

(38.) The next volcano I shall introduce is *Ætna*, the grandest of all our European volcanos. I ascended it in 1824, and found its height by a very careful barometric measurement to be 10,772 feet above the sea, which, by the way, agrees within some eight or ten feet with Admiral Smyth's measurement.

(39.) The scenery of *Ætna* is on the grandest scale. Ascending from Catania you skirt the stream of lava which destroyed a large part of that city in 1669, and which ran into the sea, forming a jetty or breakwater that now gives Catania what it never had before, the advantage of a harbour. There it lies as hard, rugged, barren, and fresh-looking as if it had flowed but yesterday. In many places it is full of huge caverns; great air-bubbles, into which one may ride on horseback (at least large enough) and which communicate, in a succession of horrible vaults, where one might wander and lose one's self without hope of escape. Higher up, near Nicolosi, is the spot from which that lava flowed. It is marked by two volcanic cones, each of them a considerable mountain, called the *Monti Rossi*, rising 300 feet above the slope of the hill, and which were thrown up on that occasion. Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of *Ætna* is that of its flanks bristling over with innumerable smaller volcanos. For the height is so great that the lava now scarcely ever rises to the top of the crater; for before that, its immense weight breaks through at the sides. In one of the eruptions that happened in the early part of this century, I forget the date, but I think it was in 1819, and which was described to