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THE VOLCANO OF ALBAY.

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READFUL & MEMORABLE OCCURRENCE

That took place in the Province of Camarines, on the 1st day of February, 1814.

A Pastor, whose flock suffered, and is now suffering, the greatest calamities and sorrows, comes to implore, with an entire confidence, the well known sympathy of the inhabitants of these parts, and particularly that of the respectable population of this city of Manila, most earnestly imploring, in the name of God, of His Most Holy Mother, each individual, to relieve, according to ability, the necessities of this afflicted and horror-stricken parish.

The inhabitants of the villages of Cagsawa and Budiao, in the province of Camarines, which have been destroyed by the dreadful and memorable eruption of the volcano of Albay, that happened on the first day of the month of February, of the present year, of which, an eye witness, I offer to the public the following relation.

More than thirteen years had elapsed, during which the volcano of Albay, by some called Mayon, had preserved a continued and profound silence, without giving the least sign of its existence. It was no longer viewed with that distrust and terror with which volcanoes usual inspire those who inhabit the vicinity. In the year 1800 its last eruption took place, in which it emitted a great quantity of stones, sand, and ashes, (as had always been usual) and occasioned considerable damage to the same villages; but now completely destroyed; remaining useless a great number of fertile fields, which thenceforth were converted into arid and frightful sands. In the latter part of October of that year the last eruption opened, and caused more damage to those villages.

Since that time we had not recalled any circumstance indicative of the existence of the volcano, and therefore all the apprehension that had formerly inspired was gradually dissipating. Consequently, its extensive and spacious side had been converted into a highly cultivated and beautiful garden. In particular, the inhabitants of Camalg and Budiao had planted upon it many cocoa trees, and every kind of fruit-trees, with a variety of roots and vegetables; which, while they afforded an agreeable perspective, supplied their excellent productions many illustrious families with food.

In this state was the volcano on the first day of Feb. last. No person reflected, in the slightest degree, upon the damages and losses that so bad a neighbour had been in the habit of occasioning. We had become persuaded, in consequence of a long silence, that it was now completely extinguished, and that those subterraneous conduits were closed, through which it attacked itself and kindled the combustible materials, which it had formerly so continually thrown out.

It had been seen or remarked any which might indicate to us beforehand what was about to take place. In the former eruptions, there were heard, a considerable number of previous, certain subterraneous sounds, that were sure presages of them. It also emitted almost continually a thick smoke by which it was announced them. But upon the present occasion we remarked nothing of all this. It is true, that on the last day of January we perceived some slight shocks; but we scarcely noticed them, on account of their having been very frequent, since the earthquake that we expected on the 5th of October of the year 1811. On Monday night

the shocks increased. At two in the morning we felt one more violent than those we had hitherto experienced. It was repeated at four, and from that hour they were almost continual until the eruption commenced.

Tuesday dawned, and I scarcely ever remarked at Camarines a more serene and pleasant morning or a clearer sky. I observed, however, that the ridges nearest the volcano were covered with a mist that I supposed to be the smoke of some house thereabouts, that had been on fire in the night. At 8 o'clock on the fatal morning the volcano began suddenly to emit a thick column of stones, sand and ashes, which with the greatest velocity was elevated in a moment to the highest part of the atmosphere. At this sight we were astonished, and filled with the utmost dread, and especially when we observed that in an instant the brow of the volcano was covered by it. We had never seen a similar eruption, and were immediately convinced that a river of fire was coming towards us, and was about to consume us. The first thing which was done in my village was to secure the holy sacrament from profanation, and betake ourselves to a precipitate flight. The swiftness with which that dreadful tide rolled towards us, did not give us much time either for reflection or conversation. The frightful noise that the volcano made, caused great terror, even in the stoutest hearts. We all ran terrified, and fled with the greatest dismay and consternation, endeavouring to reach the highest and most distant places, in order to preserve ourselves from so imminent a danger. The horizon began to darken, and our anxieties redoubled. The noise of the volcano continually increases; the darkness augments; and we continue our flight for the preservation of our lives, removing farther and farther from an object so terrific. But notwithstanding the swiftness with which we run, we are overtaken in our disastrous flight by a heavy shower of huge stones by the violence of which many unfortunate persons are in a moment deprived of life. This unforeseen and cruel circumstance, obliges us to make a pause in our career, and to shelter ourselves under the houses, but the flames and burnt stones fall from above which in a short time reduce them to ashes.

