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## Volcanic Eruptions.

The terrible disaster which lately occurred on Martinique and St. Vincent, and the indications of volcanic activity in other islands of the group to which these belong, naturally arouses interest in the general subject of volcanic explosions. Professor John Milne, of England, who is regarded as one of the highest authorities in the world upon the subject, classifies volcanic eruptions as being of two kinds—those which build up slowly and those which destroy rapidly. Eruptions that build up mountains are periodical overwells of lava and are comparatively harmless. But such volcanoes may assume a different character, and the slow action of the eruptive forces may give place to action of tremendous rapidity and force. For in the building up process, which may cover a period of centuries, natural volcanic vents are closed up, while gases and fires accumulate, which eventually must burst forth, and accordingly terrific eruptions occur, the cause of the explosion being practically the same as that which makes a boiler burst. The greatest volcanic explosion ever known was that of Krakatoa, an island in the Straits of Sunda, between Java and Sumatra. The eruption began on May 20, 1883, but the great explosion did not come until Aug. 26. The flames from the crater could be seen forty miles distant. The crashing explosion which followed the flames set in motion air waves that travelled around the earth four times one way and three times the other. Every self-recording barometer in the world was disturbed seven times by that blow-up. These waves travelled at the rate of seven hundred miles per hour. The noise of this eruption was heard at Borneo, 1,600 miles distant. It was felt in Burmah, 1,478 miles distant, and at Perth West, Australia, 1,902 miles away. The explosion was heard over a sound zone covering one-thirteenth of the earth's surface. Sea waves were created by the explosion, which destroyed all the towns and villages on the shores of Java and Sumatra bordering the strait, all vessels and shipping there and 36,380 lives; raised a tidal wave at Merak one hundred and thirty-five feet high, covered five hundred thousand square miles of ocean with lava dust several inches thick, submerged an island six miles square and seven hundred feet high to a depth of one hundred and fifty fathoms, and created two new islands. After the Krakatoa disaster Prof. Milne was questioned as to the probability of similar outbursts occurring in the case of other volcanoes which had been for a long time in a quiescent condition. He replied that such eruptions would most probably occur, and that there were many such volcanoes in Europe and some in America.

## Martinique and St. Pierre.

The Island of Martinique on which occurred the terrible volcanic eruption of May 8, resulting in the destruction of its principal city, St. Pierre, is one of the Windward group of West India Islands. Its northernmost point is just south of 15° N. It is about 47 miles long, its greatest width is 15 miles and its area 380 miles. Its population is said to be about 170,000. The island is irregular in form, high, rocky and volcanic containing five or six extinct craters. In the interior of the Island are three mountains, the highest of which is Mont Pelée in the north, having an altitude of 4,438 feet. From these mountains several ridges of low volcanic hills extend to the sea and between them lie fertile valleys. There are numerous small rivers which in the rainy season become rushing torrents. The climate is humid, and the mean annual temperature of the plains 81°. The products of the island are cotton, indigo, sugar, coffee, cocoa, bananas and various tropical fruits,

and in these products there is a considerable trade. Martinique was discovered by Columbus in 1502, and was colonized by the French in 1635. It was several times seized by Great Britain, but by the treaty of Paris, 1814, was finally restored to France. The French population, representing the rulers of the island, is a small minority of the whole, the bulk of the population being composed of negroes and people of mixed blood, the women are spoken of as being well-formed and handsome and varying in color from ebony black to a shade so light as to be scarcely distinguishable from white. The seat of government is at Fort de France, but the place of chief commercial importance was the ill-fated St. Pierre. Its population is reported to have been about 30,000. The city was beautifully situated, lying in amphitheatre shape on a fine curve half encircling the bay, the streets with their white houses and red roofs rising gradually from the water, and wooded hills occupying the back ground. These narrow streets were well paved, with a central gutter, the water in which, bounteously supplied from the hills above the town, rushed down in clear and sparkling torrents. These street gutters were not mere drains, for children were even bathed in their clear, sweet water. There was a fine cathedral, a theatre, and good public buildings; but the glory of the city, to a foreigner, was its gardens, both public and private, with their reckless wealth of flowers and tropical foliage. Martinique is one of the "wet" islands, wonderful for the luxuriance of its tropical vegetation. The unlimited supply of water from the hills was taken advantage of, not only for the city's necessities, but for its beautification, and fountains splashed and sparkled everywhere. A Montreal gentleman who visited St. Pierre a few years ago wrote of it at the time: "The town is bewitching in its quaint wild beauty, and the country is a dream. The botanical gardens, the most extravagant language will not describe. They are very old, and all the most lovely trees and plants have been gathered there, and their situation in an immense valley or gorge, is unique. Immense trees; great climbing vines; flaming bushes; waterfalls a hundred feet in height; ponds surrounded with water plants; great overhanging cliffs; a wealth of natural beauty such as you cannot imagine till you see it." Another visitor to the place remarked upon the happy abandon of the natives. They lived on little and had but few wants. The men worked on sugar plantations, etc., the women, who were represented as more active and industrious than the men, attired in bright colored clothing, formed a picturesque feature of the town. These native people are described as living careless, happy lives, apparently without much care of anything beyond the concerns of the present hour and with no apprehension of the awful fate that impended for them and for their city. A half century had passed since there had been a destructive eruption of Mont Pelée, and the simple people, with scarce a thought of danger, continued to live their gay and careless lives while the terrible volcano, which one day was to overwhelm them with sudden and awful death, slumbered beside them.

