

Onslaught of Fire and Poisonous Gas Overwhelmed Martinique

Louis H. Ayme, United States consul at Guadeloupe, sends the following cable to the Chicago Tribune from Fort de France, Island of Martinique.

I have just returned from St. Pierre. The desolation of the ruins of the city blasted by the fire and sulphurous fumes from the angry crater of Mont Pelee can only be inadequately pictured. Not a half of the horrors to be seen there have been told.

I left the Island of Guadeloupe in a chartered steamer Saturday night. We approached the site of the once fair tropical city soon after 6 o'clock in the morning.

The island with its lofty hills was hidden behind a leaden colored haze. Enormous quantities of the wreckage of large and small ships and houses strewn the surface of the sea. Huge trees and, too often, bodies with flocks of sea gulls soaring above and hideous sharks fighting about them, were floating here and there. From behind the

could scarcely distinguish the sites of the large buildings that had been destroyed under the rain of fire, lava, mud and ashes.

The still smoking volcano towered above the ash-covered hills. The ruins were burning in many places and frightful odors of burned flesh filled the air.

With great difficulty a landing was effected. Not one house was left intact. Viscid heaps of mud, of brighter ashes, or piles of volcanic stones were seen on every side. Here and there amid the ruins were heaps of corpses, almost all the faces were downward, as if the unhappy victims had rushed into the streets when the first shock of the catastrophe aroused them, only to meet a sudden and awful death that smote them to the earth as they ran.

So many piles of corpses were to be seen that it is difficult to describe any in particular detail. In one corner twenty-two bodies of men, women and

that the disaster came suddenly.

On the morning of the disaster the inhabitants of the city awoke to find heavy clouds shrouding the Mont Pelee crater. All the previous day loud detonations from the volcano had been heard, so loud that the reverberations echoed from St. Thomas on the north to Barbadoes on the south. The fearful crashing sound ceased and there began a shower of fine ashes, which fell like rain over the city. The inhabitants became alarmed, but Gov. Mountet, who arrived at St. Pierre the evening before, did everything possible to allay the panic. They partly succeeded, but scarcely had the fears of the people been allayed when there came the explosion, and in an instant St. Pierre, its people, its houses, had been blotted out of existence.

After a search of three hours in the ruins I found no trace of the American consulate. Consul Thomas T. Prentiss, his wife and two daughters, are undoubtedly dead. That quarter of the city is still a vast mass of blazing ruins. Nor has any trace of James Japp, the British consul, been found. Mr. Japp had a large family at St. Pierre.

intense heat. Curiously enough, the features of the dead were generally calm and reposeful, although in some cases terrible fright and agony were depicted. Grim piles of bodies were stacked everywhere, showing that death had stricken them while the crowds were vainly seeking escape from the fiery deluge. On one spot a group of nine children were found locked in each other's arms.

The vaults of the Bank of Martinique, at the head of what had been the Rue de l'Hospital, were found intact. They contained 2,000,000 francs (\$400,000) in specie and other securities, which were sent here for safe-keeping.

