of church bells, visions of a quaint little tropical town, red-roofed under the spreading palms, ramparted seaward, thatched landward, half-made nations toiling in the shade, warships French, British, Dutch, yarded merchantmen, a roll over the swell, in a crazy little dug-out with the crest of every wave dripping over the gunwale, a pump up the sides of a weather-scarred tug flying old Glory, a wonderful hour of steps of hair-breadth escapes by land and sea, a fifteen-mile dash down the coast to the City of the Dead, the plunge ashore, the drenching of the ashes under the feet in that wierd climb through the ruined ending by a race with death,—playing tag with the devil," as a bluecoat graphically put it, a retreat close pursued by the artillery of Pelée, the sudden blotting out of the brilliancy of the tropic noonday by a darkness as of night, a sea flight through a storm of sand, dust and ashes, and over and through it all the lap, lap, lap of the ceaseless waves. It has surely been a day to live.

DIXIE'S ARRIVAL AT FORT DE FRANCE.

The anchor chains of the Dixie, southbound for a week on her errand of mercy, rattled through the hawse-holes at exactly 5.51 o'clock this morning in the beautiful harbor of Fort de France, the harbor from which came our first news that Cervera's fleet was on this side of the Atlantic. The United States cruiser Cincinnati, the French cruiser Suchet, the Hollander Koningen Regentes, the United States Navy tug Potomac and three merchantmen were lying at anchor.

Hardly had the Dixie's anchor been dropped before she was surrounded by a small fleet of native boats. The natives volunteered much startling information in their Martinique-French patois, translated for our benefit by Mr. Charles Van Romondt, for many years a business man at St. Pierre, but recently a resident of New York. Mr. Van Romondt's immediate family was with him in New York when the catastrophe occurred, but he lost many relatives and much property.

It appeared from what the natives said that there had recently been another big eruption of Pelée, a great panic at Fort de France and much devastation at St. Vincent. Mr. Van Romondt was not inclined to credit it all, more especially when he asked if Mr. Charles Van Romondt had been killed at St. Pierre. "Oui, Oui," they shouted. In a few minutes, however, the Health Officer of the port came aboard with much ceremony and confirmed the news. Having given us pratique, he departed hastily.

Everybody waited as Capt. Barry opened up wig-wag communication with the Potomac. The toy warship had been in these waters for a week or more. There lay a mine of wondrous stories, if it could only be dug, even ever so lightly. A slip over the side, a plunge into one of the tiny native boats, and the thing was begun.

I have called the "boat" a dug-out. A cross between a fence-rail and a coffin shell is the most graphic and accurate description that can be given of it. Two grinning darky youngsters manned it. They laughed all the time, as at some great joke. I suspect that I looked like one. As we lay poised sideways on the flank of a wave, for all the world like a fly on the wall, one of them asked me in pantomime if I could swim. Warily, if nonchalantly, I shook my head. That was the crowning point of the joke. Those black youngsters shrieked in glee (they are half Celtic themselves), but we reached the side of the Potomac. There a big bronzed fellow gave me a hand over the side, Brayton, boatswain of the United States Navy, and second in command of the U. S. S. Potomac. Brayton it was, as I learned long afterward, who struck the Potomac's nose full speed ahead into the very depths of the oncoming wrath of the volcano, while a consorting warship fled for the open sea. Brayton's commander and shipmates were ashore, and Brayton went after them. That was all. It was characteristic, too, that in that hour I spent alone on the Potomac with her clean-cut commander, Lieut. McCormick, and her sturdy boatswain, Brayton, I heard of everything except the gallantry of the Potomac.

Of the great eruption of the day before, of the terrifying scenes in Fort de France, of the rescue of the body of the United States Consul on Monday and of many other happenings of the preceding days I shall try to tell in another place.

ON TO ST. PIERRE.

Soon after 10 o'clock the Dixie sent to the Potomac two boat loads of her passengers, scientists, newspaper men, artists and photographers. Capt. Berry, with a few of his officers, Capt. McLean, heading a delegation from the Cincinnati and some of the officers of the Dutchman, Koningen Regentes, joined the party, and the Potomac swung northward toward St. Pierre, keeping fairly close to the shore. The scientific party was composed of Jaggar of Harvard, clear-cut and eager, Russell of the University of Michigan, nicknamed Father Neptune by the irreverent, Hovey of New York, young, alert and bespectacled, and Borchgrevink of Antarctic fame. Half, the only lady geologist, had chosen to go ashore at Fort de France, and write a newspaper description of Pelée and St. Pierre from there.

Quickly gliding down the coast with the jagged mountain line cleaving the sky on our starboard hand, we passed half a dozen villages nestling on the shore, in the valleys of the hills. There were signs of life at all of them, although we were informed that a majority of their inhabitants had fled from the wrath of Pelée to Fort de France. Fishnets drying in the sun, children playing on the beach, a woman, her head heaped high, placidly driving a donkey before her, a big-sailed boat hugging the rocks—these things gave no indication of the terrific devastation but a few miles beyond.

