

IV. *A Relation of the New Island thrown up near the Island of Santerini; sent to the Marquis of Ferriol, Ambassador Extraordinary of France at the Ottoman Port. Taken from the Memoirs of the History of Arts and Sciences at Trevoux, for the Month of July, 1708.*

My Lord,

THIS new *Phenomenon*, that has appear'd in our part of the World, seems to us so extraordinary and Curious, that I am perswaded, a True and Particular Relation of it will be very acceptable to your Excellency; in which I shall do my self the Honour to write at large; whatsoever I judged most remarkable and deserving your Notice.

On *Monday* the 23d of *May*, 1707, at Sun-rising, we observed between the two *Burnt Islands*, commonly call'd the *Little* and *Great Cameny*, as it were a Floating Rock; which we thought at first had been some Vessel Shipwrack'd on that Coast, and seem'd as if it would in a little time be dash'd to pieces against the *Lesser Cameny*, that was hard by: On which account some Mariners, in hopes of Booty, put out immediately to see what it was. Soon after we were amazed to hear by 'em, that it was a Shoal which began to spring up from the Bottom of the Sea; and was not as yet very plainly to be discerned. Next day (the 24th) several Persons, both Ecclesiasticks and Seculars, went out of Curiosity
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to satisfy themselves, not easily believing what the Mariners related : But they were no sooner got to the place, than their Eyes fully convinced them, that it was Matter of Fact. Some of 'em were so bold as to get a-shoar on this new Shoal, which was still moving, and sensibly increased under their Feet. They brought us back several Curiosities, and among others a kind of Oysters, very large, and of an Exquisite Taste, which they found sticking to the Rock, and raised out of the Water, as the Shoal had increased in height. Above all I observed a sort of Stone, that at first sight look'd much like Bisket, but in reality was nothing but a very fine Pumice-stone, surpassing all that I ever saw in *France*, or any other Parts of *Europe*.

Two days before the springing up of this Shoal, on the 21st, between twelve and one at Noon, there was an Earthquake over the whole Island ; which we cannot reasonably attribute to any other Cause than the rising up of this Mass of Rock : And this was the only Trouble and Fear that this New Island gave us ; for from its first appearance to the 13th or 14th of *June*, it has continually increased very sensibly, as well in bigness as height, without any noise, or giving any other disturbance or concern to any Body, than the uncertainty and expectation of what would be the Consequences of it.

This Shoal is very pleasant to look on, of a white Colour, and round Figure. The Earth that it is composed of is light, with a small Mixture of Clay. Perhaps I should be thought too extravagant, if I should affirm this New Island, according to the Report of some Learned and Skilful Persons that were upon it in the beginning of *June*, to be half a Mile in Circumference, and from 20 to 25 Foot high. Its increasing for 4 or 5 days, was not so sensible as before ; insomuch that most were perswaded, that it had intirely ceased : Every Body

dy then thought themselves safe, and that there was nothing further to be fear'd; but they were afterwards convinced of the contrary. For the Sea, already much troubled by the raising up of this Mats of Earth, appeared more troubled every day than other; not so much by reason of this Shoal lately removed, and still floating, as on account of the Mixture of a vast Quantity of different Matters, continually thrown up Night and Day from the Bottom of the Sea; so that one might easily distinguish several sorts of Minerals, by the diversity of Colours they made on the Surface of the Water; but Sulphur was in greatest abundance, insomuch that the Sea was colour'd with it about *Santerini*, to near 20 Miles distance. The excessive rolling of the Waves about the new Shoal was greater than ever; and a more than ordinary heat was sensible to any one that approach'd too near, which undoubtedly was the Cause of such Quantities of Fish being found dead on the Shoar. Every Body perceived a horrible Stench, that infected the Neighbouring Air; and which we our selves, tho' more than 3 Miles distant, often found of dangerous consequence. The boiling of the Waters, which some before doubted of, proved now too true; and instead of decreasing, grew every day considerably greater. This struck all People with a fresh fear; and changed the Resolutions of those, who were so bold before as to venture on this New Island, more out of Diversion, than any commendable Curiosity. But their fear was increased, when on *Friday July 16th* at Sun-set, they perceived between this new Island and the *Lesser Cameny*, as it were a Chain of Black Rocks, that rose up from a prodigious depth of the Sea, to the Number of 17. or 18, not very distinct from one another, but seem'd as if they would shortly unite together, and joyn themselves to this new Island, as they actually did some few days after. Next day;

