

VOLCANIC DISASTERS IN THE WEST INDIES

NEW YORK, June 21.—Hy Leonard, the daring young camera artist who was the first to reach Martinique after the Mont Pelee disaster and who furnished the Courier, through the Leslie syndicate, with the authentic snapshots of St. Pierre and surrounding places, returned today to New York via St. Vincent.

Although the hero of an extraordinary newspaper exploit, and the getter of the biggest pictorial scoop on the greatest news event of the year, Mr. Leonard bears his honors very meekly and is now resting at his home, 232 West 14th street, Manhattan, New York.

When asked to give a brief synopsis of his life and doings Mr. Leonard said: "You just wanted those pictures in a hurry and I went and got them. Of course there was risk, big risk, but that's nothing. Yes it was hot and choky and horrible out there, I admit. Once I had to run for my life and barely escaped the suffocating fumes of Pelee by throwing myself into a boat and rowing fast. As for that, every step taken ashore was a risk, with the ground falling in every yard or two and steam hissing up. Hot? Yes, hot as Pelee!"

"Hy" Leonard, as he is known to all his friends, was born on the banks of the Tees, in Yorkshire, England, at a place called South Bank, twenty-three years ago. His father emigrated to New York when "Hy" was a boy of nine and so most of his education was gotten in the public schools. "I was too lazy to go to school," said "Hy," "but I managed to scoop in two medals, anyhow. I suppose the boys who worked hard got none.

"At the age of sixteen I went to work under George G. White, one of the leading illustrators of his time. I was a year with him and then ran away to sea, but one trip cured me. There was too much work as a sailor boy for my blood. Then I applied for a job in the art department of the World, and oddly enough, got it. I struck out into the cartoon field and made very good money. Later I was engaged for special work by the Leslie Newspaper Syndicate. I'm still trying to avoid hard work, however, and have reached the ripe age of twenty-three without suffering from high-pressure life.

"Just how I got to Martinique first would take too much telling. I flitted in from the Barbadoes. The vessel I arrived on passed Pelee before dawn and there were no signs of eruption then. I went ashore at Fort de France first and from there proceeded in a small boat to St. Pierre.

"When I attempted to land at the ruined city I was met by a gendarme who motioned to me, warning at the same time that to land was to court death. I laughed and told him that didn't matter. I had come to take photographs. They made no further effort to stay me. My immediate objective point was Mont Pelee. If it was quiescent I determined that would be my opportunity. To the surprise of every one I announced by intention of going to the crater. It seemed to me that nothing could have been worse than staying in the city. There were charred and decomposing bodies everywhere. The place was a charnel and the smell hideous. In two or three places were funeral pyres, where the police were burning the bodies of the dead. There were no paths to tread, one having to vault from ridge to ridge at the risk of a broken leg with the first false step. Finally I emerged from the city, and following instructions, reached Morne Rouge without a scratch. Pelee was still silent. I had been told that the moment the mountain commenced to belch volumes of yellowish smoke I should be suffocated. This of course was not encouraging, but I had seen no yellow smoke yet and consequently did not fear. Just past Morne Rouge I came up with a

native. I offered him five dollars to accompany me to the crater. He shook his head and I doubled my offer, also giving him a drink from my flask. He finally pocketed the money, after nearly emptying the flask, and we trudged on over the ashes, already hardened into a solid mass by the heavy rains. The path we followed had the appearance of a cement sidewalk of the old-fashioned type. But for the native I should scarcely have been able to have accomplished the perilous, withal, somewhat easy ascent. He seemed oblivious to fear and I learned had lost all that he cared for on earth in the eruption of two days before. This man knew every inch of the ground, as he had been a guide all his life, his living having been made by escorting visitors to the island to the crater. As we went along he occasionally scooped into the ashes to find some sign by which to recognize the trail. Finally, after several hours plodding, we arrived within sight of the crater and although there was nothing but the faintest haze of smoke emerg-

dreadful desolation of that picture, showing not one building standing, discloses a fearful contrast. It was the first taken.

"Another scene which I shall never forget, was the view of Rue Queyllis, one of St. Pierre's leading streets, with a number of bodies lying in the foreground of the picture, showing exactly how the poor victims of Pelee's wrath had been struck down. The picture was taken before any attempt had been made to clear up the wreckage.

