

carriage-drive has been constructed, by which a considerable portion of the mountain may be circuitously ascended. A more interesting mode of ascent is by a rough bridal-path on horseback. Taking this route you proceed up a sort of watercourse, passing over bare lava which shelves backwards by great flights of broad irregular steps. At first on the right and left are vineyards and gardens till you approach a rather level portion of the mountain, where stand the place of refreshment called the Hermitage and an Astronomical Observatory—not the scene of the discoveries of De Gasparis—that one gazes at with interest close to Naples itself. At this point vegetation ceases, or has been destroyed over the upper portion of the southern and western flanks of the mountain, and the far outskirts of the cone begin to present some rather startling evidences of the desolating power of volcanoes. The whole apex of the mountain rises solemnly before you, apparently a pile of solid lava—of lava which bears very visible marks of having flowed down from the crater above in broad outspreading cataracts. Its furrowed, rutty look is like the surface of one of our unmacadamized back-streets after a sudden frost. Here and there you see where the descending ponderous fluid has met in its course with some solid mass of anterior date, and has coiled heavily around it; leaving great sluggish circular ripples, set fast for ever. You start from Resina very buoyantly; you are carried gaily along on your willing nag. The brilliancy of earth, air, and sky fills the mind with a sort of child-like glee. But as you approach the base of the cone, a sobriety comes over the spirit. Like the child that advances onward into manhood, you find that you have entered a rather stern region, and that nothing short of hard work will enable you to overcome its difficulties.

Arrived at length, after two hours and a half, at the Atrio del Cavallo, near the base of the cone, you dismount. You take a rough scramble up a wild desolate ravine underneath the precipitous walls of Monte Somma, the north-westerly summit of Vesuvius; you notice the stratified layers of the ancient lava, and the buttress-like dykes of subsequent and apparently harder lava jutting out from the semi-circular escarpment of this, the original gigantic crater of the volcano of the pre-historic times; and after satisfying your curiosity as well as the time will admit, you return and begin the ascent of the cone.

The place chosen for this exploit is a part built up, so to speak, with closely-packed fragments of lava and slag, between the interstices and among the prominences of which you insert your feet, to the certain disruption of only moderately strong shoes. The whole inclination of Vesuvius, were it uniform from Resina to the lip of the crater, would be only about thirteen degrees. Up to the base of the cone it is still less; but the cone itself is inclined at an angle of forty-three degrees. The perpendicular height of the cone is about 1000 feet; so that it can easily be conceived that the physical labor of ascending it—to a person not accustomed to climb—is for the time extremely painful. It requires, indeed, many “*corragios*” from the guide, and some assistance from a looped strap which he throws over his shoulder for you to lay hold of, to enable you to persevere.