

ST. PIERRE DEAD CITY OF PAST

Edmund Hovey Visits Ruins Wrought by Mt. Pelee.

MAKES GEOLOGICAL STUDY

Other Devastated Places Building Up Again.

The twelve-month now ending has perhaps seen more volcanic activity than any similar period within the historic period of the earth's history. Special popular interest in the subject of volcanoes was attracted, of course, by the terrible eruption in May, 1902, of Mont Pelee, on Martinique, which destroyed 29,000 human lives on the former island and 1,500 on the latter, and as a result such mountains all over the world have received more study from the public at large than ever before.

In May, 1902, the author was sent by the American museum of Natural History to study and report upon the phenomena attending this eruption. Next I went to the West Indies at the behest of the same institution to supplement my previous studies and to learn the changes which have taken place in the last ten months.

Leaving New York February 5, on the steamer Caribbee, we arrived off Mont Pelee about noon of the 17th and were favored with a short interval in which the whole summit of the mountain was free from clouds except those of steam issuing from the crater and new cones. The most striking feature of Mont Pelee now certainly is the new fragmental cone which has built up during the present period of activity and the top of which is not less than five thousand feet above the sea.

The former height of Mont Pelee, the highest point of the old crater and of the mountain, was usually given as 4,250 feet, while the elevation of most of the crater rim was not more than 4,000 feet. Next to the new cone the feature which most attracts the attention of one who was familiar with the appearance of the eruptions is the filling of the gorge of the Riviere Blanche with material which has been poured out of the crater by the numerous eruptions.

This was the gorge leading out of the great gash in the southwest of the crater, the gash which determined the direction of the explosion which overwhelmed the doomed city of St. Pierre on May 8 and succeeding days. Now the lower portion of the gorge has been obliterated and the upper and deeper portion, near the crater, almost filled with calcined rocks and dust and ashes, which glides white, in strong contrast with the surrounding cliffs and slopes.

The present series of eruptions began in April, 1902, from several openings in the great crater, the principal of which was just west of L'Etang Sec, at an altitude of about 2,400 feet above the sea. A cone began forming at once about the openings, which has been growing ever since, though with interruptions, due to great eruptions and other causes, and most notably filling up the great crater. In the latter part of June this cone had reached an altitude of about 4,000 feet above the sea, that is, its own height was about 1,600 feet.

At that time it had an irregular, serrated top, surrounding a bowl shaped depression or crater. It was growing rapidly, and early in July the photographs show for the first time the remarkable shape of a tooth, the upward growth of which has more than kept pace with that of the rest of the cone, until now it has changed the sky line of the mountain and forms its most striking feature. As has been stated the apex is about 5,000 feet above the sea, indicating a height of 1,600 for the new cone, but this altitude varies strangely from time to time, the French official commission having reported several sudden losses or gains of several feet.

Other changes in the outline seem to emphasize the fact that the volcano still is in a state of activity. The great spine rises above the northwestern quarter of the old crater and its base is surrounded by a valley which is bounded by a strongly serrated ridge or series of ridges. Outside of this again the sides of the new cone slope away steeply to join the old mountain in the north, or, it seems to be, continuous with the outer slope of the old crater rim, but on the other side there still is a rather shallow valley or gorge between the new cone and the inner walls of the old crater, except where the great gash allows the new cone to slope continuously into the gorge of the Riviere Blanche.

The nature of the new cone and the great spine is more or less conical. The main mass of the cone is made up of loose material, "ash," brought up from below by the successive forces acting in the volcano. The French commission, of which M. Lacroix is the head, hold, I believe, that the spine consists of masses which have been ejected in a sufficiently past condition to stick together when they come to rest again. Thus far I have not been able to get near enough to the spine in clear weather to form any personal opinion as to its constitution.

The vapors issue from every part of the new cone and M. Lacroix holds that there is no permanent central or nearly central conduit through the cone. The line of the gash and the gorge of the Riviere Blanche still is the favorite direction of discharge of the volcano, and although there have been no important eruptions since August 30 many clouds of steam have gone down that way, driving or following the great blocks of ancient lava which have traversed it.

Enormous masses of rock, some of them forty feet across, lie scattered about along the middle altitudes of the Seche Blanche plateau, thrown there probably by the eruption of August 30. Some of these were broken into many fragments through striking on other rocks, others jagged and broken and were not even cracked. Especially on the eastern side of the plateau the "bread crust bombs" are more numerous than in June. These generally are taken to be fragments of lava which have reached the air in a fluid or partly fluid condition, and the increase in number over the earlier eruptions, which may, however, be more apparent than real, indicate an increase of temperature or a diminution in the proportion of water vapor. Such diminution, if it has occurred, would of itself raise the temperature in the volcano.

