

new blow-hole had broken out, and, instead of sending out steam as the others did, it was sending up a straight shoot of red, living ashes. From where we stood (about a mile away) the blow-hole appeared to be about a yard across, and so great was the force with which the ashes were ejected, that for the height of about fourteen hundred feet the column rose like a jet of water, straight as a walking stick far above the cliff, then spread out like the top of a fern tree. As I looked the thought flashed through my mind, "that is the way the younger Pliny described Vesuvius as starting when Pompeii was destroyed." I knew then that this was an eruption. The noise was not so great as at first, but a roaring sound continued, accompanied by sharp percussions.

The men were much alarmed, and I was dreadfully anxious about the children. I went to the whare, and found them much astonished at the noise. I told them that the volcano was very active, but that it might only be a blow up, and would most likely go down again soon. My eldest sister looked very nervous, but she tried not to show it before the children. I called her aside and told her to pack up everything as soon as possible, so that if the worst came to the worst, we could put to sea at any moment.

The men and I went down to the boat-house and got out the best whale-boat, then we put into her a keg of water, some provisions, oars, sails, etc., in readiness for a start.

I thought it best to keep the men working, to prevent them from dwelling on the situation.

The position was this: We were forty-five miles from the coast across a strip of water nearly always rough. My two whale-boats had just done a year's rough work, and were leaking in every seam—so far gone were they that two others were being built in Auckland to replace them. The trip across, even in a good boat, well manned, was one that old coasters would

think it madness to try. I had only two men, the weather was bad, and getting worse, and the volcano becoming more and more active every hour.

We were all very grave at tea that evening, though we tried hard to think it would all be over before morning.

As soon as it was dark I went across the sulphur flat to get a good view of the new crater. What was my surprise to see all round the new blow-hole red-hot! I felt something falling on my face like hot soot, and found I was being covered with falling ashes. The noise now was terrific, and had a sort of screeching sound in it. You have heard a large ocean steamer blow down steam, well multiply that by any number you like, and it will give you a faint idea of what this noise was like!

I need not tell you that none of us slept that night except the youngsters. We sat up listening to the roaring and screeching all night, and in the morning we found that two new craters had broken out, and were vomiting stones and ashes to the full height of the mountain.

Great clouds of ashes were rushing up into the sky, like bales and bales of dark brown wool. There was now a stiff gale blowing from the south-east, directly from us to the volcano, so that fortunately no ashes came our way. Launching the boats in such a sea was out of the question, so we busied ourselves in fixing up the boat-house to live in, as it was more sheltered from the volcano than the whares.

We had on the island some hundreds of sleepers (six inches thick), to be used for laying the tramway. With these we covered the boat-house all over, as a further protection from falling ashes.

My sister did some cooking, as she said there was no knowing when we would have to leave, and the children must have food in the boats.

About an hour before sunset the