The lofty hills showed green in the sunlight, with here and there but a trace of the ash fall. Piton de Carbet, the island's big central volcano, still quiescent, loomed up grandly in the middle distance. We passed successively and rapidly the tiny seashore hamlets of Fond Diromot, Anse de la Casa, Piton, Fond Capot and Morne Auxbeaux, all alike, a red-topped stone building or two, a score or so of thatched roof huts, and occasionally a little church.

Reminiscence of St. Pierre in its glory, stories of the disaster and of the days following the disaster, scientific speculation and theory flew fast and furious as the little tug ploughed on her way. Lieut. Harry Phelps, navigating officer of the Cincinnati, who helped fight the Texas on the Sunday morning that Cervera's fleet went to wreck, stood in the pilot house and spun me yarns of Pelée. Phelps was one of the landing party which recovered Consul Prentis's body on Monday.

"We decided that it was our move," he said, in describing great black clouds that swept down toward them from Pelée's heights, and I touched only the high places on my way to the boats.

"We marked out a square on the deck yesterday," came the voice of one of the Cincinnati's officers from below, "and by careful calculation it measured an ash-fall for yesterday morning's eruption of one ton to the square mile. We took angle measurements which showed the height of the column that rose from the crater to be a little over six miles."

"Among the débris which fell on the Cincinnati's deck," said Capt. McLean, "was a fragment about three inches long, which the surgeon identified as part of a human bone."

NEARING THE DEVASTATED ZONE.

Bearing around Cape Enrage, with its white cross landmark glistening in the sunlight we sighted the pier that marks the village of Carbet, the southernmost limit of Pelée's devastation. The hamlet, nestling under the eminence of Morne d'Orange, was ash-strewn. From Morne d'Orange on the south to Le Marr point on the north stretches the roadstead of St. Pierre, the coastline between them making an almost perfect bow.

High on the jutting outline of Morne d'Orange was the first visible sign of the devastation of St. Pierre. For many, many years a gigantic white statue of St. Mary the Virgin, called by the people Notre Dame de Garde, had pointed to mariners the anchorage place of the port. It was the most conspicuous object for miles about. The statue had been splintered from its base, and lay about forty feet to the south. It had faced the north, and, as subsequent investigation showed, it lay with the head still in the same direction, the force of the destructive blow having been evidently in the middle of the entire structure, at the top of the base and the foot of the statue.

Just a few yards to the south of the fallen Lady of the Watch, could be traced a perfect line of demarcation between the zone of desolation and the zone of safety. It was as clear as though drawn with a giant pencil. On one side of a line beginning to the southward of Carbet and traversing northward to a short distance from the statue running up over the undulating hills to the central backbone mountains all was ashen grayness—not a green leaf, not a strip of grass, on the other side the greenery of rank tropical vegetation.

WHERE A CITY HAD BEEN.

Rounding the Morne d'Orange into the roadstead of St. Pierre the gray blankness of the devastated city struck silence to our hearts. Half a mile away all that could be distinguished was a gray streak. As we came nearer the outlines of what once might have been buildings could be made out. The general effect was unutterably weird and sinister.

To the westward the blunted lines of Cape Martin sloped strongly upward in a knobbed, tufted ridge of mouse-colored rock to a point where Mont Pelée's flanks were swathed in dull white smoke, a veritable winding sheet of fantastic pennons and streamers through which showed faintly the mountain's grim color. At the base from giant fissures columns of steam writhed upward, adding to the desolate terror of the monster whose summit was high in the clouds. At the very rim of the gentle surf that lapped the scared coast these evil plumes issued forth and the geologists recognized in these phenomena a flow of hot volcanic mud running beneath the crust of cinder-strewn earth and coming into contact with the steam-generating waters of the sea.

At the coast line the mountain took a bold dip and then surged upward again in a chain of clustered spurs and shoulders on their flank and running down in steep slopes from a point near the crater stretched a valley two miles in width, path of streams of hot mud and receptacle of immense quantities of the gray ashes that covered to a depth of nearly two feet the ruins of St. Pierre.

There was but an almost imperceptible change in the color of this picture from the heavy mouse-colored flanks that had missed the fiery avalanche to the gray-colored patches, the shade of a Havana's ash. The gaping, smoking, half-hidden mountain seemed like the nightmare of a degenerate imagination. The broad valley, its bosom bared of vegetation and ruled by infernal streams of boiling mud, acres of volcanic ash and cinders and studded with gigantic boulders, seemed like one of the spots of Dante's Inferno, or an hellish alkali plain through which ran cañons of death. Over all hovered not a bird, not a sign of the life of this world.

Directly ahead, couched in fancied security for decades before at the foot of this scene of ruin and desolation, lay the ash-colored shells that marked the city that had been stuffed out by the hot breath of Mont Pelée.

A spar lifted its sail-draped head a few feet above the water, marking the grave of a sunken coaster. Three white flat-topped buoys were but of little break in the anchorage and on the wreck-buried beach their fellows rested with gaping tents in their frames.

