

They killed thirty, being the majority of the Boer commando, and handed three prisoners over to the British at Vryheid, in the south-eastern Transvaal.

NEW ZEALANDERS IN AFRICA.

The Acting-Premier is advised as follows from South Africa:—

A. L. H. May of Christchurch (8th Contingent), is dangerously ill, having been injured internally at Vasilbank on May 2nd by a rough fall from his horse.

R. E. Anslow, Wellington, and Conlon, Oamaru, both of the 9th Contingent, are ill, the former from dysentery, the latter from rheumatic fever.

There is no change in the condition of Lieut. Lascelles, of Napier.

The present whereabouts of Bartill, formerly of the Blimington Guides, is unknown.

John McKay (Riverton), of Seventh Contingent; G. A. Fraser (Wellington), of Sixth Contingent, are both convalescent.

John Ashton (Dunedin), of the Seventh Contingent, has recovered and rejoined his regiment.

John Considine (Auckland), of the Seventh Contingent, is progressing favourably.

Hugh McDonald (Eighth Contingent) and S. E. Whitta (Makuri) are both with the regiment and well.

News has reached Masterton by private letter that over 100 members of the Seventh Contingent were left behind at Durban when the transport Cornwall took her departure for New Zealand.

News has been received that Sergt. Aikenhead, of Oamaru, who had been two years in Marshall's Horse, was killed in action at Sutherland, Cape Colony, on the 24th March.

The Acting-Premier has received a cable from Capetown stating that R. E. Anslow (of Wellington), of the Ninth Contingent, has died from dysentery.

Wm. Warner (Wellington), of the Seventh Contingent, is dangerously ill with enteric at Pretoria. The condition of Lieutenant Lascelles (Napier) is slightly improved. J. D. Bersley (Wanganui) and Lee (Wellington) are now convalescent.

Revell (Ashburton) and 48 men of the Sixth and Seventh Contingents sailed by the s.s. Aurania for Australia on May 4th. The award of a medal to Lieut. Pieton while corporal in Loch's Horse, and prior to his lieutenantcy in the Bush Veldt Carbineers, has been cancelled.

The Governor has received the following cablegram from South Africa: "The Aurania left Capetown on the 4th of May, having on board Lieutenant Christian (Johannesburg Mounted Rifles), nine men of the South African irregular forces, and 81 men of the New Zealand Mounted Infantry, including eight invalids for New Zealand. The ship calls at Albany for orders."

The Governor has been advised as follows from South Africa: "Dangerously ill, May 4, at Potchefstroom, Patrick Lee and William Grant, New Zealand Mounted Infantry, both from injuries."

In reply to inquiries Major Filcher, Capetown, cables: "Corporal Urwin, Wellington, Sixth Contingent, now convalescent. Condition of Sergeant Walter Miller, Wellington, unchanged. Lieutenant Lascelles, Napier, slightly improved. Lieutenant Colledge's condition improving. Harvey discharged from hospital, well. Whittle, Makuri, convalescent."

The s.s. Cornwall, with 308 returned troops of the New Zealand Sixth Contingent, arrived last night, and the men were transhipped to the Monowai, which sailed for Wellington this morning. The troops are all well. They are in charge of Colonel Banks. Some of the Sixth Contingent, who were to come on with the Cornwall, elected to join the Ninth Contingent when they reached Durban and returned to the front.

The Terrible Catastrophe in the West Indies.

Indies.

A City Overwhelmed.

Terrible news is to hand from the West Indies concerning the volcanic eruption on the French island of Martinique, in the Lesser Antilles.

Mount Pelee, the volcano 4429 feet high, in the island, which broke out into active eruption several days ago, continues to belch out flames, smoke and ashes.

The eruption has totally destroyed the city of St. Pierre, the commercial capital of the island, and its inhabitants and shipping.

Advices two days ago stated that up to then 150 people had lost their lives through the eruption. A previous message stated that the streets of St. Pierre were covered with ashes, and that great consternation prevailed amongst the inhabitants.

