

THE GREAT CALAMITY.

Further Details of the Johnstown Horror.

Terrible Scenes in the Valley of Death—Thousands of Bodies Buried in the Debris of the Ruined City—A Pestilence Feared From the Stench of Decomposing Bodies.

JOHNSTOWN, Pa., June 4.—Death, ruin and desolation are but meagre words as applied to Johnstown proper. Weeping men, women and children are at all places looking for their dead. From Kerasville to New Florence, bodies are being picked out every few minutes. The first tour that has been made through the southeast end of the town was made Monday morning. The school house in the southeast part of the town is now a morgue and in it are not less than 250 bodies, most of whom are unidentified. The street at the foot of the hill is patrolled by citizens with loaded muskets. Without a pass from General Hastings it is impossible to get to the morgue. About 500 men are working here, clearing away the debris in order to make a wagon road for the bodies to be hauled away from the morgue. In front of the school house is posted a list of the dead.

In this part of the town is located the Irish Catholic church and convent. A remarkable story is told about these sisters. The mother of the convent saw the wave coming, which she says was mountain high. She at once called all the sisters into the chapel. Here the sisters began to pray as they possibly never prayed before for protection from the water. When the water struck the building it shattered the entire structure and every room except the one where the sisters knelt in prayer.

Since ten o'clock Sunday night the fire engines have constantly played on the burning ruins. At times the fire seems almost extinguished, but still flames suddenly break out afresh in some new quarter. The sensation of the day was the united monstrosity of the physicians against the extinguishment of the burning wreck. They maintain that hundreds if not thousands of lifeless and decaying bodies lie beneath this mass of burning ruins. "It would be better," they say, "to permit nature's greatest scavenger—the flames—to pursue his work unimpeded than to further decay the horde of putrefying bodies that lie beneath this debris. There can be but one result. Days will elapse before the debris can be sufficiently removed to permit the recovery of these bodies, and long ere that every corpse will be a putrid mass, yielding forth those frightful emanations of decaying human flesh that can give but one result—the dreadful typhus. Every battle field has demonstrated the necessity of the hasty interment of decaying bodies, and the stench that already arises is a foreboding of the impending danger. Burn the wreck!"

A loud cry of indignation arose from the lips of the vast multitude and the warnings of science were lost in the eager demands of those who sought the remains of friends. The hose was again turned upon the hissing mass and rapidly the flames yielded to the water. It is almost impossible to conceive the extent of these smoking ruins. An area of eight or ten acres above the dam is covered to a depth of forty feet with shattered houses, borne from the resident center of Johnstown. In each of these houses it is estimated there were from one to twenty-five people. This is accepted as data upon which to estimate the number that perished on this spot, and if the data be correct the bodies that lie beneath these ruins must number hundreds, if not thousands.

JOHNSTOWN, Pa., June 4.—About eleven p. m. of Thursday, May 30, the storm burst upon the city of Johnstown and continued until 11:30 a. m. Friday. At eight a. m. the torrent began to pour into the city from the creeks and rivers. At ten a. m. there was no outlet for the people. The first message from the lake at South Fork was received at ten a. m. Friday, that the dam was weakening. But the people, or the few who heard the report, laughed to scorn this message, saying they had heard such news before. The second came at 11:30 a. m. It was to the effect that the dam was likely to burst at any moment. At 2:30 the final message was received, advising the people to flee to the mountains for their lives, as the dam must surely burst within the hour.

The messages were held by a few officials about the railroad, who neglected to sound the alarm until it was too late. At that time the water had reached the second story of some of the dwellings in the lower part of the city. All bridges had been swept away by the avalanche of water pouring through the city. The warnings, which were received in ample time for all to have escaped, were sneered at and cast aside as being an old story. At 3:30 the whistles and bells gave warning that the dam had broken, but then it was too late. There was a roaring sound, and before the people could realize the danger the water was upon them in a mass, carrying every thing before it. Had they taken the warning in the morning from the messages received, thousands of lives would have been saved.

Yesterday a corn patch of about an acre in extent at Nineveh was dug over by a volunteer force and 138 corpses were uncovered. The manner in which the ghastly find was made was purely accidental. A man walking over the field kicked a clump of gariand; overturned it and uncovered a woman's face. This indicated a rich find and the people around were called to assist, with the results above stated. This increases the list of dead at Nineveh to 281. The dead were found under about four feet of alluvial deposit.