PICTURE OF AWFUL RUIN.

Within the eye's vision a gray city, without light or shadow to break its awful monotony of color, stripped of its roofs, its walls either lying in crumbled heaps or rearing jagged, meaningless fragments to the smiling blue skies, swept from one's brain every vestige of the power to grapple with the overwhelming suggestion of annihilation, complete and unearthly. Small herds of smouldering bodies and rubbish gradually became recognizable in the picture and the tumbled walls of the cathedral caught the eye.

On the high bluff of Morne d'Orange the great white statue of the Blessed Virgin, which, framed in the vivid greens of tropics, had long served as a point for navigators, lay prostrate and crushed, broken shafts of giant trees completed this picture of ruin. Below the gradual planes of the military road that rose with continuous slopes above the city, the open spaces of the market place and the devastated burying-grounds, broke the almost uniform parallels of stone and ash-filled streets. But there was no break in the ghastly monotony of color, no lights to pick out the detail of form, no shadow to lessen the negative effect.

Rather than the thought of sudden annihilation that it first presented, the effect of gradual decay grew on the mind. It was as though a traveller had penetrated into some mountain fastness of Asia and had stumbled upon a ruined gray shell of a city that had been drooling out its long decay for centuries. A pitiful wreck of man's long labors, filled with the dead and shunned by the living. No vulture soared above with searching eyes and ready talon, no beast skulked in its ruins.

LANDING IN THE CITY OF DEAD.

A line was carried out to one of the flat-topped buoys, where a sailorman made it fast and the blocks of the tug's boat falls hummed and creaked as her boats, were rigged out and lowered now. As we approached, whipcord had been loaned for the trip, and as each boat shoved off from the big tug Capt. McCormick gave strict, concise orders that on the sounding of the tug's whistle all should repair without delay to the beach and that no articles of value would be allowed on the boat. The first order was sufficient, for the narrow escape of a burial party from the Cincinnati two days before had made its impression and the second order was as carefully observed.

Not a stringpiece was left at St. Pierre's many landings and there was nothing to do but land with the light swell and run the boat's bow on until the crews could tumble out and haul them up on the beach far enough for the passengers to make a dry landing. The instincts that one followed as he made his way over the ribs of ships, tangle of boulders and beams that lay thick on the beach varied as to his calling. The scientist plunged his hand into the shroud of gray ash that lay knee deep in the streets and perhaps racked his brain over the diverting study as to whether the rocks that made many streets impassable, except for sure-footed goats or athletes, had been hurled from Mont Pelée's catapult or were identical with the rounded stones that one saw projecting from the wrecked mortar of broken walls. The corps of photographers and newspaper men spread out like a fan, the former bent on panoramic points and the latter hurrying to cover as much ground as possible before the tug's whistle would be sounding its coarse notes of alarm. The American and Dutch officers mingled freely and leisurely peered into the ruck of ruin that stretched before them in every direction.

The gaping buildings disclosed among their deep settings of rocks and dust-smashed bedsteads, twisted beams and here and there a brown, grisly thing that looked like a firelog. The firelog was broken, though, and its break showed the unmistakable gleam of bone. So completely disfigured by storm of fire and dust it was hard to believe that these shrivelled, scorched things were the dead of St. Pierre. There was not the faintest semblance in most cases of a human face or form, and the dismembered bodies were, of all the many sinister sights, the most depressing. Hidden in many cases to the casual glance, the work of burning the dead must necessarily be a slow one, and the recurrent shrouds of dust and ashes have greatly increased that task since the day of the great eruption, when the Sagbet's searching party found the dead lying in rows in the streets. The telltale odor of decomposition could be detected in certain places, but streets and roads were remarkably free from this phase of death.

WHAT ST. PIERRE HAD BEEN.

We had landed at a point a little to the southward of the Mouillage. Cathedral the ruins of which formed the most prominent landmark in the whole city. There was absolutely no semblance of Place Berrin, the flagged water front with its border of green, shade, its lighthouse, its piers jutting out to the sea. Every visitor to St. Pierre remembers the Place Berrin, sloping gently to the sea from its leafy border, and covered with thousands of hogsheads of sugar and casks of rum, and its fountain with its three great black Tritons. Seamen called it the Levee.

Beyond the trees at the uppermost slope of the waterfront were the warehouses and public stores, and buildings of that kind great massive structures, fronting on the longitudinal street called Rue Bouille. The Place Berrin is buried, not by the ruin of Mont Pelée, but by the eternal sea. Its paving, and Tritons, and trees lie beneath the green waters of the roadstead, which now lap the withstanding walls of the buildings that were a block away.

A brief glance at the geography of the former city will serve to aid in a conception of what it is now. St. Pierre lay at the base of towering hills which culminated in Mont Pelée to the northeast. Roughly, Morne d'Orange was the extreme southern point, but at the base of this hill and between it and the city was the little suburb of L'Anse, a place of fine residences. The city was divided popularly into three sections, the Fort (the northernmost part), the Centre and the Mouillage (anchorage) the southern section.

