

assumed a redder tint, gradually growing more and more intense. The showers of fiery sparks increased ; while the concentrated light within the crater itself enabled us more easily to mark each varying phase of the eruption. The explosions of the two smaller vents recurred every seven or eight minutes, whilst between those of the larger crater intervened ten or twelve minutes. The phenomenon always exhibited the same details—for example, so soon as the volcano showed any signs of activity, the smoke, which was ejected from the vents on the right, assumed a bright and glowing red ; while detonations, succeeding each other with constantly increased rapidity, preceded every jet of burning matter. These jets were thrown up in divergent directions, and with scarcely any smoke, from one of the two sister craters ; whilst from the other they rose upwards with a leap, as if impelled by the current of violet-hued vapour that escaped from the mountain with a loud shrieking sound. The principal crater threw out a broad expanded jet of incandescent rocks and lava, which nearly reached the platform where we were standing, and fell with a great crash ; one portion being carried into the sea, and the remainder thrown back into the abyss whence it had been ejected, while the wind surrounded us with a cloud of fine black sand and ashes.

“The night had long since gathered over us, and our guides were urgent we should make the descent. We were, therefore, constrained to yield, and prepare for our return ; but before beginning to retreat we waited for another eruption, which, fortunately, proved one of great magnificence. The three vents played simultaneously, reflecting the crimson glare of the lava ; while the threefold rampart of the crater was once more revealed to our gaze.”

Friedrich Hoffmann, the great Prussian geologist, ascended the peak of Stromboli in 1828. Having reached the crater, he lay down and hung over its precipitous side, while held firmly by his companions. He was thus enabled to look right down into its fiery depths, and of the scene which they presented he has left on record a vivid description.

At the bottom of the crater were three mouths in a state of activity. The central and principal one was 200 feet in diameter ; it was in no way remarkable ; it smoked slightly, and its sides were encrusted with several coats of yellow sulphur. By the side of this main vent, but nearer the precipice, was another, only twenty feet wide, in which I observed the glow of the liquid column of lava that at intervals played upon the surface.

The lava was not, as an ardent imagination depicts it, a burning mass, vomiting forth flames ; but shone like molten metal, like iron flowing from the furnace, or like silver at the bottom of a heated crucible.

This molten mass oscillated to and fro, and rose and sank. It was evidently impelled by the terribly elevated tension of elastic vapours enclosed in its interior, and the effect could easily be seen of the balancing between the weight of the melted masses and the pressure of the aqueous vapours which uplifted them. The surface