A volcanic disturbance has also been experienced in the Leeward and Windward Islands (West Indies).

The cables south of Santa Lucia (one of the Windward Islands) are interrupted.

Further news received from the scene of the terrible volcanic disturbances indicates a general revival of volcanic activity throughout the Lesser Antilles, in the West Indies, and confirms the news of the great loss of life on the island of Martinique.

A cablegram from St. Thomas states that thousands of people in Martinique have been killed.

After smoke and ashes were ejected from the crater of Mount Pelee the volcano increased its activity, and a stream of boiling mud flowed down the mountain side from the crater.

This river of mud, which began to flow on the 5th inst., overwhelmed the chief factories at St. Pierre and caused enormous destruction of property.

The stream of mud is still flowing, but is decreasing in volume.

Great alarm exists in several other islands of the Lesser Antilles owing to renewed volcanic activity.

The volcano of Soufriere (3000 feet high), in the British island St. Vincent, is smoking ominously.

The active craters on the island of Dominica (British), immediately north of Martinique, are in a state of eruption.

Great consternation has been caused in Guadeloupe (French island, north of Dominica) owing to loud noises and frequent earthquake shocks.

Further details fully bear out the worst fears that were entertained, and show that the entire city of St. Pierre was destroyed by a most fearful catastrophe, involving the loss of between 36,000 and 40,000 lives.

In addition to the hot ashes, rocks, and boiling mud ejected in immense quantities, the volcano of Mount Pelee, which overlooks St. Pierre, threw out molten lava.

As the New York cable was interrupted by the eruption two steamers carrying messages were despatched to the island, but were lost, and a third was unable to land.

The British steamer Ocean Traveler, which has arrived at Dominica, reports that she left the island of St. Vincent during a heavy fall of sand from Soufriere volcano (on that island), but was unable to reach St. Lucia owing to currents, and arrived opposite St. Pierre on Thursday morning.

Those on board saw the volcano of Mount Pelee explode, a rain of fire sweeping down and destroying the town environs and shipping, including the cable-repairing steamer Grappler, 868 tons, belonging to the West India and Panama Telegraph Company.

The cruiser Suchet went round to St. Pierre on Thursday afternoon,

and found the place in flames.

Thirty persons were rescued belonging to the shipping, but the Suchet's men were unable to penetrate the town.

Heaps of bodies were seen on the wharves, and it is feared that in addition to the Governor (M. Moutlet) and his staff, Colonel Wirr, the American Consul, and his wife have fallen victims.

The steamer Esk was covered with ashes while passing St. Pierre, five miles off on Thursday night, everything ashore being aflame.

The British steamer Roraima, 1784 tons, during the morning exploded, the Suchet saving eight of her passengers.

Another steamer, the Roddam, 1508 tons, was partly burnt. She slipped her anchor, but 17, including her officers, died from their injuries. The captain was taken to the hospital at St. Thomas.

Out of the Roddam's crew of 23 all were killed or injured except two, who declare the disaster was like "a glimpse of hell," begging description.

Five miles from the land the coast is enveloped in impenetrable darkness, and the atmosphere is saturated with cinders and sulphur.

M. Laparent, the president of the French Geological Society, states that the chimney of Mount Pelee exploded, projecting showers of incandescent lava, submerging everything, with a flow of lava following.

The population of St. Pierre was estimated at 36,000, and the latest estimates of the dead in Martinique are between that number and 40,000.

The number of whites living in St. Pierre was estimated at 1000, including probably a dozen English.

Eighteen vessels were destroyed, including four American.

News from the British island of St. Vincent, via Point a Pitre, states that a storm of thunder and lightning broke on Thursday morning, becoming tremendous, with a continuous roar.

Pitchy darkness followed.

The volcano of Soufriere (3000 ft. high) was enveloped in columns of smoke, and threw out stones and scorificaceous hail.

Thirty persons are known to have been killed.

On Friday the shocks were intermittent and fainter.

A vast amount of property was destroyed.

The ashes lie two feet deep in the village of Chateau Eclair.

