

less blue of the heavens through the opening, a most beautiful contrast to the red rocky archway. Springs make of one or two of these Grottoes reservoirs of profound depth, which, however, in parts are shallow enough to serve as watering-places for cattle.

We rambled through these vast colonades, crushed by their marvellous and picturesque beauty into silence. Adjectives fail to express the mental effect produced by such a succession of lofty halls and pillar aisles and superb archways as these we passed in review. And here and there we perceived that the Grottoes had been made of service as resting-places for the dead, places being cut in the rock precisely similar to those one sees in the catacombs, of which the Campagna held the secret for so many centuries.

It was late in the afternoon when we at length left the Grottoes and walked back to the wayside station. The sun now low in the heavens flooded the Campagna with golden and crimson light, setting the world about us in an atmosphere of poetic charm. Before us on a slope a herdsman led his cattle home. He walked in front, and the herd of some forty head followed in single file. The largest of these beautiful creatures tossing its head and lowing as it went brought up the rear. And on they stepped as though treading a golden ladder up among the sunbeams. On the top of the ridge each stood a moment tossing his head and hesitating as though dreading some declivity on the other side, then disappeared. At last the superb animal in the rear stood there on the brow of the hill alone, his form outlined against the sky.

Later, when we ourselves had rounded the hill, we saw the herd again, now in a mess in near vicinity to a little village of shepherds' huts. Any one passing the huts might have mistaken

them for haystacks of various sizes, such is the form of a shepherd's hut on the Campagna.

We reached the wayside station and Osteria in good season, and, as our train was not yet in evidence, we climbed a ridge near at hand, and stood at this vantage point to watch the sun go down over the Campagna.

Behind us lay the great city of Rome, its turrets outlined against the sunset sky, the Dome of San Pietro dominating all. In the glow of the "great dying flame," the snow-crowned peaks were dazzling in brightness against the dark purple of the Sabine hills. Tivoli, Frascati and Albano stood out in strong relief, and many little villages came out one by one, demanding interest. Below them at the foot of the hills at the meeting point with the Campagna spread a lake of azure hue.

The atmosphere at this witching hour invested the broad waste with its magic, and one transformation scene followed on another. The shadows of the hills grew liquid, became an azure lake, the mists on the plain, a tossing sea that broke the mountains apart and filled the rocky rifts with foam. Above this the hill cities showed as castles in the air.

The sun set, a crimson ball in the golden heavens, just as our train came in. But to-night there was no dusk, for the moon rose as the shadows deepened and shed glittering beams from the cloudless sky. The distant snow-peaks caught the silver chains, next came the graceful aqueducts on the Campagna as it were, leading the flitting, dancing moonlight across its many arches to the hills and ridges of the Eternal City.

Through which the Tiber pours  
His smiling waves along, with rapid whirls  
And yellow sand, and bursts into the sea.

(Æneid vii., 35f.)