"Another scene of desolation was shown in the view of Rue Victor Hugo, which also was photographed before any clearing away had been done. This was one of the principal business centers of the city where were located many of the most important offices.

"One of the most pathetic of the views was that showing some of the poor creatures who had ventured back to the dreadful city in search of their beloved lost ones.

"I think the most striking of all, perhaps, as a human document, was my snapshot of Raoul Sartout, of whom I

able. I managed to get good snapshots of Soufriere.

"I saw the great bank of cinders, 30 to 50 feet high, under which the village of Richmond, with its 150 houses are buried. There was not a sign of the village left—merely an immense mound of ashes. In the distance were the ruins of the old Richmond mansion. The whole country was gray and desolate and a terrible contrast to the green of the rest of the island. Above all, the sullen roar of Soufriere, like the noise of a vast cataract, or the sound of a huge blast furnace.

"When we reached the Wallibou river we found it all choked up with mud, while great volumes of boiling water rushed down the river, giving off dense clouds of steam. As we tried to reach the shore the steam was spurting out of holes, some of which were not larger than one's fist, while others were as large as a man's body. I put my hand over one and it was singed by hot gas. As we made for the shore we did not know how soon the shallow earth crust might break and drop one of us through. Fortunately no catastrophe occurred and I got home safely with whole bones and the precious pictures.

"Among the newspaper men who came to Martinique and who I met before I left were W. M. Mason, representing the Publishers' Press and Scripps-McRae Press associations; and G. B. Fife, representing the New York Evening Post; J. Burton photographer, Collier's Weekly; G. B. Lucky, Les'ie's Magazine; J. Martin Miller, Press Syndicate; F. E. Huddle, New York Tribune; G. B. Greaves, New York Times; O. M. Skinner, Brooklyn Eagle; J. O. Hammitt, Brooklyn Times; A. H. Heiss, Pittsburg Dispatch, and S. R. Honey, Boston Herald.

"I brought home with me the first pictures of Soufriere in action, which I gathered on St. Vincent. I see that the tired butterflies, and those who be the first bona fide pictures published of the eruption."



(Copyright, 1902, by Henry Leonard.)

The above snapshot was made at Fort de France, Martinique. It shows Mr. Henry Leonard, special artist, correspondent and photographer after having returned from a trip through St. Pierre. Mr. Leonard secured the Martinique pictures, recently published in the Courier. His exclusive snapshot of Mt. Pelee in eruption has been pronounced one of the biggest pictorial journalistic feats of the century. The thrilling story of Mr. Leonard's Martinique experience accompanies this picture.

ing from it I determined to take a snapshot. As I fixed my camera for the operation a low rumbling sound, which seemed to pass under our feet, was heard, and a minute later flame and smoke were belched up by the volcano. I had barely time to snap the camera and fly, for I saw the dreaded yellow smoke approaching us. How we made our way back to Morne Rouge I cannot say. Terror seemed to lend wings to our feet and when at last I left my companion behind and flew for my boat it looked to me as if the yellow demon all but had me in his grasp. A few swift strokes with the oars and I was out of danger. On the following day, after a good rest up, I returned to St. Pierre in the morning and spent a busy day taking pictures, but I had no further desire to risk my life at the crater, especially as my one picture developed an excellent view of the volcano in a state of semi-eruption. "One of the first pictures I took upon my return was that of the market place of St. Pierre. To those who knew this scene of constantly changing life and color before the cataclysm, the

obtained literally the first picture at a moment when it was feared that he could never recover from the results of his entombment. He was the sole survivor.

"Another of the views that I secured was a scene at Fort de France at the time when a panic resulted from another threatened eruption of Mont Pelee and the terrified inhabitants were fleeing from the town for their lives.

"After the excitement subsided in Martinique I went to Kingston, the stories of Mt. Soufriere making me hasten thither. If I had not experienced sufficient excitement in Martinique I was destined to get it on St. Vincent. When within measurable distance of Soufriere I made a landing at one of the villages, where I left my boat and proceeded up the Wallibou valley in the direction of the volcano district. I found that at least a third of the island had been devastated and saw great jets of steam bursting through the surface in all directions, all through the back country and up the mountain side. Here and there a puff of the sulphurous smoke was vis-

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