



## What Are You Reading?

---



By Eleanor Rodgerson, MD

KRAKATOA, Simon Winchester, Harper Collins, Publishers. ISBN: 0066212855

GOD'S SECRETARIES, Adam Nicolson, Harper Collins Publishers. ISBN: 0060185163

"What are you reading these days?" he asked.

What am I reading? I considered. A little of this, a little of that - newspapers, general health and its advice. For relief, the mysteries, both fanciful and true. But, when it comes down to real satisfaction, there is nothing like a good book, well written, full of solid fact.

What did I know about the earth that supports us, tolerates us, keeps us happy? By chance, I was given KRAKATOA and I was absorbed from the first words to the last, even though I knew how it would all turn out.

Krakatoa was, and is, an island that developed through the centuries in Indonesia. It erupted so catastrophically in 1883 that it was heard 3000 miles away, and thousands of Indonesian natives and Dutch settlers drowned in its tidal waves. The author begins its history before tectonic plates were proposed and before variations in flora and fauna were recognized on different parts of the earth, and he moves on to the present. The edges of the tectonic plates press against each other, volcanoes are formed; every so often something has to give and an eruption occurs.

Nobody, particularly Dutch settlers gathering up spices for export to Europe, paid much attention to the island of Krakatoa, bubbling and smoking, but after the big eruption, not only was the country devastated, but the economy and politics were never the same.

Dutch masters lost their influence and Islam grew. The Muslims had foretold great catastrophes and, lo and behold, they came to pass. Hundreds of natives were converted and Indonesia became a Muslim country.

The landscape was modified and a "child" of the original Krakatoa bubbles and smokes today and its pointed cone grows five inches a week. Its renewal of shrubs and trees and animal life provides ongoing study for scientists everywhere.

GOD'S SECRETARIES, "The Making of the King James Bible," received an enticing review and I picked it up. My parents were brought up on the King James Bible and I often heard it read - beautiful prose that lent itself to hymns sung in the early churches without musical instruments.

What was remarkable about this translation from earlier Bibles was that it occurred in an era of luxury and love of wealth and pleasure. But King James wanted one Bible for all the churches, one that would satisfy the bishops as well as the moderate Puritans and the strict Presbyterians. He aimed for a Bible they could all live by. The language must be beautiful, with rhythm..

Five companies of translators were chosen, all men who had taken holy orders, all ambitious, and, fortunately, real scholars. The project took several years. One of King James' rules specified that after each company had translated its assigned books of the Bible, notes should be compared with other companies and disagreements ironed out. The first printings were failures, full of errors, and not popular. Further revisions were necessary before general acceptance.

GOD'S SECRETARIES includes a history of the England's Jacobean period and characterizes the men who bowed to King James' wishes. Radical Puritans were a small part of the problems and the separation of the group helped colonize America.

That was my current reading.

ebr8809@aol.com

Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society  
5380 Elvas Avenue #100 • Sacramento, CA 95819  
916.452.2671 PH • 916.452.2690 FX • Email: info@ssvms.org

Copyright © 2000-2008 Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society - All Right's Reserved