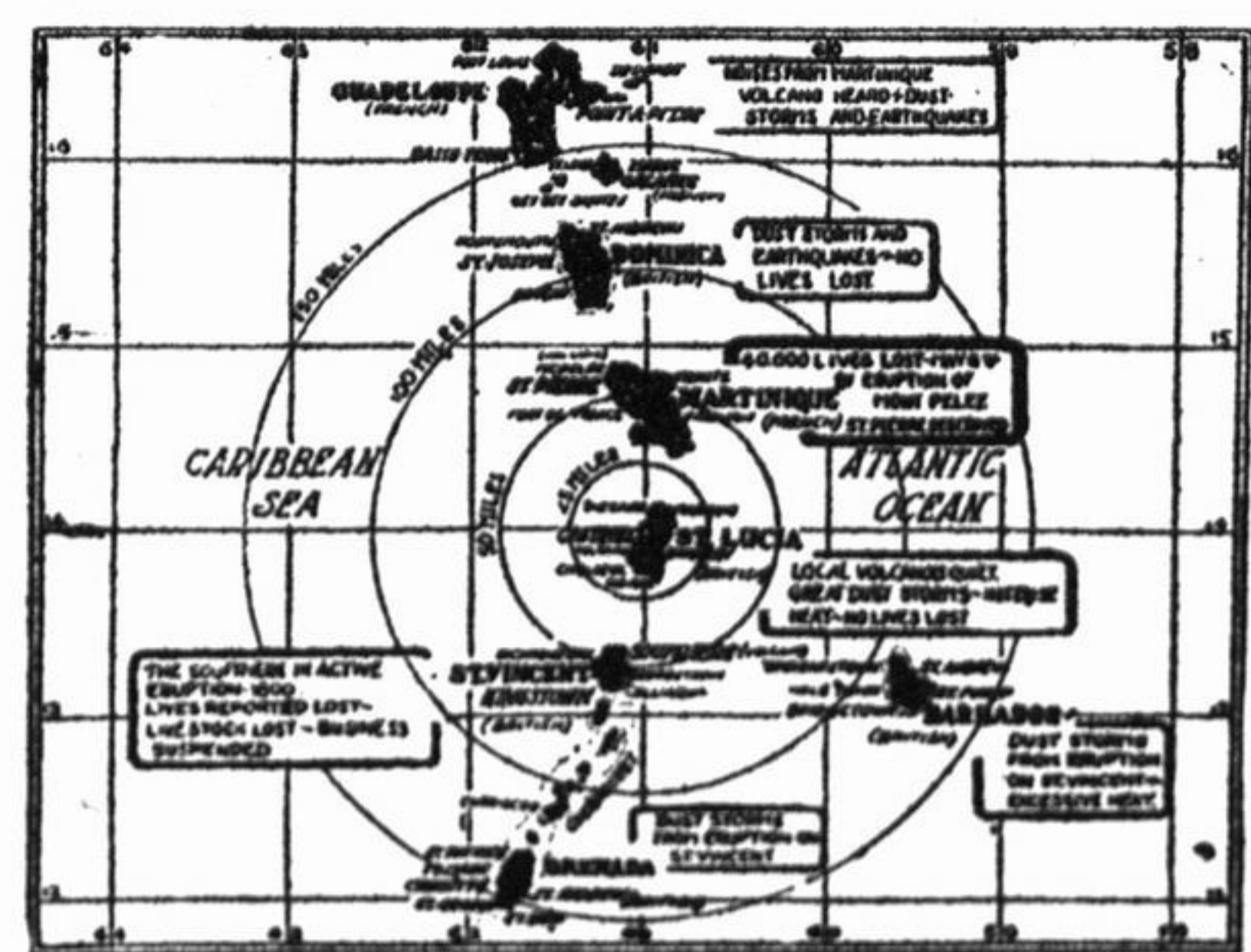
The vaults of the government treasury are now being searched in the hope that a large amount of money and other valuables deposited by the principal merchants of the city may be saved.

talked with Captain Muggah, Mr. Scott, the first officer, and others. They had been on the bridge.

"The captain was horribly burned. He had inhaled flames and wanted to jump into the sea. I tried to make him take a life preserver. The captain, who was undressed, jumped overboard and hung on to a line for a while. Then he disappeared."

"Gus" Linder, the quartermaster of the steamer, who is horribly burned and can scarcely talk, confirmed this.

Francisco Angelo, who speaks poor English, vividly described the onrush of the fire. He says the captain was a brave man, too brave to be burned to death. Angelo further asserted that the storm of fire lasted not more than five minutes. Joseph Beckles, a seaman, who is fifty years of age and is so frightfully burned that he cannot



(From the New York Herald.)

volcanic veil came blasts of hot wind mingled with others ice cold.

At Le Precheur, five miles north of St. Pierre, men and women frantic to get away begged for a passage on the little steamer. We had room for none, but managed to pick up twenty-eight half dead men, women and children, who were so badly burned that they had to be lifted over the steamer's side. Of the twenty-eight, sixteen died on the boat before we reached Fort de France. Only three or four of the others are likely to live.

