in the midst of barren wilderness, and seeming to smile upon the desolation around.

I dismounted from the carriage at Resina, whence the road branches off to Vesuvius. This small town or village is built upon the top of ancient Herculaneum, which was destroyed by an eruption of burning lava, that buried the whole under one huge wave of destruction. The ruins have been recently discovered, and partly explored; so that there is a dead town below, and a living one above, the surface of the ground; and the inhabitants now heedlessly walk over the dwellings of their ancestors, seemingly forgetful that their own may share the same sudden and awful fate.

I here procured one of the Salvadors, who are well-known guides to the visitors of the volcano. Under his directions I mounted a large white ass, which, though now fourteen years of age, was excellently adapted to the work assigned. Salvador always walks by the side of his company. The first part of the ascent was fatiguing and uninteresting, on a very rough road between the walls of vineyards. But what good is to be obtained without trouble? A half-way house afterwards appeared, being a place built on the sides of the mountain for the refreshment of travellers. But as several men and boys had previously assailed me with their importunities to be allowed to follow us with wine and fruit, and as I had selected a lad for that purpose, I declined stopping till we should reach the top. If every sweet in this life has a sprinkle of bitterness mixed with it, there are few bitter cups in which some grains of sweetness may not be discovered. And now the prospect began to open to the astonished view, as we gradually wound up the lower ridges of the mountain, and had no sooner reached one eminence than another seemed to rise above our heads. Towns and villages appeared like so many white specks in the vast plain, and even Naples occupied but an insignificant portion of the wide-spreading landscape. And who could in such a situation forget that beautiful passage of Cicero, in his *Somnium Scipionis*, where the sage, in his contemplation of the heavens, beheld the number and magnitude of the stars to be so great, and the earth so small, that he expresses himself to be ashamed of the Roman empire, which appeared like a single spot of the universe? O, that we were accustomed to the contemplation of celestial objects and heavenly hopes! for then would the possessions of earth dwindle into insignificance before our view, and its glory and its beauty would resemble the gaudy wings of a butterfly, which just then obtruded itself upon my notice, and courted a passing regard.

"What do you here at this time of the year?" was the involuntary expression of my mind. "You gaily flutter about; but one cold night will lay your beauties in the dust!" I had a desire to grasp it, and keep it as a memento of Vesuvius; but I could not muster resolution enough to rob it of the few short hours it might yet have to live. Had I done so, Cowper, for whom I have the greatest veneration, would not have deigned to enter me on his "list of friends," condemning, as he does, the man—

"Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm."

And as to the inhabitants of the woods, he says—

"When held within their proper bounds,  
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,  
Or take their pasture in the spacious field;  
There they are privileged; and he that hurts  
Or harms them there, is guilty of a wrong."

And when they do not interfere with man's rights or claims,—

"They are all—the meanest things that are,  
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,  
As God was free to form them at the first."

Since such sentiments are those of a philosopher as well as of a Christian man, I could never make a collection of insects, reptiles, or any other animate beings, in order to gratify the "lust of the eye." In my boyhood, fishing was a favourite sport of mine; not that monotonous trade of throwing lines out of a boat into the sea; but the angling with rod and line in the sparkling brook, which dashes down the wild and solitary glen. But my conscience was always uneasy; it was done for pastime, not from necessity; and though I broke the neck of every fish the moment it was taken out of the water, yet whenever I looked back upon it, and above all, when I saw the innocent worm writhing under the hook, I have thrown down the rod, and felt that, notwithstanding the hackneyed excuses for the sport, I had lost all the pleasures of the excursion.

But I am a rambler. In two hours and a half we reached the foot of the cone, where we partook of the light refreshment already mentioned; and then, leaving our attendants and the donkey, and being armed with iron pointed staves, we proceeded to mount to the summit.

The ascent is very steep, and is rendered still more difficult by reason of the ashes and loose pieces of lava, in which the feet must tread; so that the traveller often slides down as fast as he mounts up. Being young and nimble, and accustomed to the climbing of mountains, I outstripped my guide, and we reached the summit of the old crater in half an hour, being about half of the usual time occupied in so doing. As this had appeared to be the top of the mountain, I was surprised on reaching it to find a large plain of lava, with a smaller crater rising up on one side to a considerable elevation. As we were passing over this extensive level, Salvador stopped short and struck the pavement with his stick. A hollow sound reverberated through the mountain, and made me start with amazement. "Do you hear that?" said my guide. "Yes," I replied: "what is the cause of it?" "Formerly," said he, "this was an open crater, two thousand feet in circumference, and fifteen hundred in