day, being *Saturday*, we saw them plainer; and those whose Tops we could only see the Night before, now appeared extraordinary large. On *Sunday* we first perceived Smoak to break forth, much resembling, in thickness and colour, that of a burning Furnace; and at the same time heard certain Murmurings under Ground, which seemed to proceed from the Center of this New Island, as yet too deep in the Sea, to be plainly distinguished.

Every Body then of both Sexes were more frightened than ever, and thought of nothing, but how they should shelter themselves from the approaching Danger, and avoid the Fire that they foresaw in all likelihood would soon follow. Whole Families went for refuge to the neighbouring Islands; and others contented themselves only with changing their Habitations, and living in the open Country, thinking themselves safer there. In the mean time the Rocks abovementioned united together, and seemed already to form another Island distinct from the former. The Smoke appeared in greater abundance; and the Fire, which we so much dreaded, at last began to break forth about the 19th of *July*: It was so little at first, and of so dull a colour, that few believed it to be really so; but afterwards increasing by degrees as the Island increased, and breaking out more and more, and in different Places, all were sufficiently convinced of it.

It was no less frightful and amazing than curious, to see every Night on the top of this Mount, that Nature had lately formed, a vast number, as it were, of burning Furnaces, all of a bright Flame; in order and position not unlike those Illuminations of the *Minarets*, which the *Turks* usually make at certain times every Year. One Night at the end of *July*, about an Hour after Sun-set, as we were observing the different *Phænomena* of this New Island, there appear'd of a sudden, in the middle

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Region of the Sky, a fiery Lance, seeming to come from East to West; but it disappearing again to soon, we could not exactly observe the dimensions of it. In the mean time the Burnt Island increased prodigiously, and extended it self principally on the South and North sides. The Sea also seemed much more disturbed and loaded with Sulphur and Vitriol. The boiling of the Water was more fierce and violent: The Smoak thicker, and in greater abundance; and the Fire bigger and more frightful. But above all, a Stench that infected the whole Countrey, grew so insupportable, that Persons of the strongest Constitutions could scarce breath in it; others, that were weaker, fell into frequent Faintings; and almost every Body was seized with Vomitings. I could not then but imagine my self on Board some Man of War, where at a general Discharge of all the Guns, the confused stink of the Powder, Tar, and stench of the Ship, especially in foul Weather, often overcomes the strongest Seamen. Just such a nauseous stink we were forced to breath in, without being able any ways to avoid it, or defend our selves from it. But as we were infested with it but at times, and as the Wind brought it; so it was sometimes more in one place than another, and more or less tolerable, as the Wind fate. This ill Scent was very mischievous: It spoiled most of the Vines; and a great Smoak, that rose out of the midst of this New Island like a Mountain, joyning it self to a thick Fog, that commonly hangs over *Santerini* when the Wind is at South, burnt and destroy'd, in the beginning of *August*, in less than three hours time, all the Fruit that was ripe and ready to be gathered; especially in such Vineyards, as lay most exposed to the South. A few days after I was obliged to go to *Naxos*, so that I was absent 13 or 14 days; in which short space of time there was so great an Alteration in these two New Islands, that I scarce

scarce knew 'em again at my return ; so different they were from what I left them. The White one, that did not seem to increase any more, was now grown considerably higher ; and the Black one was much longer. Both of them, tho' different in colour, were now united together, and made but one Island, as they remain at this time. The Fire and Smoak had made new Vent-holes ; and the noise under Ground was more frequent and audible. They told me, that in my absence they heard from the midst of the Island, as it were, so many large Cannon shot off, and at the same instant saw a great quantity of Burning Stones thrown into the Air. I could scarce believe it at first, and tho' I did not look on it as altogether improbable, yet I could not persuade my self but that they had much exceeded the truth. But a few days after I was my self an Eye-Witness of so Prodigious and Frightful a Spectacle. I watched Day and Night these furious Discharges, which made the Doors and Windows of our Chambers shake, and sometimes the very best built Houses : And saw with my own Eyes, more than once, Stones all on Fire darted into the Air out of sight, and after fall again like a Bomb, and quench'd in the Sea at more than five Miles distance.