The condition of these unfortunates is no worse than thousands of refugees in the hills about Le Precheur. Hundreds of them will die before relief can reach them. Thousands need medical care, food, clothing, and above all, water.

children were mingled in one awful mass, arms and legs protruding as the hapless beings fell in the last struggles of death. From under one large stone the arm of a white woman protruded. Most notable was the utter silence and the awful, overpowering stench from the thousands of dead.

The fiery stream which so completely destroyed St. Pierre must have been composed of poisonous gases, which instantly suffocated every one who inhaled them, and of other gases burning furiously, for nearly all the victims had their hands covering their mouths or were in some other attitude showing that they had sought relief from suffocation. All the bodies were carbonized or roasted.

Through the middle of the old Place Berlin ran a tiny stream, the remains

From everything I saw I feel confident that 30,000 is not too great an estimate of the loss of life. Every one in the city perished, and suburban towns added thousands to the number of victims.

Plantations and small villages have been devastated by the ceaseless rain of ashes and fire which has poured from Mont Pelee.

These survivors have taken refuge in the hills, away from the danger of the lava flow in the valleys, but still menaced by the showers of fire. They must be relieved, taken to places of safety, fed and clothed. The work must be done quickly. Hundreds and even thousands of them must perish as it is before help can reach them.

The work of exploring the ruins of St. Pierre, of bringing away the refugees in the hills in the northern part of the island and of burning the bodies of the victims is progressing as rapidly as circumstances permit.

Fort de France is crowded with refugees and food is already so scarce that alarm is felt that it will be exhausted before supplies can reach here.

As a result of the relief work the people who had fled to the hills behind the village of Le Precheur, nearly 4,000 in number, have been brought here.

They are in a most pitiable condition. Hundreds of them are frightfully burned and in most urgent need of medical care. All the doctors and nurses in Fort de France are working night and day among the injured and they are assisted by scores of volunteer nurses, many women of the wealthiest families of Fort de France giving their services.

A number of steamers, including the government vessel Rubis, started from here for St. Pierre. They carried government delegates, a number of gendarmes, a detachment of regular infantry and several priests.

The vessels also carried a quantity of fire wood, petroleum and quicklime, for use in the cremation of the bodies of the victims of the terrible volcanic outbreak. Large quantities of disinfectants and stocks of clothing for the refugees were also shipped to St. Pierre.

The refugees had, as a rule, assembled at Le Carbet and Case Pilote, not far from St. Pierre, and, it is reported, over a thousand of them have died since the fearful stream of lava poured down Mont Pelee.

The sea for miles round was covered with the wreckage of the vessels sunk off St. Pierre at the time of the disaster, and ashore only a few trees, all bent seaward by the force of the volcanic shower, were left standing.

When nearing St. Pierre the Rubis met a number of tugs towing lighters filled with refugees.

The heat from the smoking, lava-covered ruins at St. Pierre was suffocating and the stench from the corpse-strewn streets was awful. Only a few walls were standing. The report that the hospital clock was found intact with its hands stopped at 7:30 was confirmed, as was the statement that the offices of the cable company had entirely disappeared.

On all sides were found portions of corpses, which were gathered up by the soldiers and gendarmes and burned on one of the public squares.

Not a drop of water was procurable ashore. The darkness caused by the clouds of volcanic dust shrouded the town, and continuous subterranean rumbling added to the horror of the scene.

The fort and central quarter of the town were razed to the ground and were replaced by beds of hot cinders. The iron grill work gate of the government offices alone was standing. There was no trace of the streets. Huge heaps of smoking ashes were to be seen on all sides.

At the landing place some burned and ruined walls indicated the spot where the custom house had formerly stood, and traces of the larger shops could be seen. In that neighborhood hundreds of corpses were found lying in all kinds of attitudes, showing that the victims met their death as if by a lightning stroke. Every vestige of clothing was burned away from the charred bodies, and in many cases the abdomens had been burst open by the

live, having inhaled flame, said in weak tones that he was the last man to see the captain. The captain was then trying to reach a floating mattress.

From the Italian ship Teresa Lovico several men were saved, but they are in a frightful state, except Jean Louis Prudent of St. Pierre. Although on deck and unprotected, he was little burned.