The Mouillage River, a rippling little stream, also called the Roxelane, divided the Fort section from the Centre. The Riviere des Peres emptied into the sea at the extreme northern end of the island, by the suburb of Fonds Core.

The city itself rose in terraces of masonry to the green hills above. Morne Mirail was an aristocratic residence district to the east of the Fort section. Morne Rouge, on the southeastern slope of Mont Pelée and about five miles in a direct line from St. Pierre, was a fashionable resort, and a place of beautiful dwellings. The famous Botanical Gardens, the Jardin des Plantes, bloomed in their magnificent beauty on the slopes of the Morne Parnasse, less than a mile directly back of the central part of the city.

The main thoroughfare was Rue Victor Hugo, the main street to Rue Bouillé, which came next to the waterfront. Place Berrin, Rue Victor Hugo ran lengthwise of the city, and then curved to the eastward. The streets were not laid out at right angles. They twisted and curved and more often than not ran into cul de sacs. But three or four of the cross-town streets ran all the way to the water.

The streets were very narrow. The buildings were almost all constructed of rubble masonry with tiled roofs. The masonry was very heavy, walls of three feet thickness being common. The streets that led seaward descended from terrace to terrace by flights of heavy stone steps. Most of the buildings were two stories and an attic. Very few of the window openings were glass-encased, heavy wooden shutters with movable slats serving to take in or keep out light and air.

The city was one mass of color, the yellow-painted houses with their red-tiled roofs and bluish-gray shutters contrasting harmoniously with the great forests of green encircling it, and the gentian blue of the tropical sky overhead.

ONE MASS OF ASHEN RUINS NOW.

One great crumbling mass of ashen ruins was what we found left of all this. Terraces were levelled, so that the effect was that of a gently sloping plain from the eastern rim of the city to the sea. Streets were choked with huge boulders, fallen stones, cinders and ashes, so as to be indistinguishable except for the torn and ragged walls of the buildings that had bordered them.

These walls were standing in some cases to the height of the first story. But it was only here and there that a wall was standing. In many cases the building was entirely level with the debris surrounding it. It was noted that in every case the wall which still stood in part was the seaward wall, that farthest from the force of the volcanic blast.

THE DEAD LAY EVERYWHERE.

Almost the moment we jumped through the surf from the cutter to the ash-strewn shore, the sun hid and the rain fell, adding, if possible, to the overpowering sense of gloom and desolation. Singly, and by twos and threes, with no word spoken, the party spread itself out over the city.

I picked my way over the rocks toward the Rue Victor Hugo, with the Cathedral ruins as a landmark. The mountain climbing process first slipped and slid in the powdery ash that on a level rose over the instep. I had not gone twenty-five yards before a slipping stone dislodged a skull that rolled gently down a little slope of rock and rested in the ashes below, with teeth gleaming to the sky. A few steps further on, just inside a three-foot wall lay a charred torso and head. From that time on fragments of bodies were seen everywhere.

HOW THE CITY BAKED DIED.

Passing a block northward along the rocky chasm that once was the Rue Bouille my attention was attracted to the ruins of what had been evidently a big bake shop. The outer wall was standing about eight feet. The walls had fallen outward. Inside a drab mud clung to the shoe soles. Two huge bake ovens stood side by side in a perfect state of preservation. In the one on the right was the partly disintegrated body of a man. He was lying on his back, with one leg drawn up slightly, the right arm outstretched and the left arm bent toward his head, a remarkably natural posture. The body was charred, but the features were distinguishable.

The finding of the body in this place was interesting as bearing upon the question of just what immediate warning of the actual catastrophe the people of St. Pierre had. This baker, for instance, certainly had time to crawl into his oven in a vain attempt to escape the on-rushing devastation.

Jaggar of Harvard, the scientist, was in the near distance breaking off bits of rock with his geologist's hammer. I beckoned to him. Jaggar came and made notes. He also tried to take a photograph. The sand and dust and ashes got into the camera, and the sun would stay out only for a second at a time. All through our stay ashore there were but brief flashes of sunlight.

AS A SCIENTIST SAW IT.

And while we sat on an ashy rock on the wall, with our feet in the mud that had come from the bakers of Mont Pelée five miles away, in the company of the baker who had wasted in his own oven, Jaggar, of Harvard, the scientist, meditatively tapped with his hammer and spake. At the feet of Science I took it down with the rain splashing the pages of the note-book.

"There are no papilli," said Jaggar, whether speaking to me or the dead baker. "There is no evidence of lava. There is much volcanic dust. Walls three feet thick have been torn down by this blast. The 30,000 dead of St. Pierre were killed, I should say, by an explosive volcanic tornado, which bore with it a wave of burning gas. The volcano is now in a most dangerous condition, and in the method of its action it bears a close resemblance to Krakatoa, whose eruptions began on May 20, 1883, and lasted fourteen weeks, culminating on Aug. 26, when the island was blown into the air. The action of Pelée is of the same character as Krakatoa, small, recurrent eruptions, with no lava."