When these Discharges happen'd, which were as loud as those of a Cannon, we commonly saw immediately a great Flash of Fire like Lightning ; and after that, there sprung up very swiftly, a black and dismal Smoak, mixt with Ashes, and so prodigiously thick, that when spread in the Air, it made a thick Cloud of several Colours ; which, by degrees, dissolving it self in a fine Dust, fell like Rain on all the Neighbouring Country, and more particularly on our Island, where it was in such abundance, that the Ground was often covered with it. The Noise grew stronger, and was louder

than if six or seven Cannons had been discharged together: The Fire made it self every Day more Vent-holes, and became more dreadful. We commonly fate up the greatest part of the Night to observe it.

Every Night Nature represented as great variety of Scenes, as the Fire broke forth in different Forms; sometimes burning Ashes spread themselves in the Air, like a Plume of Feathers, which falling again on the Shoal, made it appear all of a light Fire. Other times one would think it was actually the discharging of so many Mortar-pieces, which threw intire Rocks, like so many Bombs, capable of destroying the largest Ships; tho' for the most part, these Stones were of a middle size, but in such Quantities, that I often saw this little Island all cover'd with them, and so pleasantly illuminated, that one would never be weary of looking on it.

These dreadful Discharges were less frequent at the end of *August*, but increased in *September*, were daily in *October*, and at this time are almost incessantly. 'Tis true, the Noise is not so loud; the Stones, that are cast up, are not so big, nor so many; the Boyling and Disorder of the Water is much abated; the Sea begins to recover its former Colour; the Stench, that was before insupportable, has been very little for these six Weeks. Yet the Smoak grows every day thicker, blacker, and in greater abundance: The Fire is more than ever, and seems sometimes to strike the very Sky: The Subterraneous Noise is continual, and so violent, that it can't be distinguish'd from Thunder: Dust and Ashes fall daily on this our Island. The Countryman is dejected at the Loss of his Corn, which scarce sprung out of the Ground, begins to fade already: And the Mariner, not so bold as before,

contents himself with viewing it at a distance, since the loss of a Bark of this Country, which going too near, took Fire and was burnt.

In a word, our New Island grows every Day more Curious, more Dreadful, and less Accessible: And is so far from ceasing to increase, at the Approach of Winter, as some Pretenders to Philosophy would persuade us, that we see it continually increasing on the South West side; where Nature seems as if she labour'd to make a large Port, capable of holding all manner of Ships, which may one Day render *Santorini* not so practicable as heretofore.

This, my Lord, is in substance what I thought most remarkable, in relation to this New Island, from the first beginning of it, to this 20th of *November*. I leave our Philosophers and Curious Men, to reason on it as they shall think fit; and our Geometricians to condemn me for saying nothing of its Demensions. I had rather be blamed by them, than expote my self to a just Censure, in speaking blindly of what I know nothing of, and which it is, as yet, impossible to be truly informed in. But if I may be permitted to give my Judgment, barely from Appearance, and the Common Opinion of People here, I think I should not exceed the Truth, if I affirm this New Shoal to be at present at least three Miles in Circumference, and more than from thirty five to forty Foot high. I hope in time, as this Island becomes easier of Access, we shall then find means to speak more particularly of it, and of giving your Excellency a more faithful and exact Relation.

(208)

I shall then do it with the same Pleasure, as I am at present, and shall always be, *My Lord*, with the greatest Respect,

Your Excellency's

most Humble

and most Obedient Servant,

Bourguignon.

E R R A T A.

Philosoph. Transact. Numb. 316. p. 125. l. 12. and p. 137. l. 14. for Capt. *Wine* read Capt. *Winde*.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *H. Clements* at the *Half-Moon* in *St. Paul's*
Church-yard. MDCCIX.