Prudent says there was first an awful noise of explosion, and then right away a cyclone of smoke and fire, but such was the poisonous, choking nature of the smoke that it burned worse than the fire. The cyclone of gas tore the masts out of ships, blew others up, and sunk some of them. Soon afterwards came a wave of fire bigger than the smoke cloud.

"That cloud," continued Prudent, "was bigger, it seemed, than the mountain."

"The fire burned the city everywhere at once. Near me I saw only dead men, but on shore I saw men and women rushing back and forth for an hour. They would not run long. Then came that choking smoke, and they would drop like dead flies."

"The explosion, smoke and fire all came and went in three minutes, but the city burned for three hours. Then every house was finished and nothing alive was left."

"Some men from the sinking ships got to the shore, but they were burned up there."



THE CABLE STEAMER "POUYER O UERTIER," OF HAVRE, WHICH BROUGHT 450 SURVIVORS TO PORTE-DE-FRANCE.

Nearly 4,000 of the refugees from the vicinity of the village of Le Precheur, a suburban village, were rescued by the French cruiser Suchet and the cable repair ship Pouyer-Quartier and were brought here.

As a result of his inspection, the commander of the Suchet reports that crevices and valleys are constantly forming in the northern portion of the island, where the land is in a state of perpetual change. Fortunately, that part of the country was evacuated in good time by the inhabitants, who fled to Fort de France.

Lava continues to stream down the mountain side, accompanied by terrific thunder and lightning.

The stories of the survivors added to the awful details of the particularly harrowing account of the loss of the British steamer Roralma.

C. C. Evans of Montreal and John G. Morris of New York, who are now at the military hospital of Fort de France, say the vessel arrived at 5. As eight bells was struck a frightful explosion was heard up the mountain. A cloud of fire, toppling and roaring, swept with lightning speed down the mountain side and over the town and bay. The Roralma was nearly sunk and caught fire at once. The steamer Roralma had reached St. Pierre that day with ten passengers, among whom were Mrs. Stokes and her three children, and Mrs. H. J. Ince. They say they were watching the rain of ashes, when, with a frightful roar and ter-

While fire was destroying half of the \$1,000,000 lard refinery belonging to Armour & Co. in the Union Stock Yards at Chicago, a runaway crowded with two tiers of spectators broke under the strain.

From the mass of crushed timbers and struggling men and boys more than thirty injured persons were taken out. A boy, two women and one man were dangerously hurt. In addition to these a fireman sustained injuries while making the run to the fire which are expected to result in his death. Several other firemen were hurt, the list approximating forty.

There was a second's warning as the roof of the runaway sank under the weight of the crowd. Then the sound of splintering wood was mixed with the cries of the injured as the roof fell in on the floor of the "run," which, in turn, collapsed on the heads of the people standing on the ground, throwing 2,000 persons in a confused mass.

This happened while the fire was at its height. The fire itself was the most alarming and disastrous one the Stock Yards has had for many days, and only for the prompt work of employes and firemen in draining oil from the tanks in the burning plant, and but for a firewall which prevented the blaze from spreading, it is believed the principal buildings at the yards would have been doomed.

The lard refinery was in the center of the yards. Two thousand men and women were employed in it, and 700—a night shift—were at work when the fire drove them out.

J. Ogden Armour placed the value of the building, which was constructed last year, at \$1,000,000 and the damage at \$500,000.

While the burning oil was presenting a brilliant spectacle and before the police lines had become strong enough to handle the crowd, the spectators took possession of the "hog run" of the Boyd-Lunham Company. The "run" stood just to the east and south of the building and furnished the best opportunity for viewing the fiery spectacle.

As many men and boys as could crowd on the "run" had climbed either to the roof or to the run itself.

Two thousand persons were standing on the "run" when the crash came. The roof gave way first. Then, with cracking timbers and shouting people the load came down on the floor of the runaway—itself crowded. The whole mass was precipitated to the ground, a fall of thirty feet in all, and on the heads of the persons below.

When the runaway came down it caught the patrol wagon of the Stock Yards Station and cut it in two. This helped to save the persons on the run, as it held the timbers for a second. The timbers broke both legs of Israel Morris, the driver. In spite of the pain, Morris stuck to his seat and held his plunging horses.