Furthermore, this increase in the number of fluid or partly masses reaching the surface would be an argument for the correctness of the theory that the great spine of the cone is composed of such heavy steam of molten lava flowing down the sides of Mont Pelee during the series of eruptions. Investigation of the material filling the gorge of the Riviere Blanche confirms the idea that the volcanic dust, sand and gravel which form by far the largest proportion thereof issued from the cone in a dry or comparatively dry condition, a theory that is further endorsed by studies at St. Vincent. The steam and hot air permeating the mass of dust, sand and gravel as it came from the cone caused the whole mass to act like one fluid and flow through the gorge in a torrent.

The solid particles were incandescent, and the steam rose in vast clouds as it was liberated from the bowing mass, so that the comparison with a stream of actual lava given by many observers is not surprising. The flowing mass carried along with it from the crater many large blocks of ancient lava, and the liberated steam carried into the atmosphere great quantities of the finest dust.

The "eruption" of January 23, which frightened the tourists on the royal mail steamer Esk, and which was extensively announced in the "Nation" and other papers, was one of the dust clouds rolling down the Blanche, just like scores of hundreds of others, and did not merit particular mention.

These dust flows down the Riviere Blanche must not be confounded with the mud flows down the same canyon. The mud flow which overwhelmed the Isle Guerin seems to have been caused by the waters of the Etang Sec breaking through the temporary dam formed by new ash, but succeeding ones have been caused by the rain soaking dust and ash on the inner slopes of the great crater and the remainder of the drainage basin of the Blanche descending in terrible avalanches.

The dry mud flows are hard and compact, while the dust flows are so soft and loose that one sinks in them to the knees. The mud flows are black or nearly so, while the dust flows are very light gray in color and have a calcined appearance. A considerable portion of the great area which was so injured by the accumulations of ash as it included within what was called the "zone of devastation" is now largely green again through returning vegetation. The coating of ash has been washed off by the copious rains giving grass, herbs, plants, etc., a change to sprout again from the old roots. Trees and tree ferns have put on new fronds, branches and leaves. Even thistles surrounding St. Pierre are again covered with verdure.

The area included within the "zone of annihilation" shows no sign of returning life except along the bluffs facing away from the crater and in other spots which were sheltered from the fury of the volcanic blast. This zone on the west side forms a V, with the Apex at the crater and the broad portion extending from St. Pierre to Frecheur, while it spreads, roughly speaking, in somewhat circular manner two miles down the slopes of Mont Pelee on the north, east and southeast sides. The ruins of St. Pierre are grassgrown, but that is due to the great amount of old earthy material which has been washed down from the surrounding bluffs, bringing the seeds with it. Aside from the grass and the ruins, the appearance of the city has not changed materially since last July.

Some walls which were weak then have fallen; a few streets have been swept clean of ash and deeply gullied by the rains; the iron bridge over the Rocelano has been destroyed; much volcanic material has been washed in on the beach by the ocean, the evidences of wrecks in the roadstead have disappeared, a lighter has been washed ashore near Place Berlin and the iron statue of the Virgin has rolled down to the Cerbet road from its upraised position on the edge of the bluff. Some excavation of value has been carried on under sanction of the government. The whole place already has a very good look-out, and the reports regarding the eruption of August 30 greatly exaggerated the extent of devastation wrought by that outbreak. Morne Rouge and Ajoupa-Boutin suffered the great loss of life stated—fifteen hundred to two thousand souls—the great sugar cane fields in the northeastern part of Martinique were not injured, and now the sugar factories are running as before, as if no disaster had visited the island. The tremendous floods, however, which rushed down the valleys of the Rivieres Cimet, Basses Pointes, Maucoule, and Grande soon after the various eruptions have left full evidence of their occurrence. A large proportion of the villages of Basses Pointes and Grande Riviere has been washed out to sea or buried under ten to fifteen feet of sand, gravel and ash, and a large number of the material brought down each of the four rivers extended its delta two hundred yards or more into the sea, but the surf has gained again on the new deposits and in six or seven months' time has cut away about one-third of these points and has spread the material along the coast for miles.

The little harbor at Basses Pointes was filled directly after the floods of last May, but the sea is now cutting its way into it again, and a little assistance would quickly enable the planters again to use this important shipping point.

