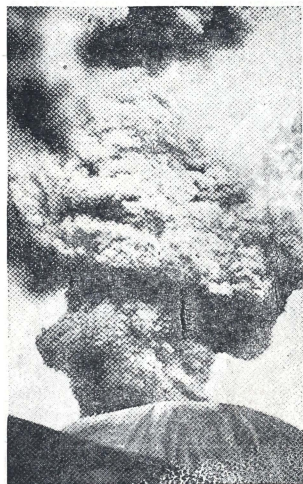


HISTORY SECTION

VESUVIUS AND THE BURIED CITIES



Vesuvius, the World's Most Famous Volcano

ACROSS the beautiful bay of Naples, less than ten miles from the city in Italy of that name, stands the volcano of Vesuvius, the most famous volcano in the world.

Mount Vesuvius is about 30 miles in circumference at the base. The height varies several hundred feet from time to time, according to the effects of successive eruptions, but it averages 4,000 feet above sea level. The top of the mountain is cut off and is about 2,000 feet across.

A cloud of dust and steam eternally wreathes its summit, for Vesuvius never

slumbers. In the photograph on this page showing Vesuvius in eruption, the dark clouds are not smoke, but are composed of steam and other gases mingled with dust and ashes thrown out of the volcano's mouth.

The region about the volcano has been densely populated for more than 20 centuries. The inhabitants at its foot cast many an anxious glance at its menacing bulk whenever the cloud seems blacker and denser than usual, for Vesuvius has taken a heavy toll of life and property through the centuries since daring man first settled in its shadow. No man knows when other villages will share the fate that overwhelmed the buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum more than 1,800 years ago.

Many volcanoes supposed to be extinct have proved to be only dormant, that is, inactive. Such was the case of Mount Vesuvius. On the side of the mountain forests grew as far up as the crater and it was apparently extinct until the great eruption in 79 A. D. which destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum. That was the first eruption of Vesuvius in historic times.

Herculaneum was buried under masses of ashes and lava, and its actual site was not discovered until 1720, when the sinking of a well brought the workers to the remains of many of its buildings.

Pompeii was more fortunate than Herculaneum, because it stood farther away from the burning mountain, and was covered not so much with the destroying lava as with ashes. The city was, however, completely hidden from sight for

more than sixteen centuries.

During the next 1,500 years, after the great eruption of A. D. 79, there were other eruptions, but none so violent. But in 1681 there was another violent eruption which destroyed 18,000 lives. Since that time Vesuvius has never been entirely quiet, and in the last century the eruptions have increased in frequency.

One of the most destructive of recent eruptions took place in 1906. Masses of red-hot rocks and ashes shot up to the height of a mile or more. Great boulders could be seen rising and falling in the mighty jet of steam and fire. Heavy explosions tore open the whole mountainside, and streams of lava bathed the volcano from base to summit in a bright red glow. Along the side of the vertical column of fire thousands of tons of cinders and small stones shot out over the villages below. For a week the black cloud kept rolling down the valley so that the darkness was unbroken. Once more Vesuvius had taken its harvest of lives.

In recent years excavations have been made so that the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum have been uncovered. Whole streets can now be seen with shops and dwellings just as they stood centuries ago. By visiting the ruins of these ancient

cities we may get an idea of their former beauty and the life of the people of those times.

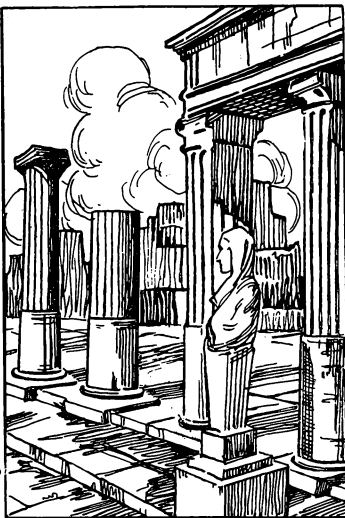
The excavations of Pompeii give a complete picture of the arrangement of the larger Roman private houses. A typical villa was divided into a front part, where strangers calling on business were received, and the private apartments of

the family found at the back of the building. The public part consisted of an open colonnaded court with small rooms leading out of it, and the private rooms were grouped around a slightly larger court. The exterior of these buildings followed the Oriental example of being plain and uninteresting, but inside there was much luxurious decoration.

In the rooms were elaborate paintings on the walls (mural paintings). Due to the preservative action of the volcanic ashes, many of the mural paintings in

the villas of the buried cities are in a remarkably fresh condition even today, although they were buried for 1800 years.

In the illustration on this page is shown a picture of a street in Pompeii. One can easily visualize the classic beauty of this city in ancient days before it was destroyed by Vesuvius, the most terrible volcano of all times.



Street in Ancient Pompeii