

While toiling thus sorely up this steep, I began to be convinced that the good Franks of yore really did mean by their word "travail" what some etymologists have asserted. To get "transvallum"—beyond the wall—to scale the precipitous flank of some old Roman camp, was doubtless to their warriors some such task as this—a difficulty memorable enough, certainly, to be embodied in a term.

At length, after numerous rests, and after a lapse of perhaps an hour and a half, you find yourself on the comparatively level platform which leads to the lip of the great crater. The desire accomplished is found to be truly sweet on such an occasion, and the propensity to be noisily elated is quite overpowering. A strong wind blowing in our direction, sweeping down over us a huge column of vapour, which completely obstructs the vision, obliges us several times still to halt in our ascent of the final gently inclined plane.

At last we are on the brink of the great crater, and we find ourselves looking down into a gigantic and tolerably sooty-looking flue, up which from unknown mysterious depths are rolling volumes of what in the distance seems smoke, but which is, in fact, steam—steam carrying up with it a variety of choking gases. The whole breathing apparatus becomes immediately painfully affected, and we are reminded of the sensation suddenly experienced when one passes the nostrils over the edge of some great vat where fermentation is going on. The reverberation of a shout directed by the guide or yourself down into the undefined abyss is sufficiently awe-inspiring. Its effect can in some degree be conceived by imagining how a shout would sound when directed into a hollow cask one thousand feet in diameter.

The view obtained in every direction from this position is in the highest degree interesting and exciting. The Appenines form the background of the picture, a congeries of secondary and tertiary formations, exhibiting in their retiring ranges phase after phase of the finest aerial colouring. On one side you look down upon a city, pre-eminently of the living, ever on the stir and outwardly joyous—the syren-city, a sight of which its inhabitants fondly say might reconcile a man to the relinquishment of life. On another side, in solemn and instructive contrast, you see cities of the dead—historic fossil beds—mines not yet exhausted by the student and philosopher. Around you, on the left and right, are Capri, Positano, Procida, Miseno, Baiæ, names summoning up images of beauty and long trains of shadowy forms and events. Yonder is Posilipo, the "grief-dispelling," the favorite haunt of the poet who, before the Christian era, sang the praises of this region, and whose tomb now consecrates that height. Before you, far and wide, lies the tideless sea, a household word throughout the world, whose name recalls the ideas with which the old cosmographers vainly tried to satisfy inquiring minds—whose serene surface, stretching to the distant south and west, still now as of yore reflects and sets off to best advantage the never tiring, because sublime pageantry attendant on the demise of each successive day.

After traversing a portion of the rim of the great crater,—its whole circumference of 5624 feet,—holding firmly the arm of the experienced guide, you begin