

before we should be able to get back. On the other hand, to give up our design, and quit a country where a volcano was to be seen, without seeing it, appeared rather a mortifying prospect. After weighing for a few minutes the chances on both sides,—I shall not say with the utmost impartiality, curiosity finally prevailed over apprehension; and, in order to prevent any further repentance and consequent change of mind, we put our donkeys into a gallop, and hurried on as fast as they could carry us. But the speed of the asses and our own venturous determination proved, after all, equally unavailing; for, on gaining the summit of the downs, and looking back upon the fleet, we beheld, to our great sorrow, the signal for sailing displayed at the topmasts of all the ships. Mortified at our disappointment, and at the same time rejoicing that we had got no farther on our journey, we were compelled to turn our asses' heads, and to retrace our steps towards Ponto del Gada, where we found everything in the bustle and confusion of a re-embarkation. The beach was covered with sailors, soldiers, bullocks, and casks of fresh water, hurrying, and being hurried, indiscriminately into the boats which had arrived to take them off. The townspeople were running about upon the strand, some offering their skiffs to convey the officers on board the ships, some helping to swing the bullocks into the barges, and others shouting and hallooing apparently from the disinterested love of noise. In short, it was a scene of great liveliness and bustle, perhaps rather too much so to be agreeable.

Seeing this universal eagerness to reach the fleet, we, like the rest, threw ourselves into the first boat we could approach, and in a short time found ourselves on board our own ship. But here a very tantalizing piece of intelligence awaited us, for we learnt that, in spite of all this show of preparation, the Admiral had not begun to weigh anchor; and that no intention of moving was entertained, at soonest, before the morrow. The opportunity, however, was lost; it could not be recovered, and we were obliged to submit as cheerfully as we could, though it was impossible to help regretting, what had at first been a source of consolation, the circumstance of our having caught a view of the signal at the time we did. But, as the event proved, all had turned out for the best; for on the day following the signal was again repeated; and by way of giving additional weight to it, the