

carry death so suddenly to so many thousand people, inside and outside of their houses, over a whole city. That these gases were mostly sulphur gases and very inflammable gases (which could be mainly nothing else but hydrocarbons) has also been made quite clear by the accounts of the very few survivors. From among these I will quote the following extracts from the narrative of Count de Fitz James in the New York Herald of May the 27th, 1902, namely:—"Gustave Doré, in his most estatic delirium, never conceived anything so dramatic and so awe inspiring as was St. Pierre after it had been desolated by the whirlwind of fire that swept down upon it from Mount Pelée. . . . From a boat in the roadstead in front of St. Pierre, Baron Fontenillat and I witnessed the cataclysm that came upon the city. We saw the shipping destroyed by a breath of fire. We saw the cable ship Grappler keel over under the whirlwind and sink as though drawn down into the water of the harbour by some force from below. The Roraima was overcome and burned at anchor. The Roddam, a trifle more fortunate, was able to escape like a stricken moth that crawls from the flame that has burned its wings and left it a cripple to suffer until death relieves. . . . While we were talking, there came an explosion that was beyond anything that ever before happened. I can only liken it to a shot from a mammoth cannon. The breath of fire swept down on the city and water front with all the force that could have been given to it by such a cannon. The explosion was without warning and the effect instantaneous. Cinders were shot in our faces with stinging effect. The air was filled with flames, involuntarily we raised our hands to protect our faces. I noticed the same gesture when I saw the bodies of the victims on shore. The Roraima was all a mass of flames for several seconds. We could see the poor wretches aboard of her rushing about in the vain attempt to escape from the fire that enveloped them. . . . On shore all was aflame. . . . When we gave our attention to the panorama that was spread before us, the entire city of St. Pierre was mantled by a dense black cloud. We could not penetrate it, but it lifted a few seconds revealing below it a second cloud absolutely distinct from it. The second cloud was yellow, apparently made up of sulphurous gases. . . . Then, as the yellow cloud lifted from the earth, we saw