

Harney Valley Items.

VOL. 18.

BURNS, OREGON, SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1902.

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IT RAINED FIRE

How City of St. Pierre Was Destroyed.

The recent earthquakes occurring in the Lesser Antilles, followed by the eruption of Mount Pelee, near St. Pierre, on the Island of Martinique, which began early last week, and which resulted in the complete destruction of the old town of St. Pierre, Thursday morning, May 8, is one of the greatest disasters of modern times.

Castries, St. Lucia, British West Indies, May 10.—Mount Pelee, a volcanic mountain some 10 miles north of St. Pierre, the commercial capital of Martinique, is the mountain which made a faint show of eruption 50 years ago.

At noon, May 5, a stream of burning lava rushed 4400 feet down the mountain side, following the dry bed of a torrent and reaching the sea, five miles from the mountain, in three minutes.

At the rear of the mouth of the Riviere Blanche stood the large Guerin sugar factory, one of the finest in the island. It is now completely entombed in lava.

As the lava rushed into the sea, the latter receded 200 feet all along the west coast. Returning with greater strength, a big wave covered the whole sea front of St. Pierre, but did little damage ashore or aloft.

Terrible detonations, heard hundreds of miles northward, followed at short, irregular intervals and continued at night. In the intense darkness the electric lights failed but the town was lit up by lurid flashes of flame from the mountain.

The Plissono family escaped to St. Lucia in a small steamer. Thirty-five persons, mostly women and children, arrived here in the forenoon of the 6th and furnished the above details. The men remained in Martinique.

The same afternoon, later, telegraphic communications was interrupted with both the Islands of Martinique and St. Vincent.

During the afternoon of the 8th the British steamer Roddam, which had left St. Lucia at midnight on the 7th for Martinique, crawled slowly into Castries Harbor, unrecognizable, gray with ashes, her rigging dismantled and sheets and awnings lancing about torn and charred.

Captain Whatter reported that, having just cast anchor off St. Pierre at 8 P. M., in fine weather succeeding an awful thunder storm during the night, he was talking to the ship's agent, Joseph Plissono, who was in a boat alongside, when he saw a tremendous cloud of smoke

and glowing cinders rushing with terrific rapidity over the town and port, completely and in an instant enveloping the former in a sheet of flame and raining fire on board. The agent had just time to climb on board when his boat disappeared. Several of the crew of the Roddam were quickly scorched to death. By superhuman efforts, having steam up, the cable was slipped and the steamer backed away from the shore, and nine hours later managed to reach Castries.

Two of the survivors of the crew were loud in their praise of the heroic conduct of the captain in steering their vessel away from destruction with his hands, which were badly burned by the rain of fire which kept falling on the ship for miles after she got under way.

M. Plissono is believed here to be the one survivor of the 40,000 inhabitants of the town, and all the shipping of the port has been utterly destroyed, the West Indian & Panama Telegraph Company's repairing vessel going first, then the Quebec liner Romanna. Captain Muggah, of the latter, waved his hand in farewell to the Roddam as his vessel sank with a terrific explosion.

The British Royal Mail steamer Esk, which called off Martinique at 10 o'clock last night, reported standing off shore five miles, sounding her whistle and sending up rockets. She received no answer. The whole sea front was blazing for miles. The Esk sent a boat ashore, but it could not land on account of the terrific fire, which was accompanied by loud explosions. Not a living soul appeared ashore after the boat had waited for two hours. Fire and ashes fell all over the steamer.

In the afternoon a French coasting steamer arrived here from Fort de France seeking assistance, as all the country was burned up, the stock was dying, all the plantations were charred, the country people were flocking into the towns and famine was feared. The steamer was loaded with food of all sorts and was sent back to Martinique at 7 P. M. The captain of this vessel reported that some 30 persons left St. Pierre by the 6 o'clock boat Thursday morning for Fort de France, and consequently were saved.

All attempts to get to St. Pierre

are barred by fire. The closest possible observation showed houses still blazing and streets strewn with charred bodies. It is certain that the whole town and neighboring country for miles is utterly destroyed, and it is feared here that few, if any, of the inhabitants escaped.

The volcano of the Island of St. Vincent has burst out in sympathetic eruption. A steamer which returned from there last night reports that the northern third of the island was in flames and cut off from assistance by a continuous stream of burning lava, ashes falling in heavy showers as far as 150 miles away.

MOUNTAIN SPLIT

Vomited Fire, Vapor and Sulphur—Told by an Eye Witness.