STARTING RESEMBLANCE TO POMPEII.

"Then, too, this is very, very suggestive of Pompeii, not only in the action of the volcano, but in the general appearance of everything, even the sweep of the coast line and the green waters. I had not realized that this eruption was so Pompeian in character. The mountain is more symmetrical than Vesuvius, but its action upon St. Pierre is identical with the manner in which Pompeii was destroyed. All the evidence of old volcanic rock on the water shows that the island was built up by explosive volcanic action, with intermittent flows of different types of lava to make the rubblestone of which the houses are built."

The people of St. Pierre were in a cul de sac. There were very few cross streets but long lateral ones parallel to the sea, surrounded by high cliffs, and if the town had been built purposely to be destroyed by a devastating eddy, it could not have been done better. The eruption itself differs from that of Vesuvius in that there appear to have been no premonitory earthquakes.

This spake Jaggar, the scientist. Then he went on tapping stones and I took up again my sapping and sliding over the ash-strewn boulders, turning east toward Rue Victor Hugo, in what was evidently the ruin of a dwelling lay an upturned face with its body's outline distinctly perceptible under the ash. A little farther along, in the débris of the street protruded the back of a human body, with the head and legs buried completely out of sight, while just beyond, a companion piece to this, stuck up the arm and leg of a man, all the rest of the body being under the mud and ashes.

DESTRUCTION OF THE CATHEDRAL.

Most of our party found their way sooner or later to the Cathedral. It had been a handsome, massive structure. The tower to the south held the finest peal of bells in the West Indies, while one great bell swung in the north tower. The catastrophe of May 8 left both towers and the seaward arch standing. The eruption of May 19 had levelled the south tower, and crashed the other in, too, the great bell, looking pathetically forlorn amid the ruin of the interior of the Cathedral, looming up above the wreckage of its frame.

The interior of the cathedral spelled destruction more eloquently, perhaps, than any other spot in St. Pierre. It would have taken an expert in church architecture to have separated from the mass of débris piled high as a man on horseback, the original site of any of its fittings except the altar. At one end the façade, and the great bell, with the gnarled distorted steel framework of the bell tower, at the other the shattered marble and the scorched, discolored fittings of the altar. At one's feet lay shattered slabs of marble, pictured with Biblical carvings, the beautiful doors of the sanctuary wrested from their hinges, and the candelabra broken like pipe stems.

The great walls and roof buried almost all these in an immense mass of débris, and the eastern side was impassable. The great Christ that had stood midway between the towers, seeming from sea against the background of green as if the statue were erected high up on the hills, was nowhere to be seen.

MANY DIED THERE.

It does not take much imagination to picture the rush of men, women and children to the cathedral, if there was a sufficient immediate warning. There were probably many worshippers in the church; at all events, it was the morning of the Feast of the Ascension. Most of the bodies there must have been buried deep. The gendarmes had found a number near the altar, charred, distorted, unrecognizable, and had burned them.

In climbing over the great bell one of our party discovered entangled in its wreckage part of a human form. Near the entrance in the street lay two bodies, barely covered by the shifting ash pall. The heads of both were toward the sea, and their arms were thrown up before their faces.

In the cross street to the north of the cathedral (Rue College) three bodies, partly covered, were lying in a heap, while a few feet further away was another.

It is to be remembered in reading of the bodies that the Dixie party stumbled upon in this first day's hurried exploration, that the French soldiers had been burning bodies for a week until they were driven away by fresh eruptions, and that the eruption of May 20 had recovered the ruins with fresh layers of mud and ashes.

CITY'S LARGEST BUILDINGS LEVELLED.

Steadily clambering over and through the maze of desolation we came to the square which had been the centre of the life of the gay city. About it had been many of the chief buildings of the city, the Hôtel de Ville, or City Hall, the Insular Bank of Martinique, the Military Hospital and the St. Pierre Club, or, as it was popularly known, the Whites' Club, and the Cercle de la Rue Hospital. The fringe of giant silk-cotton trees that bordered the square were the pride of St. Pierre.

A crumbling ashen chaos was all that was left. The huge trees, splintered, crushed and twisted, had been torn off, in some cases uprooted, and lay prostrate, scorched and shrivelled. Some of the stumps were charred clear through, showing the intensity of the heat that fell upon the city.

An old St. Pierre merchant, who had been in New York at the time of the disaster, pointed out to me the site of some of the principal buildings. The Military Hospital, which was one of the biggest buildings in St. Pierre, had been built solidly, backing against a high bluff, fronting the water. Its walls were three feet thick, and it would seem that the bluff back of it would have been a stout rampart of protection. And yet these massive walls were razed to their foundations. There was not the trace of an arch, hence twisted into fragments there was the splintered stone terrace, there were the building stones piled one on another, riven and ash-cracked. That was all.

The Hôtel de Ville, the municipal building, was almost level with the ground. The clubhouse, known to every visitor to St. Pierre, was a mere ashen heap. Two walls of the bank building were standing to a height of about eight feet. The vault, which had been opened the week before by the agents of the authorities, was again covered up by the fall from the eruption of May 20.

