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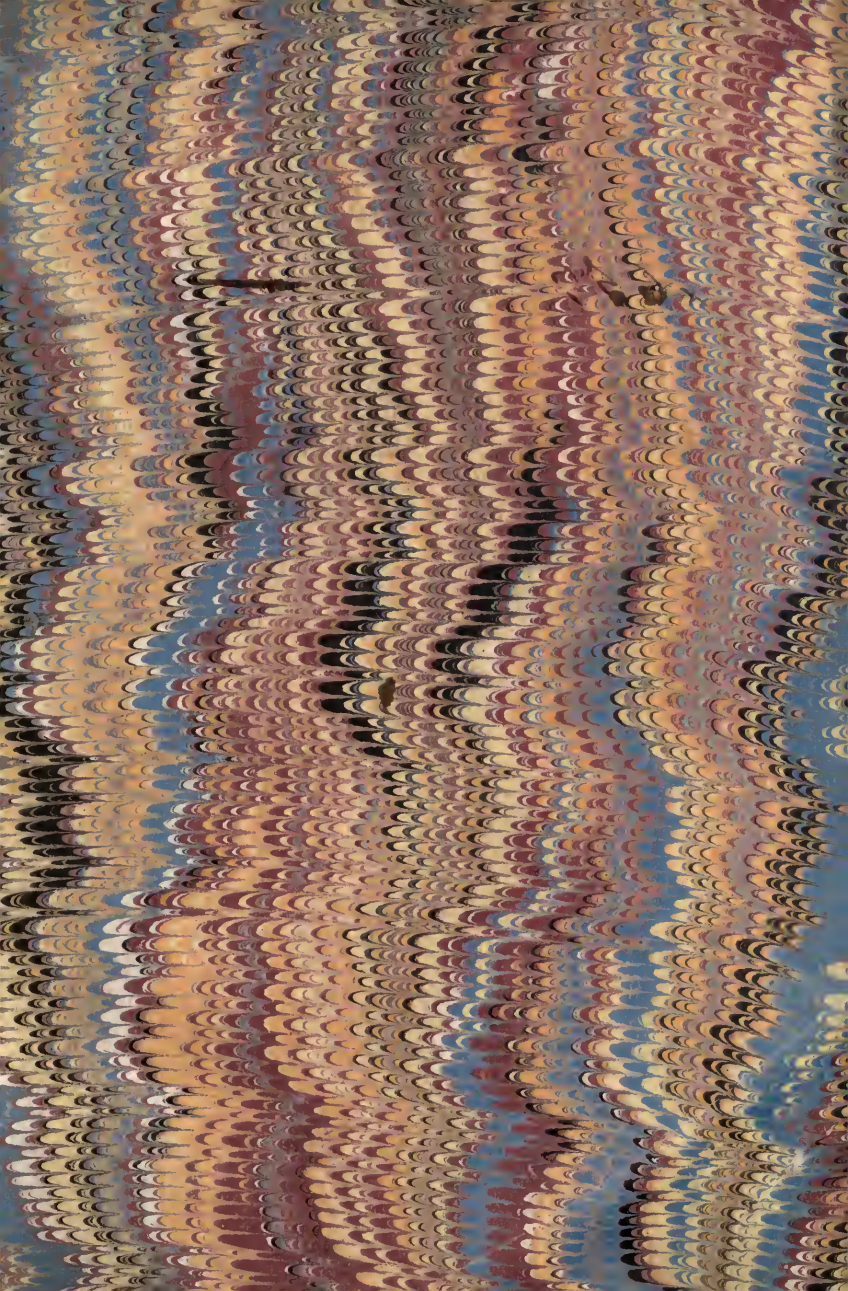
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THE
CRATER;
OR,
VULCAN'S PEAK.

A Tale of the Pacific.

BY J. FENIMORE COOPER.

"Thus arise
Races of living things, glorious in strength.
And perish, as the quickening breath of God
Fills them, or is withdrawn."—*Bryant.*

INV. 1898.

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STRINGER AND TOWNSEND

1856.

THE CRATER.

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1847, by
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PREFACE.

THE reader of this book will very naturally be disposed to ask the question, why the geographies, histories, and other works of a similar character, have never made any mention of the regions and events that compose its subject. The answer is obvious enough, and ought to satisfy every mind, however "inquiring." The fact is, that the authors of the different works to which there is any allusion, most probably never heard there were any such places as the Reef, Rancocus Island, Vulcan's Peak, the Crater, and the other islands of which so much is said in our pages. In other words, they knew nothing about them.