## The late Principal Grant.

The kindly admiration in which the late Principal of Queen's University was held by his fellow countrymen, is shown by the many hearty tributes to his memory which have appeared in the press of Canada. The Toronto Globe in the course of an article in reference to Dr. Grant speaks of him as follows: "His career goes back to pre-confederation days, and through thirty full and fruitful years his personality stands out as the ideal expression of strenuous, resolute, sagacious and sympathetic Canadian nationalism. He had a fervent contempt

for sectarian bigotry, political littleness and party chicanery, and many a time he risked his popularity in church courts and dared the displeasure of great masses of his fellow-countrymen in order to assert the generous faiths and the tolerant principles which were of the very fibre of his being. There was nothing parochial in his patriotism and nothing local in his outlook. Surrounded by hostile influences, he boldly championed confederation, and with all his rash courage, and sometimes reckless enthusiasm, he seldom forgot that prudence and compromise were essential to the successful administration of affairs in Canada, and that statesmen engaged in the actual work of government must often resist the incendiary and demagogic elements of the population, moderate conflicting opinions, and restrain racial and sectarian passions. With all his contempt for mere demagoguery, he had, however, something of the art and craft of the practising politician, and rarely became the patron, and never the servant, of those storm-born and short-lived agitations which so often sweep across the surface of Canadian politics. He was the abiding friend of the French people, and the inflexible opponent of inflammatory racial and sectarian movements. Thus there was often something of the statesmanship of the prophets in his attitude, and a patience and restraint in critical national circumstances, in singular contrast with his eager temperament and native impetuosity. It was simply that he had the courage to refrain as well as the courage to advance, and knew that in order to rear a structure that would endure it was often necessary to brave wind and weather, and resist amateurs, empires and revolutionaries. He was owned by no man, no sect, no party. There was a point beyond which he would not go, and when that point was passed he rejected all counsels of prudence and safety, and spoke out his rebuke and denunciation. As a consequence he was often denounced as a trimmer, his independence treated as capriciousness, and his want of subservience branded as lack of loyalty. And yet such men are the very salt of democratic institutions, and the only bulwark against the absolute domination of bureaucracy and faction. He was a devoted servant of the Crown, but with him the Crown stood for the people, and he would have resisted an infringement of popular liberties as quickly and as sternly as he would have resisted any movement to impair the integrity of the King's dominions. He lived and wrought as an educationist, but he was essentially a politician and a statesman, and few men who have lived in North America exercised a greater individual influence, more directly inspired the councils of statesmen, or more greatly fashioned the public opinion of which statesmen must take account in free communities. . . . Grant was so much his own man, his own church and his own party that the full measure of the loss the country has sustained may not immediately appear. But the truth is that few, indeed, of the men of his time in Canada measured up to his stature. He liberalized theology, he moderated political passions and prejudices, he was a social influence of singular sanity and intrepidity, and though his work was done in a new land, and perhaps in a narrow field, he yet had great understanding of the sovereign problems of human government, and his invincible faith and splendid optimism and strenuous teaching greatly served his country and his time."

There is great excitement at Khartoum and at Cairo, Egypt, in consequence of the news that Col. Lewis has struck a seam of coal at Rosaires, and that Gorringer Bay sends information concerning another coal-bed at Abuharras, near the Blue Nile. The importance of these discoveries can be best appreciated in the light of the fact that coal actually costs £6 a ton at Khartoum. Rosaires, on the Blue Nile, is about 300 miles from Khartoum, and near the Abyssinian frontier; while Abuharras is little more than 100 miles south of the Sudan Capital.