

between August 15 and September 15, 1888, and Messrs. Blanford, Geikie, Hughes, and Topley have been nominated a committee to make the necessary arrangements.

BOTANICAL EXPLORATION OF THE CHILIAN ANDES

WE are indebted to the Kew authorities for the accompanying extract from a letter dated August 21, 1885, addressed to Sir Joseph Hooker by Dr. R. A. Philippi, the Professor of Botany at Santiago:—

"My son made in the summer during 110 days a voyage from Copiapo to the River Camarones, the actual boundary between Chili and Peru. He went first from Copiapo to Antofagasta de la Sierra (26° 5' lat., 27° 20' long., 3570 metres above the sea), where about 60 to 100 people are living, and thence (nearly always on the high table-land of the desert at an elevation of 3500 to 4200 metres) to Huasco de Tarapacá, from whence he descended to the tamarugal. The voyage extended over 8 degrees of latitude. This high table-land is nearly a single bed of trachytic lava, on which are scattered a number of extinct volcanoes, three of which are higher than Chimborazo—viz. the Llullaillaco, 6600 metres (I was, twenty-one years ago, at its west foot); the Tumiza, 6540; and the Pular, 6500 metres. There are many large salt lakes, several entirely dry. The vegetation in this easterly part of the desert is not so scanty as in the westerly, visited formerly by me, perhaps owing to a slight influence of the trade wind; and the water-places are more numerous and nearer one to the other.

"The number of species of plants brought home exceeds 400, of which half are not described. Amongst them is one *Polylepis* (without flowers), found only in one quebrada, and *Pilostyles Berterii*, a parasitic plant belonging to the same family as *Rafflesia*, found at the height of 3700 m.—of course on an *Adesmia*. The three species of ferns are: *Pellaea ternifolia*, *Cheilanthes micropterus*, and a beautiful *Cincinnatiis* which seems to be new. The most numerous family is, of course, Synanthereæ, with 94 sp.; Gramineæ has 42 (among them a new species of *Munroa*); Leguminosæ, 28–29; Verbenaceæ, 15; Solanaceæ, 28; Chenopodiaceæ, 15. Amongst these plants nine or ten must form, in my opinion, new genera. Some are very curious, as a Verbenaceæ, which grows in small hemispherical tufts and has the aspect of a Synantherea, with sessile flowers and pappus. This pappus proved to be a deeply-divided calyx with long cilia. There is another genus which I took at first sight for a *Tribulus*. I hope that my age, my health, my eyes, and my time will allow me to draw up the generic diagnosis, at least, of these plants."

KRAKATAÛ

THE publication of the first part of Verbeek's "KrakataÛ," which chiefly contained the *history* of the great eruption of 1883, had raised many expectations regarding the promised description and discussion of the *phenomena* then observed. In his completed work, which contains 25 coloured drawings and 43 large and small maps, those expectations are fully realised. Immediately after the great outburst of August, 1883, the Dutch Indian Government sent him to visit KrakataÛ and to investigate the causes and effects of this awful catastrophe, more sudden and destructive than the famous eruption of Vesuvius. The great facilities they placed at his disposal enabled him to do this in the most satisfactory manner, and the really beautiful character of his completed work reflects the greatest credit not only on the learned author, but on the zeal and public spirit of the Dutch-Indian Government, who have aided him in

making so valuable a contribution to scientific knowledge. So much interest has been taken by the general public, as well as by men of science, in this remarkable eruption, that we feel certain they also will welcome this volume, since it is lucid in style and profusely illustrated. With an expression of his gratitude to various institutions and individuals who have rendered him valuable assistance, the author gives in the preface a list of the weights and measures, together with a summary of the most recent ideas that geological science has received from the KrakataÛ eruption.

KrakataÛ itself lies on the point of intersection of three fissures or cracks in the earth's crust, and from this position is naturally exposed to volcanic disturbances. The earthquake of September 1, 1880, which damaged the lighthouse on Java's First Point, probably affected the Sunda fissure and facilitated the entrance of greater quantities of water into the volcanic furnace underlying the Straits of Sunda. Accepting the theory that volcanic eruptions are caused by steam at high pressure, we have thus the probable explanation of the terrible outburst of 1883. From the observations of earthquakes in the Indian archipelago during the year 1883, it appears that the eruption was neither preceded nor accompanied by heavy shocks. It is even far from certain that any trembling of the surface took place at the time, since the vibration of the air caused by the explosion was sufficient to shake houses and crack walls, and thus might easily have been mistaken for earthquakes. The author further treats of the ejected materials; their thickness, which, on some parts of KrakataÛ, amount to 60 metres; their size, varying from bodies of one cubic metre to the finest dust; the velocity with which they were thrown out, which must have been considerably greater than that of projectiles from the heaviest rifled ordnance; the elevation which they reached has been calculated at 50 kilometres, or nearly six times the height of Mount Everest, the highest mountain of the world, and the ashes have fallen over an immense area. From investigations made at fifty different places regarding the thickness of the fallen ashes and also the change in the depth of the sea around KrakataÛ, M. Verbeek has calculated that at least 18 cubic kilometres of matter must have been ejected. To give an illustration: imagine a box of ashes as large as Hyde Park and as high as the dome of St. Paul's, a hundred such boxes will give an idea of the mass of matter thrown out by KrakataÛ in 1883.

For three days after the eruption various ships to the westward found ashes falling on their decks; the names of these ships are given, as well as a map showing their exact position at the time. Mr. Verbeek believes that the finest particles, forced by the steam into the upper air, did not descend, but were carried westward by strong east winds, making twice the circuit of the earth and causing the phenomena observed at various places of a blue and green sun and moon. The passage of this cloud has been reported from islands and ships in the Pacific Ocean and its velocity must have been as great as that of a hurricane. After the steam and dust-cloud were dispersed over a wider area the beautiful red sunsets occurred, which were owing to the presence of such a large volume of aqueous vapour, while the blue and green colours of the celestial bodies were caused by the solid particles in the air.

The author goes on to elucidate the geology of KrakataÛ by two maps and four very instructive sections, showing its development during that number of periods. The first period was marked by the destruction of the great cone, probably 2000 metres high; during the second period the peak Rakata was formed by a lateral eruption, while in the third period two parasitic cones, Danau and Perbiewatan, were added, and these, by their successive eruptions, built up the island of KrakataÛ. In the fourth