We shall very freely admit that, under ordinary circumstances, it would be *prima facie* evidence against the existence of any spot on the face of this earth, that the geographies took no notice of it. It will

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be remembered, however, that the time was, and that only three centuries and a half since, when the geographies did not contain a syllable about the whole of the American continent; that it is not a century since they began to describe New Zealand, New Holland, Tahiti, Oahu, and a vast number of other places, that are now constantly alluded to, even in the daily journals. Very little is said in the largest geographies, of Japan, for instance; and it may be questioned if they might not just as well be altogether silent on the subject, as for any accurate information they do convey. In a word, much as is now known of the globe, a great deal still remains to be told, and we do not see why the "inquiring mind" should not seek for information in our pages, as well as in some that are ushered in to public notice by a flourish of literary trumpets, that are blown by presidents, vice-presidents and secretaries of various learned bodies.

One thing we shall ever maintain, and that in the face of all who may be disposed to underrate the value of our labours, which is this:—there is not a word in these volumes which we now lay before the reader, *as grave matter of fact*, that is not entitled to the most implicit credit. We scorn deception. Lest, however, some cavillers may be found, we will present a few of those reasons which occur to our mind, on the spur of the moment, as tending to show that everything related here *might* be just as true as Cook's voyages

themselves. In the first place, this earth is large, and has sufficient surface to contain, not only all the islands mentioned in our pages, but a great many more. Something is established when the possibility of any hypothetical point is placed beyond dispute. Then, not one half as much was known of the islands of the Pacific, at the close of the last, and at the commencement of the present century, as is known to-day. In such a dearth of precise information, it may very well have happened that many things occurred touching which we have not said even one word. Again, it should never be forgotten that generations were born, lived their time, died, and have been forgotten, among those remote groups, about which no civilized man ever has, or ever will hear anything. If such be admitted to be the facts, why may not *all* that is here related have happened, and equally escape the knowledge of the rest of the civilized world? During the wars of the French revolution, trifling events attracted but little of the general attention, and we are not to think of interests of this nature, in that day, as one would think of them now.

Whatever may be thought of the authenticity of its incidents, we hope this book will be found not to be totally without a moral. Truth is not absolutely necessary to the illustration of a principle; the imaginary sometimes doing that office quite as effectually as the actual. The reader may next wish to know why the won-

derful events related in these volumes have so long been hidden from the world. In answer to this we would ask if any one can tell how many thousands of years the waters have tumbled down the cliffs at Niagara, or why it was that civilized men heard of the existence of this wonderful cataract so lately as only three centuries since. The fact is, there must be a beginning to everything; and now there is a beginning to the world's knowing the history of Vulcan's Peak, and the Crater. Lest the reader, however, should feel disposed to reproach the past age with having been negligent in its collection of historical and geological incidents, we would again remind him of the magnitude of the events that so naturally occupied its attention. It is scarcely possible, for instance, for one who did not live forty years ago to have any notion how completely the world was engaged in wondering at Napoleon and his marvellous career, which last contained even more extraordinary features than anything related here; though certainly of a very different character. All wondering, for near a quarter of a century, was monopolized by the French Revolution and its consequences.

There are a few explanations, however, which are of a very humble nature compared with the principal events of our history, but which may as well be given here. The Woolston family still exists in Pennsylvania, and that, by the way, is something towards cor-

roborating the truth of our narrative. Its most distinguished member is recently dead, and his journal has been the authority for most of the truths here related. He died at a good old age, having seen his three-score years and ten, leaving behind him, in addition to a very ample estate, not only a good character, which means neither more nor less than what "the neighbours," amid their ignorance, envy, love of detraction, jealousy and other similar qualities, might think proper to say of him, but the odour of a well-spent life, in which he struggled hard to live more in favour with God, than in favour with man. It was remarked in him, for the last forty years of his life, or after his return to Bucks, that he regarded all popular demonstrations with distaste, and, as some of his enemies pretended, with contempt. Nevertheless, he strictly acquitted himself of all his public duties, and never neglected to vote. It is believed that his hopes for the future, meaning in a social and earthly sense, were not very vivid, and he was often heard to repeat that warning text of Scripture which tells us, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

The faithful, and once lovely partner of this principal personage of our history is also dead. It would seem that it was not intended they should be long asunder. But their time was come, and they might almost be said to have departed in company. The same is true of Friends Robert and Martha, who have

also filled their time, and gone hence, it is to be hoped to a better world. Some few of the younger persons of our drama still exist, but it has been remarked of them, that they avoid conversing of the events of their younger days. Youth is the season of hope, and hope disappointed has little to induce us to dwell on its deceptive pictures.

If those who now live in this republic, can see any grounds for a timely warning in the events here recorded, it may happen that the mercy of a divine Creator may still preserve that which he has hitherto cherished and protected.

It remains only to say that we have endeavoured to imitate the simplicity of Captain Woolston's journal, in writing this book, and should any homeliness of style be discovered, we trust it will be imputed to that circumstance.

THE CRATER.

CHAPTER I.

"'T was a commodity lay fretting by you ;
'T will bring you gain, or perish on the seas."

Taming of the Shrew.

