

The Volcanoes of the Philippines.

Of interest in connection with the recent volcanic eruption in the West Indies, is the report of Geo. F. Becker on the geology of the Philippine Islands which has just appeared in Part III of the Twenty-first Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey, and which contains a review of everything bearing upon the geology of these islands.

The report deals in general with the geology and economic features of the Islands, from extent reports on the subject, and from studies in the field, so far as they could be carried on during the disturbed period of 1898-'99, though geologizing under arms and with a military escort was found to be more exciting than profitable.

In many respects the Philippine Islands so closely resembles the West Indies, especially in being the scene of violent past and present volcanic energy, that the chapter of the report on the active and extinct volcanoes of the archipelago is at this time particularly interesting. While it was possible to visit but few of these mountains owing to the hostility of the natives, much valuable information from local and other sources was collected. Forty-nine of the eruptive mountains were located among the islands, and their altitudes and the dates of their eruption obtained. Conspicuous among them is Mt. Apo, the highest mountain in the Philippines, which rises 10,761 feet above the level of the sea. At Camiguin de Mindanao, one of the most interesting volcanoes of the group, a cone nearly 2,000 feet in height has risen since 1871 over what was formerly a lake, the basin of which was presumably an ancient crater. Mayon, or the volcano of Albay, is said to be the most symmetrically beautiful cone in the world; and the famous Taal volcano, situated on a small volcanic island in the lake of Bombon, is readily accessible from Manila. The accounts of the eruption of these and other volcanoes of the group bearing a striking resemblance to those of the recent outburst of Mt. Pelee in Martinique. Of an eruption which occurred in the year 1641 near Jolo the report quotes: "the darkness and atmospheric disturbances were so great that the people of Jolo could not perceive whence came the stuff which fell from heaven upon them. And in one of the numerous eruptions at Taal, loud detonations like discharges of artillery were thrown out, and a great fire ran like a river across the island. The fire then shifted into lake Bombon throwing up water and ashes in immense masses. "The water

grew hot and black, fish were strew on the beaches as if they had been cooked, and the air was so full of sulphurous smells and the odor of dead fishes that the inhabitants sickened." At one of the eruptions of Albay, that in 1814, 1,200 lives are said to have been lost.

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