

wind shifted to the west. As soon as it did so the whole mass of brown, billowy ashes began moving towards us. Fully a mile high in the air it passed over our heads, while the ashes fell unpleasantly, it looked like another brown world travelling swiftly past us, so solid and impenetrable was the cloud. As the wind freshened down came the brown, solid, drifting mass, till it was not more than twenty feet above our heads. The ashes fell quite hot now, and as thick as sand through a sieve. By and bye the lumps became larger and larger. We plugged up every aperture in the boat-house with empty sacks, but even then could not entirely keep the ashes out.

The children all behaved like little heroes. Poor little Evie, only six years old, when the hot ashes got in her eyes, only called her cat Blacksmith to her, and brushed her eyes with his tail, saying, "Come, Kitty, doctor, and cure my eyes," the tears running down her little cheeks all the time with pain.

By this time the island was shaking like a jelly, and the noise sounded right under our feet, resembling the rushing of a thousand trains through a vast tunnel. The night was inky black, the only things which relieved the darkness were the three great glowing eyes which marked the three craters of the volcano.

With these surroundings the awful night wore slowly away, the air so thick as to be almost unbearable. The children were sitting on a mattress bathed in perspiration and black with ashes, until in a huddled heap they fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

After what seemed an eternity of time, a dull brown light began to creep over the island, and I knew that morning had come, and slept myself.

When I awoke the sun was up, and things did not look so dreadful as by night, but the eruption showed no sign of abatement. The sea was now smooth and the wind fair,

so I decided to try and reach the mainland in one of the whale-boats. The boat was ready, so we launched her and set forth. It was a beautiful morning, a good heave and swell on the water, the sky blue, and the seagulls playing round us as if there was no such thing as an active volcano in existence.

The boat was leaking badly, and some one had to keep bailing most of the time. The children were sitting on a rug in the bottom of the boat, the pet cat on little Evie's lap. Once I saw the great black fin of a shark come close to my steer-oar. None of the others noticed it except the men, and I motioned to them to keep quiet; it must have glided away, for we saw it no more.

Everything appeared to be going on well; we were ten miles away, then fifteen, and by three o'clock we were about half-way across. The island was sinking lower and lower into the water, and the mainland began to look closer and closer. If this wind had kept favourable we would have been in Whakatane harbour by two o'clock the next morning, but unfortunately it changed quite suddenly, and sprang up dead ahead.

There was nothing for it but to run back to the island, and away the boat flew with its load of bitterly disappointed hearts.

The wind was freshening all the time, and as the sea got up it took the two men all their time to keep the boat free of water. As we neared the island the sight of the eruption was very grand. The whole island looked like a chimney belching forth a volume of smoke and ashes fully three miles in height, and extending away to the horizon. The great feature was the force with which the ashes were ejected.

When we reached the shore it was like trying to face a burning house. The smoke and heat were so great that I had to alter the course of the boat and beach her under a