



Smithsonian Institution

Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Set of Underwood & Underwood stereographs of Japan

Extracted on Mar-29-2024 08:57:46

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You are up on the summit of the largest volcano in Japan, close by the circular brink of the crater which is about three-quarters of a mile in circumference. The man at the left is an English friend of the photographer — the other is a Japanese coolie who accompanied the party to carry extra baggage. That ladder strapped on his back is one frequently used in order to hold the camera higher than the surrounding level.

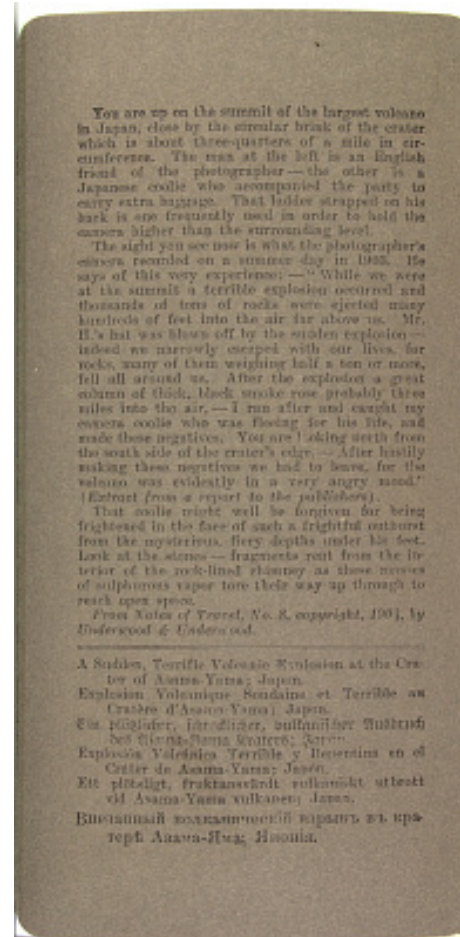
The sight you see now is what the photographer's camera recorded on a summer day in 1903. He says of this very experience: — "While we were at the summit a terrible explosion occurred and thousands of tons of rocks were ejected many hundreds of feet into the air far above us. Mr. H.'s hat was blown off by the sudden explosion — indeed we narrowly escaped with our lives, for rocks, many of them weighing half a ton or more, fell all around us. After the explosion a great column of thick, black smoke rose probably three miles into the air, — I ran after and caught my camera coolie who was fleeing for his life, and made these negatives. You are looking north from the south side of the crater's edge, — After hastily making these negatives we had to leave, for the volcano was evidently in a very angry mood." (extract from a report to the publishers).

That coolie might well be forgiven for being frightened in the face of such a frightful outburst from the mysterious, fiery depths under his feet. Look at the stones — fragments rent from the interior of the rock-lined chimney as these masses of sulphurous vapor tore their way up through to reach open space.

From Notes of Travel, No. 8, copyright, 1904, by Underwood & Underwood.

A Sudden, Terrific Volcanic Explosion at the Crater of Asama-Yama; Japan.
Explosion Volcanique Soudaine et Terrible au Cratère d'Asama-Yama; Japon.
Ein plötzlicher, schrodllicher, vulkanischer Ausbruch des Asama-Yama Kraters; Japan.
Explosion Volcanica Terrible y Repentina en el Crater de Asama-Yama; Japon.
Ett plötsligt, fruktansvärdt vulkaniskt utbrott vid Asama-Yama vulkanen; Japan.

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