menced the publication of his great work, *Travels in the Equinoctial Regions on the New Continent.* This work comprises twenty volumes; but although there were several collaborators, the work was never quite completed, and the expenses in connection with it swallowed up the remainder of Von Humboldt's means. In the spring of 1805 he visited Italy, and with his friends, Gay Lussac and Leopold von Buch, saw an eruption of Vesuvius.

Humboldt's best contributions to geology were his investigation of volcanoes and earthquakes, and the broad generalisations which he drew regarding volcanic action. He concluded his description of American volcanoes with a review of all the volcanic phenomena known to have transpired on the face of the earth, and tried to demonstrate, from a large number of observations, that the subterranean centres of volcanic action are in direct communication with one another. He placed great importance upon the connection of volcanoes and earthquakes on the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico and in the Antilles, where subterranean disturbances were felt almost simultaneously over a district several thousand square miles in extent. Humboldt's account of the catastrophe in the year 1759, which gave birth to the Jorulla and five other mountains, and covered an area of four square miles with a mass of lava, sand, and slag five hundred feet high, still ranks as one of the most noteworthy contributions in the whole literature of volcanoes.

Widespread interest in scientific circles was also attracted by Humboldt's demonstration of an eruptive fissure one hundred and fifty miles from east to west across Central America, upon which stand the volcanic cones of Tuxtla, Orizaba, Puebla, Toluca, Tancitaro, and Colima.

Through the generosity of the King of Prussia, Humboldt was enabled to devote his energies to science. During nearly twenty years' residence in Paris (1808-27) he published the series of papers which form the groundwork of his *Views of Nature*, and also a special geological work entitled *Geognostic Essay on the Trend of the Rocks in the Two Hemispheres* (Paris, 1822). This work practically marked the conclusion of Humboldt's literary activity in geology. Upon his return to his native city of Berlin in 1827, Humboldt embarked upon his gigantic plan of producing a physical description of the world. Twenty years passed before this plan was realised and his famous work, *The Cosmos*, appeared. While the work was in