

rise to "one of the most interesting events witnessed by man during the brief period throughout which he has observed the physical changes of the earth's surface."* In the year 63 A. D. Vesuvius exhibited the first symptom of internal change, in an earthquake which occasioned considerable damage to many neighbouring cities, and of whose effects traces may yet be witnessed among the interesting memorials of the awful catastrophe which soon afterwards took place.† After this event, slight shocks of earthquakes were frequent, when on the 24th of August, in the year 79, a tremendous eruption of the long pent-up incandescent materials of the volcano burst forth, and spread destruction over the surrounding country, overwhelming three cities, with many of their inhabitants, and burying all traces of their existence beneath immense accumulations of ashes, sand, and scoriæ. All the fearful circumstances connected with this event, and the attendant physical phenomena, are so well known, that it is unnecessary to dwell upon the subject.

From that period to the present time, the internal fires of Italy have resumed their ancient focus, and Vesuvius, with occasional periods of tranquillity, has been more or less active. The principal eruptions are recorded in Mr. Lyell's interesting volume. I can allude but to one other remarkable event, which

* Mr. Lyell.

† Daubeny on Volcanoes, p. 152. Scrope on Volcanoes.