Even at this date an ascent of the mountain may not be entirely without adventure, as I learned to my cost on Friday, February 27. Leaving Vive, the hospitable home of M. Fernand Clerc, early in the morning with a guide, a guide and a groom, I pushed on to the old summit plateau of the mountain in spite of the rain and clouds, hoping for a near view of the wonderful cones. Mule and groom were left at a convenient point, while the guide and I went on.

Clouds and rain prevented my seeing what I went for—in fact, consoling everything at a distance of a hundred yards, a guide and a groom, made my climb a very disagreeable one. After traversing the basin of the Las Des Palmistes and reaching the border of the great crater we turned back to gain some sheltered spot and wait for the clouds to clear away.

After tramping for half an hour across the gullies which serrate the sides of the mountain top we found ourselves at the top of the rock precipice and a momentary rift in the clouds revealed the ridge leading to Morne Rouge, on the far side of the deep gorge. The "guide" had lost his way and we were at least a mile out of our course in the midst of a dense fog! Struggling again to the summit I found my footprints in the mud near the rim of the crater and started the guide on the way.

Soon, however, we lost the trail on account of the rain having obliterated the footprints, and we started zigzagging down the slope, hoping to strike a right ridge in time. Again we were too far to the south and the second rift in the clouds for the day showed us to be near the precipices at the head of the Riviere Falaise. My poor negro, who had been very boastful in the morning, had by this time completely lost his head, but, at my earnest solicitation in broken French, he made one more attempt to get down.

At five o'clock, however, we discovered a rackfall immediately below us and we staid that we were in for a night on the mountain. Finding again in a gully which would afford us some protection from the keen wind, detaching the loose stones so that they should not fall upon us during the night and piling cameras together under my collecting bag for shelter, the guide and I squatted down under the old rain coat to spend as best we could the night.

The last morsel of food had been eaten long ago, and we were reduced to a few drops of rum, which we had for the cold night; we had no matches and no wood to burn if we had the matches; our bed consisted of angular stones with sharp edges and corners up. My companion soon was asleep, but I was slow in following his example. Remembering the saying "Politics makes strange bedfellows" I thought geology could do likewise occasionally. Showers during the night added to our discomfort, and we were fortunate in having only one of sufficient severity to bring a cataract down our gully and make us wonder for a while whether we should have to desert our camp.

Morning dawned at last still in heavy fog and we waited until seven o'clock for the clouds to lift. Then, there being no indication of relief in that way, I gave orders to climb the mountain once more and search for the summit which has been notified to us so distressingly the day before. To add to the distress of my guide, I told him that if we did not find the Vive trail before noon I was going to follow the edge of the crater westward and descend to St. Pierre and Morne Rouge.

"Along the edge of the crater" he demanded and shook his head, he would remain on the mountain. After several long delays to warm up the guide, the folds of the long rain coat of mine, we attained the summit plateau again, found the box and then quickly found the trail down, it having been made very plain by M. and Mme. Lacroix, who had ascended the mountain later than we on the preceding day. Half way down we met a relief party on the way up with food and drink and then learned that the Governor and the American Consul had been notified of my absence and that searching parties were to be started out in the afternoon if I did not make my appearance. M. Benelin, the superintendent at Vive, evidently felt much relieved to see me riding into the yard about one o'clock and the orders for the searching parties were joyfully countermanded.

Returning to Fort de France as speedily as possible after this experience, which resulted in no injury in spite of twenty-four hours of wet and exposure, I came with M. and Mme. Lacroix to St. Vincent on the French gunboat Joffroy. We arrived March 2 and at once began the study of La Soufriere.

The island of St. Vincent is slowly recovering from the disaster which overtook it last year, though it will surely immediately show signs of recovery. The French gunboat Joffroy, which has been in the French harbor of St. Vincent, may be taken as the measure of this total devastation. The mud of the two May eruptions might have been washed off more rapidly had it not been that the heavy gravel and sand and the September eruption compacted all deposits on the leeward, and those of the October eruption did the same for the windward slopes.

The area affected by the September and October eruptions, beyond the area devastated by the May outbursts, is now covered for the most part with verdure and is bearing its crops. The immediate slopes of the mountain are desolate, even if there be no additional eruptions, on the decomposing action of rain and atmosphere have converted the volcanic ash into fertile soil.

The coating of recent ash now upon the hill slopes is so heavy and so well compacted that it forms an integral part of the whole, and it is only where rills have cut through this coat and into the old soil beneath that any vegetation is appearing. The tremendous deposits of ash in the gorges of the radial valleys, such as the Wallillon, Roseau and the Rabaka, have been worn away by their rivers in marvellous fashion.