St. Lucia, B. W. I., May 11.—Captain Freeman, of the British steamship Roddam, a survivor of the terrible catastrophe at St. Pierre, Martinique, gives the following account of his experiences:

"The steamer Roddam, of which I am captain, left St. Lucia at midnight of May 7, and was off St. Pierre, Martinique, at 6 o'clock on the morning of the 8th. I noticed that the volcano, Mount Pelee, was smoking, and crept slowly in toward the bay, finding there, among others, the steamers Roraima, the telegraph repair steamer Grappler and four sailing vessels. A wall of fire swept over the town and the bay. The Roddam was struck broadside by the burning mass. The shock to the ship was terrible, nearly capsizing her. I went to anchorage between 7 and 8 o'clock, and hardly had I moored when the side of the volcano opened out with a terrible explosion. Hearing the awful report of the explosion, and seeing the great wall of flames approaching the steamer, those on deck sought shelter wherever it was possible, jumping into the cabin, the fore-castle and even into the hold.

I was in the chartroom, but the burning embers were borne so swiftly that they were swept in through the door and portholes suffocating and scorching me badly. I was terribly burned by those embers about the face and hands, but managed to reach the deck. As soon as it was possible when there, I mustered the few survivors who seemed able to move, ordered them to slip the anchor, leaped for the bridge and rang the engine for full speed astern. The second and third engineer and a fireman were on watch below, and so escaped injury. They did their part in the attempt to escape, but the men on deck could not work the steering, because it was jammed by the debris from the volcano. We accordingly went ahead and astern until the gear was free, but in this running backward and forward it was two hours after the first shock before we were clear of the bay.

"One of the most terrifying conditions was that the atmosphere, being charged with ashes, it was totally dark. The sun was completely obscured, and the air was only illuminated by the flames from the volcano and those of the burning town and shipping. It seems small to say that the scene was terrifying in the extreme.

As we backed out we passed close to the Roraima, which was one mass of blazes. The steam was rushing from the engine-room, and the screams of those on board were terrible to hear. The cries for help were all in vain, for we could do

nothing but save our ship. When I last saw the Roraima she was settling down astern. This was about 10 o'clock in the morning. When the Roddam was safely out of the harbor of St. Pierre and its desolations and horrors, I made for St. Lucia. Arriving here and when the ship was safe, I mustered the survivors, as well as I was able, and searched for the dead and injured.

Some I found in the saloon, where they had vainly sought for safety, but the cabins were full of burning embers that had blown in through the portholes. Through these the fire swept as through funnels, and burned the victims where they lay or stood, leaving a circular imprint of scorched and burned flesh. I brought 10 on deck who were thus burned. Two of them were dead. The others survived, although in a dreadful state of torture from their burns. Their screams of agony were heartrending.

Out of a total of 23 on board the Roddam, which includes the captain and the crew, 10 are dead, and several are in the hospital. My first and second mates, my chief engineer, and my supercargo, Campbell by name, were killed.

The ship was covered from stem to stern with tons of powdered lava, which retained its heat for hours after it had fallen. In many cases it was practically incandescent, and to move about the deck in this burning mass was not only difficult, but absolutely perilous. I am only now able to begin thoroughly to clear and search the ship for any damage done by this volcanic rain and to see if there are any corpses in out-of-the-way places. For instance, this morning I found one body in the peak of the fore-castle. The body was horribly burned, and the sailor had evidently crept in there in his agony to die.

On the arrival of the Roddam at St. Lucia, the ship presented an appalling appearance. Dead and calcined bodies lay about the deck, which was also crowded with injured, helpless and suffering people. Prompt assistance was rendered to the injured by the authorities here, and my poor, tortured men were taken to the hospitals.

The dead were buried, and I had omitted to mention that out of 21 black laborers that I brought from Grenada to help in stoworing, only six survived. Most of the others threw themselves overboard to escape a dreadful fate; but they met a worse one, for it is the actual fact that the water around the ship was literally at boiling heat.

The escape of my vessel was miraculous. The woodwork of the

Continued on Fourth page.

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Lodge Directory. Burns Lodge No. 70, K of P. Meets every Thursday night.

BURNS CHAPTER, NO. 49, O. E. S. Meets second and fourth Monday of each month in Masonic Hall.

BURNS LODGE, NO. 97, A. F. & A. M. Meets Saturday on or before full moon.

BURNS LODGE, NO. 95, A. O. U. W. Meets at Brown hall every Friday evening.

HARNEY LODGE, NO. 77, I. O. O. F. Meets every Saturday evening, Brown's hall.

TULE CIRCLE, NO. 165, WOMEN OF Woodcraft. Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday at Brown's hall.

Church Announcements. Sunday School at Harney the first Sunday of each month at 10 o'clock.

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BIGGS & BIGGS. J. W. Biggs, Dalton Biggs. Attorneys-at-Law. Burns, Oregon. Office in Bank building.

WILLIAMS & FITZGERALD. Thornton Williams, M. Fitzgerald. Attorneys at Law, Notary Public. Law, Notarial and Real Estate Practice. Burns, Oregon. Office in old Masonic building

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