

The copper hisses in the wave ;  
 The anvils press the groaning cave ;  
 With measured cadence each and all  
 The giant hammers rise and fall ;  
 The griping pincers, deftly plied,  
 Turn the rough ore from side to side."

Strabo speaks of three craters as existing in the island—the principal of which was visited by Polybius, and is described as five stadia in circumference and one stadium in depth. At times it vomited forth flame ; at others, red hot stones, ashes, and cinders, which were carried a considerable distance.

Though some of the old writers speak of Stromboli as "burning with perpetual fire," its eruptions were evidently inferior in violence. Now, however, its crater is constantly active, so that it is frequently described as "the lighthouse of the Mediterranean." The island consists of a single conical mountain, with a total elevation of about 2000 feet; the largest (and active) crater being about 600 feet below the summit. Its minor explosions are continuous, and at intervals of from seven to fifteen minutes are varied by more furious eruptions. It has frequently been ascended. One of the latest to accomplish this somewhat perilous feat was M. de Quatrefages, who, with a companion, reached the summit of the ancient cone, whence they looked down upon the abyss kindling at their feet, whilst a grand column of fire rose towards them with a noise resembling the rapid discharge of artillery.

"Standing immediately above the crater," says Quatrefages,\* "and unable to advance to any distance over the shifting soil, we were impeded in our observations by the mountain itself ; whilst, moreover, we were almost incessantly surrounded by clouds impregnated with choking gases. To avoid these inconveniences, we descended a lateral ridge, where we could contemplate at our leisure the savage scene unfolded before our eyes. Three concentric ridges, of which the outer ones are partly destroyed, encircle the volcanic crater. Behind us, steep declivities stretched down to the cultivated regions, which we had found it an arduous task to traverse ; but which appeared, when seen from our elevated position, to be merely a gentle plain. To the left, our gaze rested on the loftiest peak of the island, which was once a portion of the most ancient and the outermost of the three concentric ridges, and was separated from us by a deep ravine. To the right rose the small elevation from

\* [Quatrefages, "Rambles of a Naturalist," ii. 24.]