The Wallillon Valley, for instance, was filled by the May eruptions with ashes to an average depth which now it is safe to put at sixty feet, and the September eruption, added its quota to the amount. Now almost the entire valley is covered with ash and the river, which flows above its old bed. Here, and there, the angles of the original gorge have protected the new bed from erosion, and small secondary eruptions of hot ash still occur in these protected spots; such is the retention with the Rav. T. Huckerby, of Chateaubelair. I ascended the gorge of the Wallillon for three miles or more, walking along the bed of the stream as if it had been a broad avenue.

A simple calculation, taking the average breadth of the gorge for this distance at 150 feet, showed that not less than 10,000,000 cubic feet, more than 25,000,000 tons of the recent ash had been carried out to sea by this river alone since the eruption of May 7, 1902, and of course most of this work was accomplished in the rainy season.

On Tuesday, March 2, I stood again upon the rim of the great crater of this volcano and obtained a perfect view of the entire line of the grandest calderas in existence. It would require careful measurement to determine the extent to which the crater has been enlarged since May 7 of last year, when Messrs. Jagger, Curtis, MacDonald and I stood upon the same spot and were the first men to gaze into the awful depths after the beginning of the present series of eruptions.

The general impression among local observers is that there has been considerable increase in the size of the crater, especially in the Mameter from east to west. My photographs taken on May 7, look so much like what one sees to-day, however, that it does not seem safe

Eagle Table and Kitchen Suggestions What to Eat And How to Prepare It.

These articles on the necessarily absorbing topic of food are carefully prepared and based on knowledge of chemistry as applied to the kitchen and practical information derived from actual experience.

WHEN THE STRAWBERRY RIPENS One Unalloyed and Unimpaired Mouthful of Sweetness.

The enthusiastic lover of the strawberry considers that its virtues are legion, and it has not a single defect. In years past the first appearance of the strawberry in northern markets was a sure harbinger of summer than the first swallow; but now the southern berry comes so early and decidedly out of season for colder latitudes, the sign has no significance. No longer a herald with splendid banners of red and green proclaiming the approach of the rare June days; the opening of the banquet season of the year when Nature distributes her largest and most generous hand that there may be enough and to spare for the needs of every creature and kind.

The most loved strawberry was originally a plant of temperate or colder climate, growing wild, sweet and luscious in the freedom of open air and sunshine. The chief characteristic of the wild berry is its sweetness, which exceeds that of the garden berry. Cultivation has generally increased the size of the fruit, and also, according to the approval of most tastes, improved the flavor.

Like most fruits, one of the greatest charms of the many conceded to the strawberry, is the delightful color effect presented, a glory of splendor surpassing the skill of man.

All who fully appreciate and respect the charms of this immortalized fruit agree that this embodiment of perfume that waits for the nostrils of the nostrils of Virgil; of flavor that enraptured the palate of Ovid and graced the banquets under the shadow of the Acropolis and on sunny Pincian Hill, this giver of health and creator of pleasure should seldom be submitted to the perverting and desecrating fire; but eaten when fully ripe, firm, cool and while still holding the spark of imprisoned sunshine which gives the outdoor berry the effect of sweetest flavor and scent, which is said to have been one of the chief factors in molding the barbarian of Europe into his present higher civilized form. They certainly are to be preferred fresh from their dewy garden beds, cooled to just the proper degree of refreshment by the chill night air. But their pristine delights are spent before the town-dweller can enjoy them; but still much of their individuality and the fine volatile flavor is preserved when the berries are carefully packed, protected in transportation and served entire and unappetized, with little bowls of powdered sugar beside each palate. When they can be served fresh and cool from the vine, they are most delicious stemmed and served with powdered sugar and thick, rich cream.

Chief Properties of the Strawberry. The strawberry does not differ so very greatly from other fruits in component parts. They contain more acid than most apples, a little less sugar, are rich in water, and contain a small amount of lime salts and when eaten in moderation are very cooling and wholesome in effect in the average. There is a good deal of cellulose and so-called waste material in the strawberry, the ordinary proportion of water being about eighty-nine per cent. Although the aesthetic qualities predominate in the fruit, and we enjoy them for their sweetness and flavor with little regard for more useful qualities, it is a fact that the tissue-forming element of this berry is higher in proportion than in most other fruits.