Who is capable of making an exact relation of scenes so sad and melancholy, and of presenting them to the public in the same manner that they occurred? which of us thought to escape with life upon beholding such manifest signals of Divine justice? As for myself, I remembered in those dreadful moments the disastrous fate of the cities of Pentapolis, and I was then persuaded that the unfortunate villages of Camarines were about to suffer the same unhappy catastrophe. Terrible reflections it is true, but founded upon the immorality of manners which had long been remarked in those villages.

In this dreadful situation, we called upon God, in such manner as we could, from the bottom of our afflicted and almost broken hearts, beseeching him for pardon and mercy. It became completely dark, and we remained enveloped and immersed in the most thick and palpable darkness, comparable only to that which in the time of Moses was seen in Egypt. From this moment reflection is at an end, advice is no longer given, and no person recognizes another. The rather abandons his children, the husband his wife, she remembers not her beloved spouse, and the children forget their parents. No one thinks that he can assist his fellows, because all believe that they are about to die.

But as man, even in the most critical and destitute situations, endeavours by all possible methods to preserve life, each one of us, for this interesting object makes use of all the means and expedients that can be resorted to in the terrible condition to which we are reduced. Of what various and different methods did not we who have escaped with life avail ourselves, that we might not perish at that time?

In the houses we now found no shelter. It was necessary to abandon them with all haste, in order not to perish with them. To go out uncovered, was to expose one's self to a danger not less imminent; because the stones that fell were of an enormous size, and fell as thick as rain itself. It is necessary, that we may not die in the one or the other manner, to cover ourselves and defend ourselves as well as we can. We do so. Some cover themselves with hides, others with tables and chairs, others with boards and tea-trays—Many take refuge in the trunks of trees, others among the canes and hedges, and some hide themselves in a cave which the brow of a mountain offered them.—Those only of us survive who had the good fortune to protect ourselves by one or other of those methods; but those who were in the open air, with nothing at hand with which they could cover themselves, almost all perished, or were wounded.

The horrid and frightful noise of the volcano increases to its utmost; the shower of stones and thick sand augments; the burning stones and meteors continue to fall, and in a very short time reduce to ashes the most beautiful villages of the province of Camarines. Could there be signs more analogous to those that are to take place at the last judgment? The animals of the mountain descend precipitately to the villages, to seek in them a secure asylum. The domestic animals run terrified with the greatest disorder and affright, uttering cries that indicate their approaching end. Nothing interested as in those dreadful moments but the preservation of our own lives. But alas! divine justice has already marked and pointed out, with the finger of omniscience, a great number of victims who are to perish in this day of wrath and fury, in every respect similar to what we read in the holy scriptures concerning the day of the last judgment.

About ten in the forenoon it ceased to rain heavy stones, and each one endeavoured to remain in the situation he then was, waiting until the rain of thick sand which succeeded it should also cease, or until some new and unforeseen calamity should terminate the existence of us all.

We thus continued until half past one in the afternoon, at which hour the noise of the Volcano began to diminish, and the horizon to clear a little, at sight of which there was revived in us the hope of life, which until then had been almost wholly extinguished. At about two in the afternoon it became entirely clear, and we began to perceive distinctly the lamentable and dreadful ravages that the darkness had hitherto concealed from us. We saw with terror the ground covered with dead bodies, part of whom had been killed by the stones, and the others consumed by the fire. Two hundred of those perished in the church of Budiao; thirty five in a single house in that village. The joy that all felt at having preserved life through such imminent dangers, was in many instantly converted into the extremity of sorrow at finding themselves deprived of their relations, friends and acquaintances. There, a father finds his children dead, here, a husband his wife, and a wife her husband; particularly in the village of Budiao, where there are very few who have not lost some of their nearest connections. In another place at every step one meets innumerable other unhappy wretches extended upon the ground, who, though not yet deprived of life, are wounded or bruised in a thousand ways. Some with their legs broken, some without arms, some with their skulls fractured, and others with their whole bodies full of wounds. Such were the mournful objects that presented themselves to us during the remainder of that afternoon, many of them died immediately, and others on the following days, the rest remaining abandoned to the most melancholy fate, without physicians, without medicines, and in want even of necessary food.

A horrible and mournful day it

was, the remembrance of which will ever be indelibly engraven upon our hearts. Not one of us then thought to escape with life. Death presented himself to us in various and frightful shapes, threatening to deprive us of life by different and horrible methods. But the powerful hand of our beneficent and sovereign God restrains him. At his commanding voice, pale death is appalled. He trembles, groans, and leaves us. He flees, terror-stricken, to the caverns of the earth, and there begins to mourn and lament the spoils which he has been deprived of, and of which he has been deprived. He thought on that day to have imbrued, more than usual, his scythe with blood; but he was obliged to humble himself before Him who governs the empires, and at whose voice the infernal regions shake with fear.

