
Review: Later Phases of the Pelée Eruption

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Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Sep., 1909), p. 332

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1777155>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 10:46 UTC

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A long account is given of the Guanches, who to the authors are the descendants of the inhabitants of Atlantis left on the mountain-tops when that land foundered ; in this flight of imagination the origin of the Guanches is dismissed, and we pass to a description of their life, habitations, occupations, and customs.

However, we can scarcely complain of such casual treatment of an important problem in a book of this nature, which makes no claim to be a scientific volume. The volume will be of value in supplementing more serious scientific and historical works on the Canaries. There are some well-reproduced photographs, but the map is a mere plan on which no physical features are shown.

AMERICA.

LATER PHASES OF THE PELÉE ERUPTION.

'La Montagne Pelée après ses Éruptions.' Par A. Lacroix. Paris :
Masson & Cie. 1908.

In this volume we have a supplement to the great monograph on Pelée by the same author which appeared about the close of 1904. Since that date there has been no considerable eruptive activity in Martinique, but many interesting geological changes have taken place. Under the auspices of the French Government, the observatory which has been established near the mountain has been continuously engaged watching the closing stages of the volcanic episode, and recording seismic, meteorological, and other phenomena likely to be of scientific interest. In this work, Prof. Lacroix has gathered the results of all the available observations, and shows what light they throw on the novel type of eruption first brought to the attention of scientific men by the disaster which overtook St. Pierre in May, 1902. By the end of 1904 the volcano was again almost in a quiescent state, and this has continued up to the present time, with only a few unimportant interruptions. In June, 1905, it was feared that a great outburst was impending, and a "black cloud" was emitted on the 11th of that month, but this was not followed by any serious consequences.

The most interesting feature of Montagne Pelée to vulcanologists is the great dome of solid lava which swelled up gradually out of the active crater, too viscous to flatten out or to flow, though plastic and red hot in its interior. From its summit at one time a lofty spine or column of andesite or dacite towered to a height of nearly 1000 feet. The whole mass is now so cold that its surface can be walked upon in safety. It is greatly changed in shape; the spine is practically gone; the dome has cracked and split up till it is covered with angular *débris*. At one time, when the spine was highest, the mountain had an altitude of 1620 metres. Now it is only 1355 metres, which is about 135 metres greater than the altitude before the eruptions. Other changes, almost equally startling, have taken place all over the slopes of the volcano. By the destruction of the vegetation the friable volcanic rocks have been left unprotected, and an enormous amount of erosion has been produced by the heavy and sudden tropical rainstorms. In the city of St. Pierre, some of the more important thoroughfares have been cleared of ashes and mud, and a start has been made in the work of repopulation by the opening of an hotel for the use of visitors.

In the concluding part of the book, Prof. Lacroix shows very conclusively that the destruction of Pompeii was not the work of a Peléan eruption, characterized by the emission of a heavy, incandescent cloud, but merely the consequence of an outburst very similar in type to that which buried Ottajano in ashes in the year 1906, though no doubt more violent.

J. S. F.