THERE is nothing in which American Liberty, not always as much restrained as it might be, has manifested a more decided tendency to run riot, than in the use of names. As for Christian names, the Heathen Mythology, the Bible, Ancient History, and all the classics, have long since been exhausted, and the organ of invention has been at work with an exuberance of imagination that is really wonderful for such a matter-of-fact people. Whence all the strange sounds have been derived which have thus been pressed into the service of this human nomenclature, it would puzzle the most ingenious philologist to say: The days of the Kates, and Dollys, and Pattys, and Bettys, have passed away, and in their stead we hear of Lowinys, and Orchistrys, Philenys, Alminys, Cythérys, Sarahlettys, Amindys, Marindys, &c. &c. &c. All these last appellations terminate properly with an a, but this unfortunate vowel, when a final letter, being popularly pronounced like y, we have adapted our spelling to the sound, which produces a complete bathos to all these flights in taste.

The hero of this narrative was born fully sixty years since, and happily before the rage for modern appellations, though he just escaped being named after another system which we cannot say we altogether admire; that of using a family, for a christian name. This business of names is a sort of science in itself and we do believe that

it is less understood and less attended to in this country than in almost all others. When a Spaniard writes his name as Juan de Castro y* Muños, we know that his father belonged to the family of Castro and his mother to that of Muños. The French, and Italian, and Russian woman, &c., writes on her card Madame this or that, *born* so and so; all which tells the whole history of her individuality. Many French women, in signing their names, prefix those of their own family to those of their husbands, a sensible and simple usage that we are glad to see is beginning to obtain among ourselves. The records on tomb-stones, too, might be made much more clear and useful than they now are, by stating distinctly who the party was, on both sides of the house, or by father and mother; and each married woman ought to be commemorated in some such fashion as this: "Here lies Jane Smith, wife of John Jones," &c., or, "Jane, daughter of Thomas Smith and wife of John Jones." We believe that, in some countries, a woman's name is not properly considered to be changed by marriage, but she becomes a Mrs. only in connection with the name of her husband. Thus Jane Smith becomes Mrs. *John* Jones, but not Mrs. Jane Jones. It is on this idea we suppose that our ancestors the English—every Englishman, as a matter of course, being every American's ancestor—thus it is, we suppose, therefore, that our ancestors, who pay so much more attention to such matters than we do ourselves, in their table of courtesy, call the wife of Lord John Russell, Lady *John*, and not Lady—whatever her christian name may happen to be. We suppose, moreover, it is on this principle that Mrs. General This, Mrs. Dr. That, and Mrs. Senator T'other, are as inaccurate as they are notoriously vulgar.

Mark Woolston came from a part of this great republic where the names are still as simple, unpretending, and as good Saxon English, as in the county of Kent itself. He was born in the little town of Bristol, Bucks county, Pennsylvania. This is a portion of the country that, Heaven

* Some few of our readers may require to be told that, in Spanish, *y*, pronounced as *e*, is the simple conjunction "and;" thus this name is de Castro *and* Muños.

be praised! still retains some of the good old-fashioned directness and simplicity. Bucks is full of Jacks, and Bens, and Dicks, and we question if there is such a creature, of native growth, in all that region, as an Ithusy, or a Seneky, or a Dianthy, or an Antonizetty, or a Deidamy.* The Woolstons, in particular, were a plain family, and very unpretending in their external appearance, but of solid and highly respectable habits around the domestic hearth. Knowing perfectly how to spell, they never dreamed any one would suspect them of ignorance. They called themselves as their forefathers were called, that is to say, Wooster, or just as Worcester is pronounced; though a Yankee schoolmaster tried for a whole summer to persuade our hero, when a child, that he ought to be styled Wool-ston. This had no effect on Mark, who went on talking of his uncles and aunts, "Josy Wooster," and "Tommy Wooster," and "Peggy Wooster," precisely as if a New England academy did not exist on earth; or as if Webster had not actually put Johnson under his feet!

The father of Mark Woolston (or Wooster) was a physician, and, for the country and age, was a well-educated and skilful man. Mark was born in 1777, just seventy years since, and only ten days before the surrender of Burgoyne. A good deal of attention was paid to his instruction, and fortunately for himself, his servitude under the eastern pedagogue was of very short duration, and Mark continued to speak the English language as his fathers had spoken it before him. The difference on the score of language, between Pennsylvania and New Jersey and Maryland, always keeping in the counties that were not settled by Germans or Irish, and the New England states, and *through* them, New York, is really so obvious as to deserve a passing word. In the states first named, taverns, for instance, are still called the Dun Cow, the Indian Queen, or the Anchor; whereas such a thing would be hard to find, at this day, among the six millions of

* Absurd and forced as these strange appellations may appear, they are all genuine. The writer has collected a long list of such names from real life, which he may one day publish—Orchistra, Philena, and Almina are among them. To all the names ending in a, it must be remembered that the sound of a final y is given.

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