FORTY ARE HURT VIEWING BIG FIRE

Falling Runway Precipitates 2,000 Persons on the Crowd Below.

PATROL DRIVER HAS STAMINA

Sticks to His Seat and Controls Horses Though Suffering from Two Broken Legs—Loss to Plant Placed at Half a Million.

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THE LATEST CASH MARKETS.

CHICAGO.	
Wheat, No. 2 red	79 @ .51
Corn, No. 2	60 3/4 @ .41 1/2
Oats, No. 2	43 3/4 @ .43 1/2
Cattle	2.75 @ 7.60
Hogs	5.80 @ 7.35
Sheep and lambs	2.50 @ 7.50
NEW YORK.	
Wheat, No. 2 red	87 1/2 @ .57 1/2
Corn, No. 2	59 @ .59 1/2
Oats, No. 2	46 @ .46
ST. LOUIS.	
Wheat, No. 2 red, cash	81 1/2 @ .82
Corn, No. 2, cash	63 @ .63 1/2
Oats, No. 2, cash	42 @ .42
MILWAUKEE.	
Wheat, No. 1 northern	77 @ .77 1/2
Oats, No. 2 white	45 1/2 @ .45 1/2
KANSAS CITY.	
Wheat, cash, No. 2 hard	74 @ .74
Corn, cash, No. 2 mixed	63 @ .64 1/2
Oats, No. 2 white	44 1/2 @ .44 1/2
PEORIA.	
Corn, No. 3	63 @ .63
Oats, No. 2 white	44 @ .44 1/2
MINNEAPOLIS.	
Wheat, No. 1 northern	77 @ .77
DULUTH.	
Wheat, No. 1 hard	78 1/2 @ .78 1/2
Oats	44 1/2 @ .44 1/2
Corn	60 @ .60
OMAHA.	
Cattle	1.75 @ 7.25
Hogs	5.75 @ 7.35
Sheep	3.25 @ 7.10
TOLEDO.	
Wheat, cash	84 1/2 @ .84 1/2
Corn, cash	61 1/2 @ .61 1/2
Oats, cash	44 1/2 @ .44 1/2

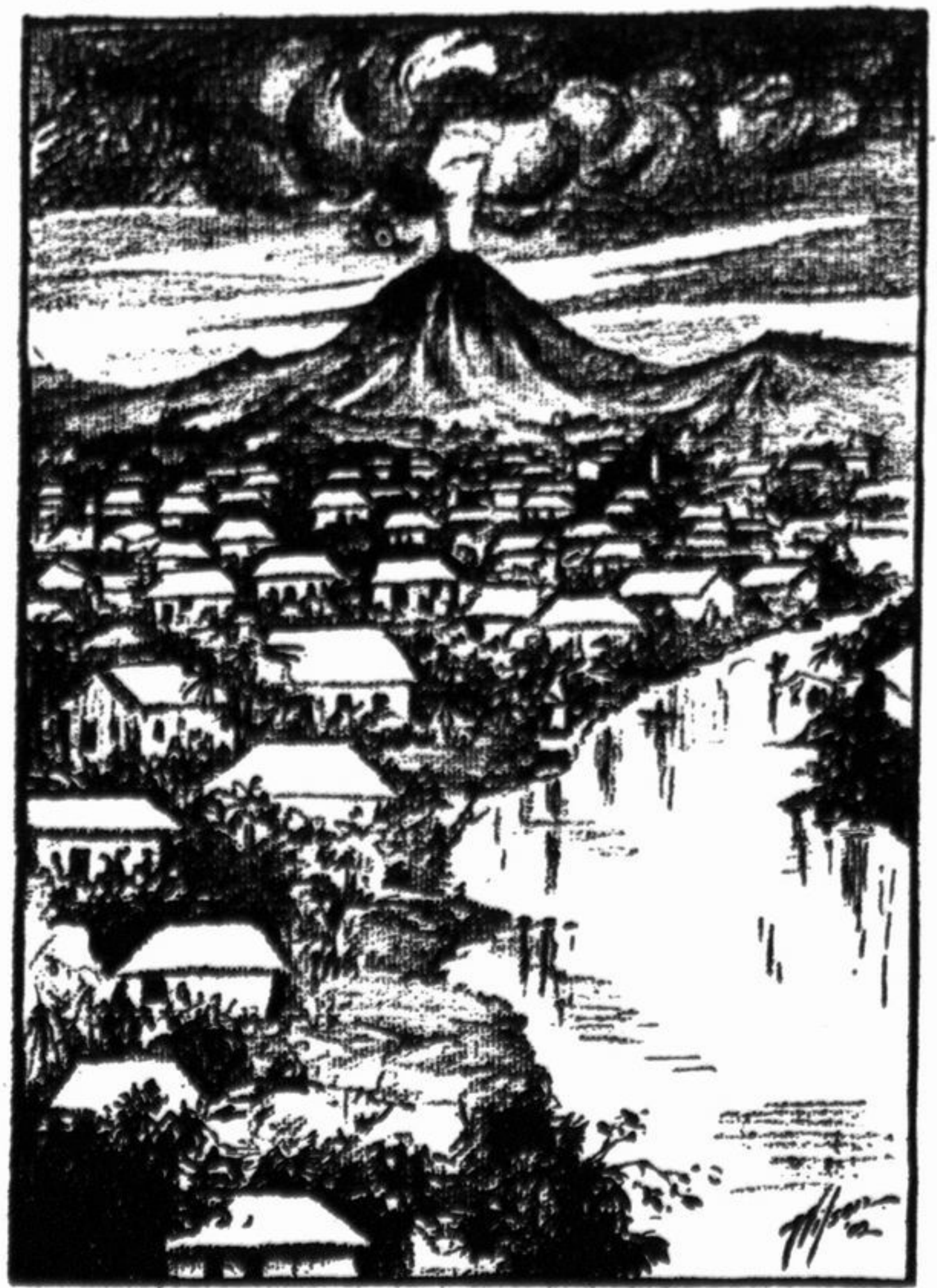
Memorial Service for Tanner.