The sad result of the misfortunes of that day has been the total ruin of five villages in the province of Camarines, and the principal part of twelve hundred unfortunate persons, and many others severely wounded; the loss of every thing that the survivors possessed in the world, being left without houses, without clothing, without animals, and without a morsel fit to eat; the mournful and unhappy fate of many who have been left orphans, abandoned to Divine providence: others widows, with the loss of four, five, and even more children; the total destruction of their Churches and Parochial houses, with every thing that they contained; in consequence of which, the sacraments could not be administered to such as died of their wounds on the succeeding days, and who were buried without any pomp or ceremony; and the many infants who have since been born, have from necessity been baptized with common water, because the circumstances in which we were placed did not permit it to be otherwise.

The present appearance of the volcano is most melancholy and terrific. Its side which was formerly so cultivated and which afforded a prospect the most picturesque, is now nothing but an arid and barren sand. The stones, sand and ashes which cover it are so astonishing in quantity, that in some places they exceed the thickness of ten & twelve yards, and in the very spot where lately stood the village of Budiao, there are places in which the Cocoa trees are almost covered. In the ruined villages and almost through the whole extent of the eruption, the ground remains covered with sand to the depth of half a yard, and scarcely a single tree is left alive. The crater of the volcano has lowered, as I judge, more than twenty fathoms, and on the south side discovers a spacious and horrid mouth which it is frightful to look at.—Three new ones are opened at a considerable distance from the principal crater, through which also smoke and ashes were incessantly emitted. In short the most beautiful villages of Camarines and the principal part of that province are converted into a barren sand.

Behold, generous inhabitants of these Islands, in this short and unpunished relation, what has just occurred at Camarines. Its most beautiful villages burned, its soil entirely destroyed, its inhabitants to the number of more than 20,000 dispersed, deprived of what they possessed, suffering a thousand wants and miseries, and begging alms from door to door that they may not perish with hunger, and when you see how many great hardships and miseries that unhappy people are suffering, you cannot but commiserate their cruel and melancholy situation.

I very well know the almost extreme necessity in which this capital city of Manila is at present, but at the same time I likewise know that your very efforts and labors would in a great degree alleviate the extreme indigence, and deplorable poverty of these miserable beings. They do not ask you for money because they know you have it not, but they will give you a thousand thanks and the most affectionate

acknowledgments, if you will condescend to give them in as alms the old clothing that you keep in your chests and wardrobes, and of which you make no use whatsoever. And old garments that you can spare without inconvenience to yourselves will be to them a most acceptable present which they will value more than I can express.

Yes, worthy inhabitants of Manila, all these unhappy natives of Camarines are depending upon your generosity and patriotic charity.—They wait with anxiety for assistance and succour; and one of their curates, who has come in person to implore your clemency, knowing the tenderness and charity of your generous hearts, addresses to you this short statement, rather for the purpose of giving you an account of what happened in that province on the first day of February, than of exciting your charity towards the miserable inhabitants, as he is firmly persuaded, that, upon your becoming acquainted with the many and severe afflictions that they have suffered and are now suffering, you will on your part exert yourselves to remedy them to the extent of your abilities, knowing that in the whole course of your lives a case can scarcely occur more suitable or proper for the exercise of charity towards your distressed fellow-men; and that God our Lord will look with peculiar complacency upon whatever slight sacrifice you may be pleased to make for their relief; for you well know that charity opens the gates of heaven and covers a multitude of sins.

Your most humble servant and Chaplain.

FR. FRANCISCO ARAGONESE.

Note.—In consequence of having distributed all the copies of this account that were printed, I have found it necessary, in order to satisfy the curiosity of many who are daily calling on me for it, to reprint it anew; and I avail myself of so favourable an opportunity to correct the many errata that were contained in the first edition; and at the same time to inform the charitable people of Manila, that I am authorized by the honourable chief magistrate, and by the Right Rev. Diocesan, to solicit alms, and to open a subscription for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the six villages that have been destroyed by the volcano of Albay.

Any person whose charity may dispose him to subscribe, or to bestow any alms for the purpose above mentioned, can do so at the Convent of Santa Clara, at which place I reside. I shall also devote as much time as other business that I am engaged in relating to the same benevolent object will permit, in going personally from house to house to solicit the charity of the inhabitants; for such is my anxiety to alleviate the distress of those for whom I plead, that I will omit no personal exertions that in my judgment may contribute to the attainment of that object.

## NOTICE.

By virtue of an order from the orphans court of Anne Arundel county, the subscriber will offer at public sale, part of the personal estate of John Watkins, deceased, at his late dwelling, on West River, on Tuesday the 25th instant, if fair, if not, the first day thereafter.

