

enveloped in a dark pall, were lost to sight, and the stillness of the night was only broken by occasional rumblings, which served to remind one that across the few miles of plains Ngauruhoe was in the throes of an eruption.

As day dawned on Tuesday the mountains stood out in bold relief against the clear sky. Dark smoke was curling from Ngauruhoe, and being driven by the breeze to the south-east. As the morning advanced, the activity became more marked. At 9 o'clock an immense dark column shot straight up from the crater for thousands of feet, gradually breaking into rolling billows, and spreading towards the Nga-puna-a-tama Saddle and the Karioi Plains. Rolling masses and dense shafts were belched forth without cessation from the great vent, taking fantastic shapes in the air. As a rocket rushes up and scatters into myriad stars, so the great columns were thrust up thousands of feet to spread and shower down rocks and ashes. The great cloud of smoke and dust gradually darkened the western sky, and, rising over the mountain, seemed to dwarf it into insignificance. The ashes falling from this on the saddle made a weird and awe-inspiring spectacle, the bottom of the cloud seeming to extend down in streaks of varying thickness to the earth. To add to the impressiveness of the scene, columns of steam and vapour issued from fissures on the north ridge of Ruapehu, extending down to the Ngapuna Saddle. By their intermittent action these resembled geysers, and the steam was sometimes shot hundreds of feet into the air, standing out in marked contrast to the black smoke behind. Signs of activity were also apparent on the craters of Tongariro, but did not show the same life as the others. Though little rumbling was heard, Ngauruhoe belched forth its lurid clouds all Tuesday without cessation, but the general appearance at nightfall seemed to indicate that for probably many years to come there would not be such a scene of majestic grandeur.

On Wednesday and Thursday the wind changed slightly, and the snowfields of Ruapehu, which had glistened in the sun during Tuesday's eruption, were soon covered with ashes.

At the time of writing—Thursday night—the mountain is fairly quiet, though the geysers have shown fair activity throughout the day. On the south side Ngauruhoe presents a greyish appearance, though no lava-flow was noticed. The crater has been slightly altered, part of the top having been blown away. Apart from the geysers on the north slopes, where there was previously no sign of activity, Ruapehu seems to have been quiescent. Without exploration, however, it is impossible to say what changes have taken place.

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