


The wreck of the Scotsman

Extract from a letter of R. P. Coppin, C. SS. R., to his Prov. Sup.

(Continued)

N the following day, Sunday the 24th about 8.40, the captain, in a more imperious tone, urged everybody even the women, to go up on the island and proceed to the light-house. A good many of the passengers did so. My companion and myself after leaving on the rocks our travelling bags and chapel which we recommended to a member of the Scotsman's crew, began to scale the rocks, a very fatiguing, difficult and perilous thing to do. The caravan nevertheless reached the summit of the island in small squads and without any accident worth noting.

We had hoped that on arriving at the top of the island, we should see the light-house or that at least we should reach it before noon, and with that hope we had not provided ourselves with food and drink and we think that all the passengers were in the same plight. We shall now tell how our hopes were disappointed. On reaching the first plateau we observed that it rose rather steeply and ended in the distance in a sort of rampart formed by a considerable undulation of the soil whence arose unknown rocks of strange shapes, a true Cyclopean work. We advanced towards these gigantic parapets hoping that from the summit we should see the light-house. Alas, we saw only an immense, deep and wild valley formed like a cup whose edges were abrupt hills and gigantic rocks. Nowhere could we see the smallest shrub; everywhere was arid rock and soil covered with a very light turf whereon sheep that crop grass so closely, could find no pasture. Several pools spread their sheets of clear and shallow water in the bottom of the valley.

We crossed the valley and, with difficulty, climbed the opposite slope whence we thought we should see the light-house.

Alas, we found only a new valley, deeper, wilder, with rugged rocks, without any turf and with pools. Not an insect hums or