

1 English or French, we determined to visit this place under more favorable circumstances. On
2 our return to Naples, we passed through the ancient grotto of Posillipo. It is simply a tunnel
3 about ½ a mile long, wide enough for two carriages to pass. It is well paved, in some parts 30 or
4 40 feet high. It is excavated in volcanic tufa, a cream colored rock not much harder than chalk.
5 This grotto was cut through this promontory many years before Christ. In the 15th century it
6 was enlarged and the floor cut down to a lower level. It was paved in the 16th century. It is a
7 great thoroughfare, and a line of vehicles is constantly moving in each direction through it. The
8 tomb of Virgil is near the Naples end of the grotto, but we did not stop to visit it on this
9 occasion. Returned to our hotel at 2 P.M. After dinner girls out for a walk. Mrs. Van and I
10 concluded to remain in for the balance of this day. The sunshine has lasted through the day,
11 parasols required for comfort. The street in front of our hotel is the fashionable drive, and the
12 turn outs would do, even in Central Park, New York.

13 Jany. 8th. Another bright, sunlit day. The weather warm as the month of May. Wrote letter to
14 Capt. John. Engaged a guide at 42 francs per week. Propose to make our first excursion with
15 him to morrow. Don't like the arrangement of rooms without fire places. Mrs. Van and I have
16 taken cold, and if we don't get rid of it soon, shall change our rooms for others with fire places
17 or leave the city.

18 Jany 9th. Carriage & guide at 8 ½ o'clock. Drove west through the grotto of Posillipo. West of
19 the grotto one mile turned north to the lake d'Agnano – or rather to where the lake used to be
20 as its waters have within a few years been drained to the sea by an artificial tunnel nearly a
21 mile in length. The lake was nearly 3 miles in circumference and 40 feet deep, is surrounded by
22 an amphitheatre of mountains. The bed of the lake is now a fertile plain, highly cultivated in
23 gardens divided by gravel walks radiating from the centre in every direction. It was at one time
24 the crater of a huge volcano. Here we visited the "Grotto del Cane." This is a cave excavated in
25 the bank of the lake and fitted with a rude door which an old woman opened (consideration
26 one franc) and showed us the mysteries of the interior. It emits from crevices in the sides and
27 floor volumes of vapour mixed with carbonic acid gas. This gas rests upon the floor and flows
28 out of the cavern over the threshold of the door. The girls went into the cave, and the guide,
29 stooping down, put his hand near the floor and, scooping it up quickly towards their noses,
30 brought up a portion of the noxious gas. They were satisfied with one or two whiffs of it. The
31 custodian offered to place a dog in the cave to show us that he would die in two or three
32 minutes, but we did not care to witness the cruelty and were satisfied with some experiments
33 of lighted torches which, if let down near the floor, would go out as suddenly as if they were
34 plunged into water. A pistol cannot be fired if held near the floor. In ancient times prisoners
35 condemned to death were shut up in this cavern where the fatal gas soon did the business for
36 them. The grotto takes its name from the experiments of killing the dogs. Cane is Italian for
37 dog. There are vapor baths and other interesting places, but we did not stop to examine them.
38 We now returned to the principal road and drove west 2 miles to Bagnoli on the shore of the
39 Gulf of Pozzuoli. There are a few plain houses at Bagnoli. The place is celebrated for its mineral
40 baths. Passing along the shore between Bagnoli and Pozzuoli, there is abundant evidence that