Further to the north we stopped before four of the other big buildings of the city, situated in adjacent blocks. The Lyceum for Boys on the Rue Peset, had about six feet of its seaward wall standing. Two charred bodies were seen lying just under one of the windows.

The jail, just across the street from the school, presented a jagged wall to the first story. The bars across the windows were bent and twisted. There was no sign of a vault or dungeon from which a prisoner could have been taken.

Indeed careful investigation showed that the story of a lone survivor of St. Pierre having been taken from a jail dungeon after the catastrophe was plainly apocryphal.

The Palais de Justice was a handsome building covering a block and fronting on the Rue Abbé Gregoire. Of it just one arch stood out over the pile of ruins. Just to the east ward of the Palais de Justice was the church of the Centre, a substantial stone structure. It was razed to the foundation, the sole exception being a bit of the walls standing, as was also the case with Government House, at the foot of Rue Abbé Gregoire, facing the waterfront.

Coming south, the Government bonded stores on the sea front had from eight to fifteen feet of their sea walls standing. The Custom House, a little further along the sea front, between Rue d'Hôpital and Rue Lucie, was almost obliterated. Only a fragment of the south wall of the massive Treasury Building in Rue Lucie was left standing.

The hospital Notre Dame des Champs was perhaps the biggest building in the city. It was situated at the extreme southeastern corner, under high bluffs. Crumbling walls, not much more than the height of a man were all that was left to tell the story. It contained about two hundred patients, all of whom, of course, met death. A huge rock, many tons in weight, lying toppling over the ruins from the crag above.

IN THE RESIDENCE DISTRICT.

The result of this careful inspection of what was left of the principal buildings of the city serves to give, perhaps, a better concrete idea of the prevailing devastation than could any other recital of facts. These were the buildings that were most substantially constructed of all the terraced rows of masonry. What happened to them was what happened, in greater degree, if possible, to every structure in the city.

So complete was the obliteration that nothing was left of the exterior of any building in the whole city, save the cathedral, to enable the observer who had not known its location before to tell whether it was dwelling or factory, stable or palace, shop or château. Some lines in the interior of the ruins a broken and twisted household utensil or article of furnishing or decoration might proclaim the character of the structure that had stood there.

As in other French towns, although there were "better" residence sections than others, very fine dwellings were scattered throughout all parts of the city. The modern baths, in very many cases, proclaimed the abiding place of a prosperous citizen. These were particularly numerous in one part of the southeastern section. They were of circular shape, built of masonry usually, with a carved marble inlet for the water and a few marble steps leading down. They were from 12 to 16 feet in diameter, frequently, and from 3 to 6 feet in depth. In every case these baths were found choked level with mud and ashes.

In one magnificent bath, fully twenty feet in diameter, in the ruins of a house that had stood to the north and east of the Cathedral were uncovered three bodies. The onrush of smoke and poisonous fumes, perhaps the outbreak of fire, had driven these three to the bath for safety but there was no safety for any living thing in St. Pierre that morning.

Another body was found with the head in a large porcelain bowl. This was an evident attempt to escape from suffocating fumes, but the basin, instead of water, was banked high above the head with dry ashes when the body was found, and probably was so within a moment of the futile plunge for safety.

WITH THE DEAD WHO HAD GONE BEFORE.

A high stone encampment sustaining the military road girdled the city from the Jardin des Plantes in the northeast to L'Anse, under Morne d'Orange in the extreme southwest. About a quarter of a mile from the cathedral in a southeasterly direction, sloping from this embankment westerly, was the cemetery du Mouillage, the chief burying place of the city.

Although all St. Pierre was one vast charnel-house, a peculiar interest attached to the resting place of those who had gone before. Every headstone was levelled, and all signs of graves or walks were obliterated. Built against the embankment of the military road were the vaults, perhaps a score, each with a tiny mortuary chapel opening to it, masonry structures with tiled roofs, pillared porticos, and latticed iron doors. They seemed to be the only things in the city that had not been entirely destroyed. Many of the doors stood open, and we could see within the slabs bearing the name and virtues of the man who had been laid to rest, in some cases centuries before.

Only two headstones were found standing of the many hundreds that had dotted the burial grounds. They testified to the loving remembrance of the friends and relatives of Capt. Henry Ripley of New York, who departed this life in St. Pierre in 1817, and of Edward Snell, a petty officer in the British Navy, who was buried there in 1816. At least one of the living of St. Pierre on the morning of Ascension Day met his death among the shades of the past. Near the main entrance the charred body of a man was found, face upward, half buried in the mud and ashes.

The ashes of Pelée had penetrated even here, and the slabs were covered to a depth of from two to three inches. There were ash-covered wreaths of immortelles, shell flowers and other mortuary emblems, handsome silver lamps swinging by silver chains, but most striking were the slender porcelain vases, many still standing, still bearing faded flowers, but in nearly every case splintered on the side nearest the wrath of La Pelée.