Consisting of several valuable negroes, both men, women and children; also a valuable stock, consisting of horses, cattle, sheep and hogs; farming utensils, household and kitchen furniture; also two Batteaus, a yawl, and one seine, corn and bacon. The foregoing property will be sold on a credit of six months for all sums over twenty dollars, under that sum the cash to be paid; bond with approved security will be required, with interest from the day of sale. The sale to commence on the premises at 10 o'clock.

Nicholas Watkins of Thos. Adm.

April 6. 37

Robert Welch, of Ben.

Offers himself a candidate for the office of Sheriff at the next ensuing election, and respectfully solicits the votes and interests of his fellow citizens.

## Property for Sale.

The subscriber will sell at private sale the plantation, whereon the present reader in Anne Arundel county, five miles below Mt. Vernon, on the road leading to Annapolis, sixteen miles from Baltimore. The tract contains 342 acres of good land, and produces well Indian corn, wheat, small grain, particularly buckwheat, and more makes it valuable to any person inclined to go into that line of cultivation. The soil is adapted to early growth of vegetables of all kinds; nearly half of the tract is in wood, of various kinds of timber. The improvements are comfortable and in good repair, the dwelling house roomy and sufficient for a large family; every convenient house, for stock and poultry; an excellent garden newly built, rich, and set with herbs of almost every kind; a pump of good water, in the yard, and a well of every kind. There is a meadow and more can be made with little labour. Any person inclined to purchase, may know the terms by applying to Mr. Richard Gambrell, Dr. Anderson Warfield, in Anne Arundel county, or Mr. Eli Hewitt in the city of Baltimore. If the above property is not sold at private sale by the 20th day of June next, it will be that day be exposed to public sale, on the premises, to the highest bidder.

## Lands for Sale.

By virtue of an order of the court of chancery, in pursuance of an act of the legislature of this state, the subscriber will expose to sale on Monday the 17th April next, at Landon's Tavern in the city of Annapolis, 550 acres of land, part of a tract called

## HAMPTON COURT

originally granted on the 3d Nov. 1711 to Thomas Johnson, and lying in Anne Arundel county.

These lands are part of the quantity of 1,000 acres, purchased by the late general John Davidson of Annapolis from Thomas Johnson, the patentee, on the 28th May, 1783, for himself, a certain Benjamin Brooke, and the late Col. Benjamin Ford. Davidson's part, of 400 acres, was conveyed on the 24th April, 1776, conveyed to the late Col. Benjamin Ford. Davidson's part, of 400 acres, was conveyed on the 24th April, 1786, previously conveyed to the late Benjamin Brooke, the remaining 350 acres are now sold because the same will not admit of division between the heirs of Benjamin Ford.

The subscriber is unacquainted with these lands, and of course can give no description either of their particular situation, their soil, or improvement. He supposes that persons inclined to purchase will view them previous to the sale. Mr. Henry Wayman, who lives near the lands, will show them to any person who will call upon him. The title is indisputable.

One sixth of the purchase money to be paid cash to the trustee, on the day of sale; and for the balance, bonds to be given for the payment of one half in 9 months, and the other half in 18 months from the day of sale, with legal interest.

Thomas H. Burt, Trustee.

March 16. 5X

## 50 Dollars Reward.

Ran away from the subscriber on the 2d of October, 1814, a negro named DICK: he is a short, yellow complected fellow, about 35 years of age, 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high, and his hair when spoken to. He took with him a pair of cotton country cloth breeches, with a broad blue stripe, & a white country cloth jacket and waist coat. He is a rough shoemaker, and took away with him his tools. Whoever brings home the said negro, or cures him so that I get him again, shall receive the above reward, with all reasonable charges.

Benjamin Harwood, of A. A. Co. hvy, South Kent Neck, near Annapolis.

N. B. It is supposed the above negro may have gone to Montgomery county, where his mother lives, or Mrs Murray, near Montgomery County House, and may have a pass. B. H. December 1.

## NOTICE.

By virtue of an order from the orphans court of Anne Arundel county, the subscriber will expose to public sale, on Friday the fourteenth April next, at the late dwelling of Charles Deane, of Wm. late of A. A. county

All the personal estate of said deceased, consisting of two negroes, one white horse, cattle, hogs, and sheep, together with a parcel of household kitchen furniture, and plantation utensils. The foregoing property will be sold on a credit of six months for all sums over twenty dollars, all sums under that sum the cash to be paid; bond with approved security will be required, with interest from the day of sale. The sale to commence on the premises at 11 o'clock.

Henry O. Drury, Adm.

March 23. 37