

THE EARTHQUAKE ON THE ISLAND OF JAVA.

Our illustration showing the terrible cataclysm of August last on the island of Java, is from a photograph taken on the scene of the disaster. In the middle of the narrowest part of the Strait of Sunda, opposite the maritime town of Anjer, lies the island of Krakatoa, from which rises the volcano which wrought such havoc in that region of the Dutch East Indies. As early as the month of May it showed signs of agitation.

On the 11th of August began the awful phenomena of the great eruption. A thick column of smoke rose from the crater, and, continually widening, formed a vast crown above the summit. Then began a rain of cinders, followed by pumice-stone and mud. When night came—a black, opaque night of eighteen hours—all the blind forces of nature seemed united in a furious effort to restore the primeval chaos. The roaring sea receded, and then dashed back upon the land in colossal waves which scattered ruin in their broad track. When the feeble light of morning broke at last, it discovered a scene of frightful desolation. Whole towns but yesterday full of life and stir had disappeared, and the coast lines themselves were effaced. The sea had so far encroached upon the land that only the summits of what had been high hills emerged from the waves, while new islets appeared in what had formerly been open water-ways. So far inland had the gigantic billows rolled, that vessels, boilers, etc., were found two or three miles back in the interior. Where the water's area of destruction ended, that of the volcanic fire began. All the Island of Java was covered with cinders; agriculture was annihilated, and streams were dried up. The unfortunate inhabitants perished by hundreds from hunger and thirst. The full extent of the calamity, and of the loss of human life, is even yet unknown. The terrible eruption of Krakatoa will, however, be classed with those of ancient history, beside which the inundation of Herculaneum and Pompeii was a minor catastrophe.

The following dated Sept. 8th, is from an eye-witness in the residence of Bantans, the western portion of the island which suffered more than the rest. "Our usually quiet residency was thrown into a state of fear and consternation, on Sunday, P. M., by hearing loud and continued thundering reports, to be likened to the discharge of heavy ordnance. The sounds were heard as from afar at first, but gradually increasing in strength and nearness, at last burst forth with a reverberation that shook the very ground under our feet. It commen-

ced at about four o'clock. All was at once in an uproar. The poor superstitious natives, thinking that the end of the world had come, huddled together like sheep, and lent a further weirdness to the scene by incessant wailing and praying. Night set in, the thundering still continuing, and showing no signs of abating—if anything gaining in strength. To sleep was impossible. Every two or three minutes, boom, crack boom, boom, crack, broke out upon the still night air. The atmosphere was stifling,

hour, two hours, passed, and the light did not increase. At 7.30 it waned, and at 8.30 it became too dark to read without the aid of a lamp. It grew darker and darker, till it became black as night. At 10 o'clock it was pitch dark, nothing being distinguishable. A heavy wind then blew, and the shower of ashes and sand mixed with rain fell. Oh, the horrors of those few hours! The darkness continued till 1.30, and then it began to clear, but the sky was of a dull yellow color, and objects cast a shadow as

thunder and lightning had ceased, and hopes were entertained that the worst was over. The worst! Ah, no! The worst had to be learned! Monday night passed quietly, only now and then a rumbling making itself heard, showing that the Krakatoa had not yet slumbered. Tuesday morning broke, and what a sight met our eyes! Trees and shrubs bowed down to the ground by the weight of mud and ashes upon them, the ground being covered by an impenetrable gray powder, in some places three inches deep, while in no place was it less than one inch.

No idea can be formed of the devastation caused by such an occurrence; the loss is simply enormous. The very lives of our cattle are at stake, for the grass and meadow lands covered by the ashes have become unfit to allow the poor creatures to graze. What can we give them to eat? Grass is not to be had at any price. Thousands of poor birds are found, having died of starvation. The timid and shy birds that are never seen anywhere near the house of man are now to be found close by, and emboldened by hunger, fly inside the houses looking for food. Grains, sweet potatoes, pepper, etc., standing in the fields, are completely destroyed. Then the ashes lying on the rice-fields will produce a very deleterious effect, for being stone ashes instead of wood ashes, they will not contribute one iota to the richness of the soil. They will retard the growth of the paddy (as rice is called when in the husk and while growing,) which must shortly be planted. Our last paddy crop was poor, and now, this coming, the prospects for the next crop are so bad that unless government take immediate and decisive action in the matter, fears for a famine may be entertained. The ground to a greater or less extent has become sterile. The sugar industry has also suffered greatly, and it will take a long time to recover from the backward move to which it has been subjected. The coffee culture has also suffered. Countless thousands of the trees have been destroyed by the weight of the ashes. Trees bearing



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almost unbearable, being loaded with sulphurous fumes. Heavy clouds hung like a pall, obscuring the sight of the heavens, and a death-like stillness reigned, broken alone by the thundering reports. Afar-off in the distance could be seen a flame, dull in color, and fan-shaped. This came from the crater of the volcano Krakatoa.

The weary night wore on, and at length a gray line was seen on the horizon. Day broke, but the sun was invisible. The thundering had ceased, but all around, it had a bizarre, uncanny appearance. An

though reflected by the moon. The fumes thrown off by the ashes and sand were unbearable. Though doors and windows were tightly closed, still the ashes found entrance to the interior of our house, filling eyes, nose, mouth, and ears and rendering food unobtainable. The thundering, accompanied by fearful flashes of lightning, again made itself heard. At four o'clock the heavens presented a phenomenal appearance, one-half clear and in a normal condition, the other half black as night the division being sharply defined. Towards evening the

ing fruit have snapped in two, and the berries lie rotting on the ground. All the care and expense of years thus in one fell night to go for naught is discouraging in every sense of the word. My stable boy was caught in the shower, and has become almost blind. His eyes were swollen to at least three times their natural size, and his is not the only case of this kind. Many more might be cited. Horses, sheep, goats, cows and buffaloes have become blind from exposure to the shower of hot ashes. Many houses belonging to

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