

itself immediately behind them. The planet Venus was splendidly conspicuous vertically over them, looking as if she had been a meteor, shot up and held suspended at the culminating point. And there she remained beautifully visible for a considerable time after the surrounding constellations had "paled their ineffectual fires" before the ascending sun. Over the easternmost of the two mountains rested what appeared at the moment to be a dark cloud, varying considerably in form, looking in shade quite black in parts, and occasionally rolling up pitchy volumes, like the smoke issuing from a great funnel of an Atlantic steamship when fresh coal is being put on below, the whole mass becoming at last magnificently fringed with fiery gold, as the sun gradually emerged from behind it and pierced its murky folds. These twin-mountains together form Vesuvius.

I observe in the ancient, so-called classic maps, that the name attached to the basin which we call the Bay of Naples is "Crater." The old observers had taken notice that there was in this locality a connected system of volcanic vents, and that Vesuvius, Vulture, the Solfatara of the Phlegrean fields, Avernus, Ischia, Stromboli, with *Ætna*, itself, were but minor formations on the lip of a gigantic flue for the escape of the elastic gases, whose egress by their former channel the influx of the Mediterranean had checked. In that old appellation—"Crater"—have we not also a lingering reminiscence of a huge upheaval, and consequent oscillation of ocean, of which tradition spoke—when perhaps the Aral parted company with the Caspian, and the Caspian with the Black Sea, and all three with the Baltic,—when the Black Sea no longer formed a continuous expanse with the Mediterranean,—when Thessaly became dry land, and Pelion fell from Ossa,—when the Red Sea ceased to receive the Jordan, and the valley of the Nile, the Mediterranean,—when the mountain chain which had previously linked the continents of Europe and Africa together was ruptured, and Atlantis, not all a fable, sank beneath the deep?

But be this as it may, Vesuvius is one of a system of volcanic vents, either open or for the present obstructed, which it is interesting to trace in this neighbourhood;—with which system are doubtless connected also the extinct volcanoes of the Albano hills, near Rome, the Solfatara on the road to Tivoli, and the Lago di Bracciano, to the north-west of Rome.

The base of Vesuvius is now encompassed on two sides by railways. The one to the north-east runs to Capua, and is ultimately to reach Rome. The other to the south-east is completed, I believe, now to the ancient port of Brundasium. The south-eastern road has "stations" at Herculaneum and Pompeii, and by this route many persons proceed from Naples to Resina, where the ascent of Vesuvius is usually commenced. But although to travellers in the United States of America the idea of rushing by rail to Rome, Syracuse, and Troy is sufficiently familiar, the tourist who is desirous of keeping his mind in harmony with the past, whose veritable relics he is about to contemplate, will certainly do well to prefer the old public road. By taking this route to Pompeii, you also have the advantage of witnessing a succession of animated scenes of popular life, the whole line of road being an almost continuous suburb of Naples, and