WHERE ONCE WAS A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN.

Some of us climbed to the site of the Jardin des Plantes, that wonderful tropical outburst of flower, tree and shrub, the fairy garden of the world. For the mile from the military road flanking the city to the outskirts of the gardens on the slopes of Mont Parnasse, the way led over a trail of ash and ruin blazed by no human foot since the blight of Pelée.

The once luxuriantly wooded heights were bare as the side of a rock, and all that remained of the once magnificent gardens was a waste of desolation. For as far as the eye could see not a green thing was in sight, not even a leaf, not a tiny blade of grass. Giant palms were uprooted, shrivelled, blasted. Ravines and lakes, rivulets, walks, cascades, arbors, fountains, all blended in one gray hillside waste, shrouded in the omnipresent ash.

And this is the place which Hearn called one of the wonders of the world, writing: "Palms rooted a hundred feet below you hold their heads a hundred feet above you. The ravine widens to frame in two tiny lakes, dotted with artificial islands, which are miniatures of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Dominica; these are covered with tropical plants, many of which are total strangers even here; they are natives of India, Senegambia, Algeria, and the most eastern East.

"Arborescent ferns of unfamiliar elegance curve up from path verge or lake brink, and the great arbre-du-voyageur outspreads its colossal fan. Giant lianas droop down over the way in loops and festoons, tapering green cords, which are creepers descending to take root, hang everywhere, and parasites with stems thick as cables coil about the trees like boas. Trunks shooting up out of sight, into the green wilderness above, display no bark, you cannot guess what sort of trees they are, they are so thickly wrapped in creepers as to seem pillars of leaves. Between you and the sky, where everything is fighting for sun, there is an almost unbroken vault of leaves, a cloudy green, cloudy in which nothing particular is distinguishable. You come to breaks now and then in the green steep to your left openings created for cascades pouring down from one mossed basin of brown stone to another, or gaps occupied by flights of stone steps, green with mosses, and chocolate-colored by age. These steps lead to loftier paths and all the stone work—the grottos, bridges, basins, terraces, steps, are darkened by time and velveted with mossy things."

And all this now ashes, ashes, ashes, and always ashes.

OLD RIVER BED NOW LEVEL WITH MUD.

Wandering in the Military road in the northeastern part of the city, slipping down over a sheer bluff to the terrace below, the way led over a thicker colored substance than the ash of the ruins. One step, a sinking as in a bog or a quicksand, two steps and a desperate plunge for the gray-stone ruin from which we had thoughtlessly stepped, we were almost up to our knees in the thickest, stickiest, most clinging mud imaginable, showing light clay colored on our boots as the sun struck it. "La Roxelane!" cried a member of the party, and surely enough the stone culvert a few yards further up, and a careful glance at the map, showed that we had walked into the ancient bed of the little river that tumbled its way from the mountains through the city, now but a huge serpentine trail of mud.

The Roxelane lay deep in a narrow ravine, the houses on either side being built high on the bank. When we stepped into its course it was from the side wall of a building, perhaps ten feet from the ground. Had we stepped off this place before the Roxelane became a mudbank we should have stepped into at least 40 feet of space. There was 40 feet deep of viscid mud, right from the heart of Pelée. It helped us a little to appreciate the horrors of that grim morning when Pelée poured forth its floods of ruin. A rippling, purling stream of pure water dancing over the rocks—in the twinkling of an eye changed into a 40-foot thick mudbank.

Another clear-cut instance of the mudflow into the city we saw a few minutes later. A paved road, singularly clear of débris, wound sharply down over a stone culvert from the height above. Like great pythons wriggling their way along it lay three distinct streams of brownish mud, two feet in width and about a foot in depth. Between them the white paving stones of the road were clean, except for a sprinkling of ash.

A FUNERAL PYRE.

Turning seaward on a little bluff overhanging the terrace below was one of the funeral pyres of the gendarmes. Three bodies lay on the rock, one of them with the head hanging down into space. On them were piled some bits of boughs and splintered tree trunks. The pyre had smouldered, but had not burned. The soldiers had scattered far and wide on the beginning of the eruption of the day before. On this day not a living thing was in St. Pierre but the members of our party.

EFFECT OF THE SECOND ERUPTION.

On the way shoreward an officer of the Cincinnati who had been in the ruins two days before looking for the body of the United States Consul, pointed out some of the effects of the second great eruption, that of May 19. Walls that on Monday had been up to the second story, to-day were only half as high, in some cases were razed altogether. One of the Cathedral towers that had been left standing by the first outbreak, was demolished. There was a deeper and a fresher ash-covering over everything.

