

know what happens when a crack takes place in a high-pressure steam-boiler, with what violence the contents escape, and what havoc takes place. Now there is no doubt that among the minerals of the subterranean world, there is water in abundance, and sulphur, and many other vaporizable substances, all kept subdued and repressed by the enormous pressure. Let this pressure be relieved, and forth they rush, and the nearer they approach the surface the more they expand, and the greater is the explosive force they acquire; till at length, after more or fewer preparatory shocks, each accompanied with progressive weakening of the overlying strata, the surface finally breaks up, and forth rushes the imprisoned power, with all the awful violence of a volcanic eruption.

(21.) Certainly a volcano does seem to be a very bad neighbour; and yet it affords a compensation in the extraordinary richness of the volcanic soil, and the fertilizing quality of the ashes thrown out. The flanks of Somma (the exterior crater of Vesuvius) are covered with vineyards producing wonderful wine, and whoever has visited Naples, will not fail to be astonished at the productiveness of the volcanized territory as contrasted with the barrenness of the limestone rocks bordering on it. There you will see the amazing sight (as an English farmer would call it) of a triple crop growing at once on the same soil; a vineyard, an orchard, and a corn-field all in one. A magnificent wheat crop, five or six feet high, overhung with clustering grape-vines swinging from one apple or pear tree to another in the most luxu-