Springfield, Ill., special: The first anniversary of the death of former Governor John R. Tanner is to be observed with a private memorial service at his grave in Oak Ridge cemetery at 3 o'clock May 22.

License for Osteopaths.

Des Moines dispatch: The Iowa Board of Health will hereafter issue certificates to graduates of schools of osteopathy. It decided to discontinue the fight against osteopaths.

MONT GAROV, ST. VINCENT'S DEATH-DEALER.



The eruption of the volcano on St. Vincent, which a fiery has covered a portion of the island with molten lava and killed hundreds, continues, and the inhabitants, unable to escape, are panic-stricken.

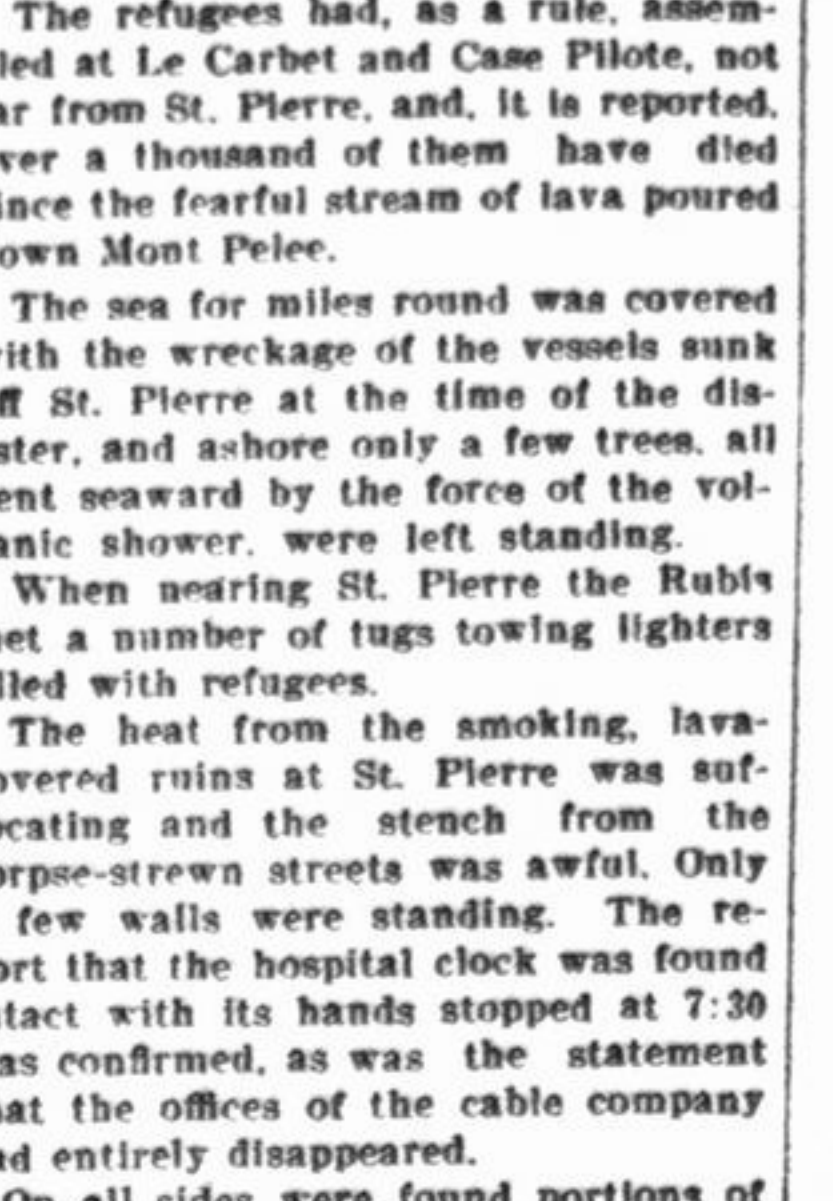
As the steamer felt its way down the west coast of the island we could see that the whole north end of the island was covered with a silver gray coating of ashes resembling snow. Furious blasts of fire, ashes and mud swept over the steamer, but finally St. Pierre was reached, or rather the spot where St. Pierre stood before that awful three minutes.

For two miles along the water front and for a half a mile back from shore to the foothills at the base of the volcano stretched the heaps of smoking ruins. Streets there were none. One

of the River Gayara. Great trees, with roots upward and scorched by fire, were strewn in every direction. Huge blocks and still hot stones were scattered about.

The completeness of the catastrophe is evident when it is stated that, so far as known at the present time, no one save a handful of survivors picked up from the wrecked vessels in the harbor by the French cruiser Suchet, escaped. Even they are unable to tell what actually happened, so crazed are they from the experiences they passed through. It is certain, however,

HOW A VOLCANIC EXPLOSION IS CAUSED



