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MOUNT VESUVIUS

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MOUNT VESUVIUS

VESUVIUS has been violent many times since the notable eruption of 70 A. D., when Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried, but the eruption of 1906 will rank among the most destructive.

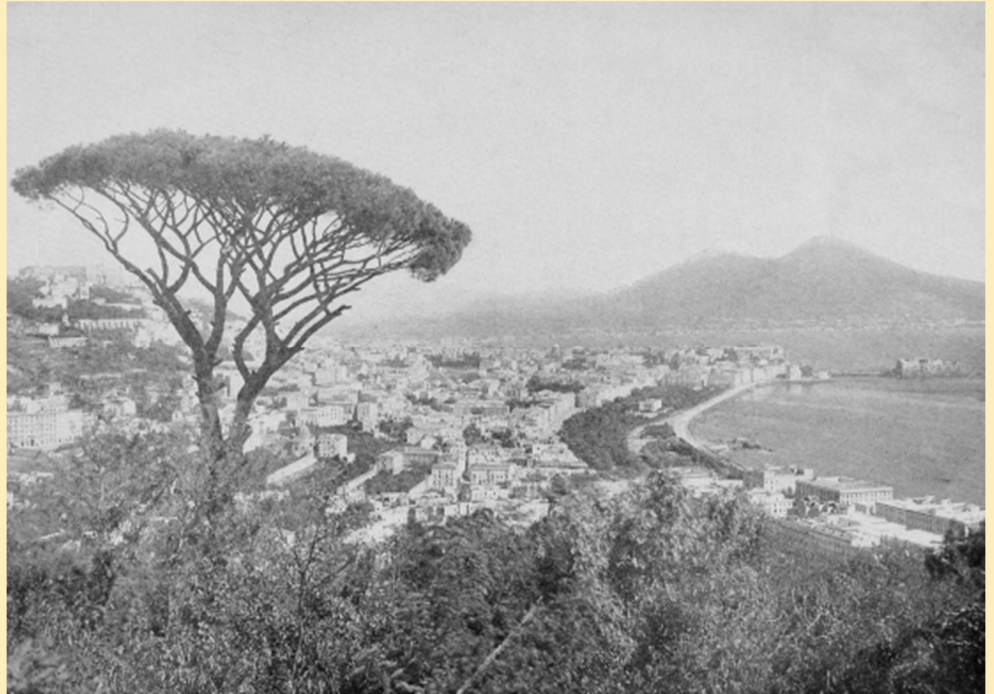
Many villages were overwhelmed by streams of lava and falling ashes, so that years will elapse before the country recovers from the devastation.

The mountain is reported to have lost about 800 feet in height, but it does not take the volcano long to rebuild.

Vesuvius has now been watched for about two thousand years, and we are better acquainted with it than with any other volcano, but its actions are so mysterious that practically nothing is known of the causes which make it break out at intervals with such violence.

No five years in history have been so noted for volcanic disturbances as the years 1902-1906. The explosion of Mont Pelee, which destroyed 30,000 people; the eruption of Santa Maria in

Guatemala a few months later, which likewise swept away thousands of people and wrecked many miles of fertile plantations; the activity of Colima in Mexico, and of Mauna Loa in Hawaii, and now this latest eruption of Vesuvius, form an unprecedented series of disasters.





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They serve to emphasize our ignorance of volcanic action; and yet this ignorance is not to be wondered at, for no systematic study of volcanic action has ever been made.

Commissions have been sent to study individual volcanoes — Vesuvius, Mauna Loa, Krakatoa, Mont Pelee, etc. but no prolonged comparative investigation has been made of all of them. Probably no

field of scientific inquiry would yield such valuable results as a careful study of the volcanoes of the world.



Near the shore west of Naples is Monte Nuovo, or new mountain, a hill 440 feet high, cast up by volcanic action during a few days in September, 1538.

All about it are volcanic hills of earlier origin, and two islands bordering the bay are also volcanic. About 150 miles south of Vesuvius is Stromboli, which is always active and is familiarly

called the "Lighthouse of the Mediterranean." Still southward, close by the eastern shore of Sicily, rises another volcano, also famed in classic myth, and in comparison to which Vesuvius is but a mound.

Etna is more than 10,000 feet in height and has a circumference of 40 miles.



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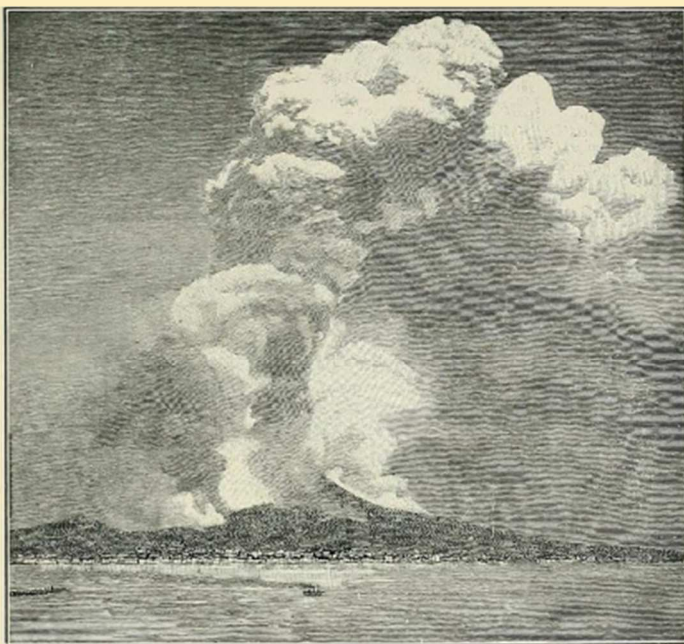
Like Vesuvius, this vast cone is built chiefly of lavas and ashes coming' to rest about a central pipe or throat leading" up from the depths, but there have also been many small eruptions on the flanks. From time to time cracks open on the sides of the great cone, allowing the escape of lava and cinders and causing small cones to be built. Like other great mountains, it has a rugged surface, and

risers through several zones of climate, being almost tropical at base, temperate and forested on its middle slopes, and arctic and snowy on its summit.



In 1831 the sea south of Sicily gave a fine illustration of the volcanic habit of that great region. At a point where the water was 600 feet deep volcanic materials were cast up until they stood 200

feet above the water. This new island, however, was soon cut away by the sea waves, leaving a shoal where the transient land had been.



From "Physical Geography," by William M. Davis and W. H. Snyder
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Some good books describing volcanic action are:

"Introduction to Physical Geography," by G. K. Gilbert and A. P. Brigham (Appletons)

"Physical Geography," by Wm. M. Davis "(Ginn & Co.).

"Volcanoes of North America," by Israel C. Russell (Putnams).

"Volcanoes ; their Structure and Significance," by T. G. Bonney (Putnams).

"Text Book of Geology," by Sir Archibald Geikie (Appletons).

"Geology," by T. C. Chamberlin and R. D. Salisbury (Henry Holt), 3 vols.