"But the chief effect was seen in the north and northwestern part of the city. A tremendous downflow of mud had completely buried that part of the Fort section nearest Pelée. On Monday that considerable district had been in much the same condition as the other parts of the city, fragments of walls sticking out of an ashen débris. To-day we would not have known that it had ever been a part of the city. The valley of the Riviere des Peres (that marked the northern boundary of the city, had for a second time become a slideway for an avalanche of mud. At its mouth, under Mont Pelée, stood an enormous mushrank, full sixty feet above the sea line. This was the grave of the village of Fonds Core, a suburb of St. Pierre, of about two thousand inhabitants, that lay just across the River of the Fathers. The houses of Fonds Core have a deeper burial than anything else that was overwhelmed by the volcanic outburst. Forty feet of mud from the apex of their roofs to the sunlight."

SIGHT OF PELÉE IN LABOR TIME TO FLEE.

"Pelée is working to-day," had been the remark of Capt. McCormick as the Potomac steamed up the roadstead to her mooring-buoy. And so in the memory of past experiences, he had made his warning emphatic that we should lose no time in making for the boats when the tug's whistle blew. He stayed aboard, with his practiced eye on the danger signals of the volcanic monster. Therefore, when the deathly stillness that hovered over everything was suddenly shattered by piercing shrieks, shrieks from the Potomac's steam whistle, rapid, continuous, it is not to be wondered at that a chill struck cold to the hearts of the little party, scattered far and wide over the ruins.

In working back I had come again upon Jaggar, the scientist of Harvard. With his everlasting hammer poised in the air he was gazing fixedly at Pelée. It surely was a sight to mesmerize the observer. From the centre of the clouds obscuring the top of the great mountain rose miles into the heavens a tremendous column of black smoke, lightening as it arose, but twisting or curling, but surging as in salvos. And suddenly from the edges of the crater the base of the upspring columnbegan to roll downward a huge wave of blackness slowly, but giving a tremendous impression of irresistibility. All over the flecked flanks of the mountain columns of steam, glistening against the dull background, shot high in the air. Ten, twenty, thirty of them, new ones springing up every second. It was a veritable geyser land. Pelée was surely in labor again. And that huge wave of darkness, creeping, creeping toward us, fascinated the eye.

"Come," said Jaggar of Harvard, the scientist. I came. He went. There is nothing to be gained by temporizing with a volcano in action. Stumbling over boulders, sinking in the sand and ashes, slipping over a smooth rock, sliding down a side wall, we made for the shore. And all the way I was possessed by just two thoughts, one, that a camera was a thing to be despised by any sane man; the other, that Jaggar, the scientist of Harvard, was well-built for speed.

We gained the waiting boats, and rowed hurriedly to the Potomac, which had slipped her moorings and was lying in as far as she could. The sky was rapidly darkening. All day had been a quick alternation of swift momentary showers, and fierce flashes of sunlight. Now all was overcast. The breath of La Pelée was reaching out again over the twice covered city.

A WOMAN WANDERING IN THE RUINED CITY.

As the last man clambered over the side of the Potomac, and a hurried count was made, one of the sailors uttered an exclamation and pointed shoreward. There, slowly walking along the waterfront, in the direction of the volcano, was a woman, her dark figure looming against the gray ruins. We were in a hurry, but Capt. McCormick didn't hesitate a moment in sending a boat ashore again. The woman was an aged negress. She absolutely refused to come aboard, saying she was going to Fort de France when she got ready. So we steamed out, and left her wandering calmly amid the awful desolation, the only living thing in the blight d city of St. Pierre.

A FINAL GLANCE AT PELÉE.

The little tug put out to the northwest to get to windward of the volcano. As we scurried along, a magnificent view of the dread monster was afforded. It was hard to realize that the gaunt, riven bare miles of the mountain slope, simply undulating wastes of mud and ashes, were but a few days before covered with a tropical forest of such luxuriant growth that the traveller literally had to cut his way through it. The dim grayness of the mountain flanks with their clefts and fissures softened by the distance gave a curious impression of an elephant's hide.

Steam boiled in jets all over the slopes, and shot up all along the coast line where the hot mud struck the waters of the Caribbean. One great cleft, a tremendous ravine of darkness, extending from the very wall of the crater, seemed to split the mountain in two. It was as if some Titanic axe had cleaved it open. There were innumerable other clefts, ravines, fissures, lateral and perpendicular, criss-crossed like lattice-work. In the distance they were but dark lines in the waste, seams in the gray garment of desolation. The one great split in the mountain, however, from crater to sea, was plainly discernible miles away. Huge mud banks marked the mouth of the Riviere Blanche, all that there was to indicate the location of the Guesin sugar works, first victim of La Pelée's wrath. A huge mound of mud, fully 500 feet long and 50 feet in depth to the north, bore a gruesome resemblance to a great coffin, or a giant mummy.

CONSTANTLY SHIFTING PICTURE.

A jet black stream, like a huge serpent, trailed down the slope and forked out over the bluish gray mud to the sea. It was evidently some bituminous substance from the heart of the crater. A freak of the weather lifted the clouds and disclosed the crater, a huge circular basin in the mountain side. The searchlight playing on the outpouring of black smoke, the innumerable steam geysers and the vaporous clouds gave a weird, fantastic effect that bade defiance to words at description. High up on a hill to the south a vivid spl