

down a chain of triangles in the direction of the meridian, by Geneva and the Alps; this was the commencement of the grand French trigonometrical surveys which have only recently been concluded.

From this rapid historical sketch the reader will perceive that, since the epoch of Newton, our men of science have not rested from their efforts to arrive at an accurate determination of the Earth's figure. All the resources of geometry and astronomy have been called into requisition; and the precision of measurement has everywhere been carried to an extraordinary degree. The labours of these ardent minds, wholly and enthusiastically devoted to science, and a great part of whose career has been consecrated to such arid researches, are unknown to the public: is a brief allusion to their work a sufficient recompense for a life of sacrifice, suffering, and unremitting toil?

[It may not be; but such earnest spirits find their best reward in the very nature and character of their pursuits. The acquisition of knowledge, says Halifax, has a pleasure in it, like that of wrestling with a fine woman. Its votaries feel the divine enjoyment which belongs to the worshipper of Brahma, or Vishnu, when he proves his devotion to his god by cheerfully undergoing the severest tortures. True scholar he will never be whose search after knowledge is dictated by any mean love of fame or power; who does not enter upon the struggle in all simplicity of soul; who does not feel that no recompense the world can give is equal to that which knowledge herself bestows.]

The result of the numerous geodesical and astronomical measurements made at different parts of the world, the aggregate of the great operations which we have so briefly glanced at, has brought us to a very rigorous estimate of the dimensions of the terrestrial globe. As we have previously placed the exact figures before the reader, it will be unnecessary to repeat them here.

These great trigonometrical experiments have not only served to determine the elements of the terrestrial spheroid, that is, to fix the value of the polar flattening and the actual dimensions of our planet;