A study of the above picture will show how a molten mass in the mountain's interior met the water and how the steam generated thereby, following the line of least resistance, blew off the top of the volcano.

ric electrical discharge, a cyclone of fire, mud and steam swept down from the crater over the town and bay, sweeping all before it and destroying the fleet of vessels at anchor off the shore. There the accounts of the catastrophe so far obtainable cease.

"I never can forget the horrid, fiery, choking whirlwind which enveloped me," said Mr. Evans. "Mr. Morris and I rushed below. We are not badly burned—not so badly as most of them. When the fire came we were going to out posts (we are engineers) to weigh anchor and get out. When we came up we found the ship afloat and fought it forward until 3 o'clock, when the Suchet came to our rescue. We were then building a raft."

"Ben" Benson, the carpenter of the Roralma, said: "I was on deck amidships, when I heard an explosion. The captain ordered me to up anchor. I got the windlass, but when the fire came I went into the forecabin and got my 'duds.' When I came out I

"At no time were any earthquakes, but big stones were rained down, and fire fell like rain for a long time."

In a separate part of the hospital were found several persons saved from Corbet village, four miles from St. Pierre.

The village of Irrine, south of St. Pierre, was almost entirely burned and almost all the inhabitants were killed. One of the survivors of Irrine, who will die, says the sea, boiling hot, invaded the land. Six women, whose bodies are one solid burn, are writhing in another ward of the hospital. Ten women severely burned from Irrine were brought in and four of them have died. It is doubtful if any of the six still alive can recover.

A woman jumps at a conclusion and wins; a man hesitates and loses.

With money, you would not know yourself; without money, nobody would know you.