Volcanic dust is falling at Barbadoes (east of St. Vincent), where it lies an inch thick.

The British cruiser Indefatigable, attached to the West Indian station, has been despatched to St. Vincent to render assistance.

Three hundred inhabitants living in the vicinity of Soufriere took refuge at Chateau Eclair.

Survivors from the destroyed British steamer Roraima, who have arrived at Dominica, state that the eruption, which destroyed St. Pierre, seemed to come from a new crater on Mt. Pelee (which is 4429 feet high).

Accompanying the eruption was a destructive ocean wave, believed to have been caused by submarine volcanic agency in the neighbourhood of Martinique.

The great wave rushed into the harbour at St. Pierre and overwhelmed the shipping.

The commander of the French warship Suchet reports that the great explosion which destroyed St. Pierre was preceded by a violent whirlwind.

On arrival at St. Pierre at two o'clock on Thursday afternoon the Suchet's captain tried to penetrate

the town, which presented a fearful spectacle.

He saw no living creature, but there were numerous corpses on the quays.

The cable-steamer Payer Quartier has brought 450 refugees from St. Pierre to Fort De France, the capital of Martinique.

Other steamers are searching for survivors.

Later news from St. Vincent confirms the worst fears of the disaster in that island.

Two craters of the Soufriere volcano are in violent activity, covering the northern districts of the island with lava and ashes.

It is impossible to approach the northern shore, owing to the intense heat and the amount of steam.

Two hundred persons are known to have been killed on the island.

Heavy ashes fell on a steamer 250 miles from the land.

Forked lightning is incessant over the disturbed area.

Great streams of lava from Soufriere separate the northern and southern parts of St. Vincent, and the bays have been converted into steaming pits.

A huge hill has replaced a valley near the volcano.

Sixty people were killed by lightning.

Many refugees who were escaping along the coast in boats died of thirst.

The British cruiser Pallas, from Jamaica, has been sent to St. Vincent to render assistance.

Clouds of ashes obscure the sky for 150 miles round Soufriere and Mount Pelee.

Later news from Martinique states that a sudden fiery flash caused an immense rent in the western side of Mount Pelee, forming a new crater.

A maelstrom of red-hot mud, travelling like spiral wreaths of vapour with incredible velocity, devastated everything in its path for a distance of five miles between the volcano and St. Pierre.

Carrying along trees, rocks and tons of earth the maelstrom instantaneously obliterated the whole of the streets, engulfing the town, and creating a tidal wave, which destroyed eighteen vessels, whose crews were paralysed.

Many bodies were mutilated beyond recognition, and 3000 charred corpses, many of them naked, were found on the site of the cathedral. All had been asphyxiated.

Some perished while performing their daily avocations.

The wholesale cremation of the bodies will be imperative to prevent pestilence.

Many of the survivors were discovered in the hills, and 450 were rescued.

The captain of the Roddam states that he had just anchored in the Bay of St. Pierre, after a terrific thunderstorm at night, when he saw a tremendous cloud of smoke blowing live cinders rush over the town and harbour of St. Pierre, enveloping them in a sheet of flame, and scorching ten of the crew of the steamer to death, and covering the deck six inches deep with hot ashes. He slipped the anchor himself and steered out to sea, though badly burnt.

Five thousand people took refuge in the hills around Lebarbet and Leprecheur. They have provisions, and are being gradually removed to places of safety.

The French Government, the British authorities, and the residents of the West Indies and the City of New Orleans have sent provisions and money relief.

No buildings have been left standing along the coast from Lebarbet to Leprecheur.

The roads are impassable, being blocked with mounds of debris and heaps of dead.

The Governor at Martinique, the British Consul (Mr. James Japp), and the American Consul (Colonel Wire) were among those who perished.

Stones of the size of walnuts and hot mud fell at Fort De France, the capital of Martinique.

Despite the engulfing of the Guerin factory the Governor of Martinique, it is said, issued a report before the final disaster reassuring the residents of St. Pierre, who were overwhelmed next day.

Twelve of the English aboard the steamer Roraima were rescued.

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