In rare cases strawberries do undoubtedly disagree with individuals. The trouble may arise from the use of berries which are stale. They are very perishable, keeping but a short time uncooked, and should never be cooked in order to "save" them, when the least sign of decomposition is shown. Skin eruptions and blives are sometimes charged to the eating of strawberries, and possibly with good reason if there is some peculiarity which may be aggravated by this acid fruit. But even with injurious result, they prove their usefulness, as they not only make known the presence of some insidious disease but proclaim the unfitness of the individual for the consumption of the berry. For example, in such cases the berry is useful, as they stimulate without irritating the intestines and in this way are useful as a laxative when used with judgment. Coming early in the season, they are one of the best as most delightful of tonics for toning up and clearing out the system preparatory for the hot weather.

Many adopt the French mode of serving the fresh berries with a little of good vinegar, from which the orange, or "charret," but the charret must be of the finest or you will spoil your berries.

Strawberry Cocktail. Take the largest, ripest berries you can get and slice them with a silver knife. To a dozen berries add a pint of brandy, a tablespoonful of orange bitters, half large-stemmed berries in powdered sugar and drop one in each glass to be served; crush the sliced berries to a pulp against the side of the bowl and then pour the mixture into glasses and serve. Keep all materials very cold.

Strawberry Cup. Mix a half cup of rich, thick strawberry syrup with a pint of good vanilla cream. Cream until stiff and smooth; half half cup, stemmed glasses with chilled ripe berries and spread the frozen mixture on top and serve.

Strawberry Savoris. Take a quart of the ripe berries fresh from the vine as possible. Sprinkle four tablespoonful of powdered sugar over the mass and rub through a sieve. Set this puree away in a china bowl to keep cool until wanted. Put three-fourths of a box of gelatine to soak in a cup of water for half an hour; add a cup of sugar and when dissolved, strain the strained juice of an orange and half a teaspoonful of lemon juice. Stand over hot water and stir until dissolved, then strain in a basin. As the mixture begins to cool stir constantly, adding the strawberry puree by degrees. Stand on ice and when it begins to set fold in a scant cup of whipped cream. Turn into a round pyramid-shaped mold, cover closely and pack in coarse ice and salt. Have a thin round layer of sponge cake or

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INQUIRIES ANSWERED.

Angel food; place this on a chilled dish and cover with vanilla fondant or boiled icing. The cake should be about an inch larger than the base of the mold. Turn the lavender out on this when ready to serve, and ornament the base with large strawberries and leaves. Leaves from angelica may be used if you cannot get the berry leaves.

Strawberry Charlotte. Stem two pounds of ripe berries and cut them in half lengthwise. Prepare one quart of lemon jelly and when slightly cool pour a thin layer in the bottom of a mold and when this is firm enough place a layer of the berries on top; cover with more jelly and set; while quite firm set a smaller mold in the center and fill with strawberries and sweeten to taste with powdered sugar; a stilted cone, when set, then set the mold in cracked ice. Dissolve half an ounce of gelatine in half a cup of water and mix with a cup of strawberry juice and sweeten to taste with powdered sugar; a stilted cone, when set, then set the mold in cracked ice.

Boiled Salad Dressing. Put a desiccated of dry mustard, a teaspoonful of salt, quarter of a teaspoonful of white pepper, half a teaspoonful of celery salt, a tablespoonful of butter and two table of eggs in a saucepan and heat until thoroughly melted, then beat in slowly a cup of milk or cream. Remove from the fire and add the berries mixture with the juice of one lemon. Place in a pan of cracked ice and beat until it begins to thicken a little, and is perfectly cold, then add the lemon juice and beat until it is stiff enough to turn out. Serve on a fancy dish garnished with whipped cream and white fruit.

Strawberry Sponge. Soak half a box of gelatine in one cup of water for half an hour. Sprinkle one cup of sugar over a quart of berries and crush the berries well; a wooden spoon. Add half a cup of sugar and a cup of water partly for twenty minutes. Rub the berries through a china strainer, add the gelatine to the boiling syrup, remove from the fire and add the berry mixture with the juice of one lemon. Place in a pan of cracked ice and beat until it begins to thicken a little, and is perfectly cold, then add the lemon juice and beat until it is stiff enough to turn out. Serve on a fancy dish garnished with whipped cream and white fruit.

Strawberry Salad. Separate the pulp of grape fruit from the bitter skin which separates the sections, using a silver knife. Sprinkle a little sherry over the pulp, and chill. Add some fine ripe strawberries and squeeze a very little lemon juice over them. Have ready some syrup made of honey and white wine; toss the berries and grape fruit pulp together and place in a glass salad dish; garnish with crisp lettuce hearts and English walnuts and serve.

Split Toast. These items as well as those for the innards can be obtained at a well-appointed house-furnishing store in most large cities.

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Split Toast Enjoy SHREDDED WHEAT BISCUIT Wholely Nourishes Whole Body.