PITTSBURGH, June 4.—There have been between 4,000 and 5,000 coffins sent or ordered to be sent from Pittsburgh. Of these 2,300 were sent yesterday morning. At noon an order was given for 2,000 more. The relief committee has received a telegram from the New York and Brooklyn Casket Company offering two car loads of caskets and all the help necessary to handle them. Only the caskets are being sent to Johnstown, as the force of undertakers has no time to handle rough boxes. Another firm has shipped 400 caskets and 500 shrouds. The statement that there is a coffin famine is untrue. Two car loads of caskets shipped from Cincinnati were sent to Johnstown on the Baltimore and Ohio road yesterday.

The secretary of the South Fork Fishing Club stated yesterday that the club had not sold an indemnity bond and as complaints have been made about the dam's safety. HASTINGS, Pa., June 4.—A message was received at the Pennsylvania railroad station at this point yesterday, from Williamsport stating that a meeting had been held in that city during the afternoon at which the following was authorized to be issued to the public: "The city of Williamsport has been sorely stricken by the most severe flood ever known in the State of Pennsylvania. All have suffered great loss. Large numbers of our citizens are wholly destitute and suffering for the necessities of life. Those of our people able to do so are giving what they can, but are unable to furnish the relief needed. We appeal to a generous public in the name of God to help us. Let every thing be done to the aid of Williamsport."

Governor Beaver has issued a proclamation, in which he says: "The most conservative estimates place the loss of life at 5,000 human beings and property at \$25,000,000. Shoes and clothing of all sorts for men, women and children are greatly needed. Other localities have suffered to some extent in the same way, but not in the same degree. Late advice would seem to indicate great losses of life and destruction of property along the west branch of the Susquehanna and in localities from which we can get no definite information."

JOHNSTOWN, Pa., June 5.—A large force of workmen is now engaged for the first time in the work of systematically rescuing the bodies from among the ruins at the railroad bridge. The fires are nearly extinguished, and unless they break out again the work will progress rapidly. The bodies taken from the ruins are horrible objects. Recognition is impossible on account of the horrible manner in which the flames have mutilated them. The smell of putrefying and burned flesh is terrible and several of the workmen have already been compelled to leave their work on account of sickness. With this condition of affairs taken into consideration, together with the fact that work on the immense quantity of debris has just begun, the weather growing warmer and a week or more must elapse before the stupendous task is completed, the awful dangers of an epidemic and horrors of the situation are not pleasant to contemplate.

The harrowing scenes which have been identified with the morgue still continue there and grow, if any thing, more intense as the days go on. In the flickering rays of light which emanated from dim and flickering lanterns Monday night the figures of the men who were doing their all to get the remains of the dead in condition for identification flitted rapidly to and fro attending to their weird and sad duties. The scene does not change materially, although many of the actors who have played in it have played the last act, but instead of the curtains being dropped the awful tragedy continues, the same scenes being continuously re-enacted by different people. Eighteen bodies were taken away Monday night by firemen.

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Delay is no longer possible. The decomposition of corpses will inevitably breed pestilence if longer exposed to the air. At the first break of dawn Tuesday morning orders were issued to push preparations for the gigantic burial with all possible speed. Where there is no reasonable hope for identification the bodies will be buried at once. The most definite account which has yet been received concerning the condition of the villages along the Conemaugh to Stony Creek and South Fork was given by the members of a relief committee from Alliance, O. Prof. R. E. Hudson, one of the members, said: "The scenes along the upper river are so horrifying that the mere narration would nauseate one. We discovered 138 bodies along the bed of Stony Creek, lying in all sorts of positions and showing the most desperate wounds. Nearly all the corpses were of women and children. The men seemed to have been at work and to have regarded the warning. The women and children were totally unaware of the gravity of the on-coming flood. There were quite twice as many bodies lying between Johnstown and South Fork as at any other place, save the Johnstown railroad bridge."

PITTSBURGH, June 5.—It appears that each passing hour but adds additional horrors and dangers to the catastrophe. Not only has the flood swept from the face of the earth thousands of people and millions of treasure, but the destroyed now threaten the Allegheny and the survivors from Pittsburgh to the scene of the disaster some on the shore, many in the eddies and pools, others lodged against the driftwood or buried in the mud and sand, lie hundreds of human bodies and dead animals. In addition to this can be counted the disease-breeding matter from cesspools, etc.

Pittsburgh's water supply comes from the washings from the infected district, creating a new danger in the way of an epidemic. Steps have been taken to avoid this. The committee at Johnstown has telegraphed to Washington for a sanitary corps, and the State Board of Health has telegraphed orders for a posse to commence clearing the river at once. Citizens whom necessity compels to use the water have been urged to do so with every precaution. A small steamer started from this city yesterday to explore the Allegheny river as far as the mouth of the Kiskiminnis. From that point the search will be continued in rowboats.

A five-pound can of dynamite was exploded yesterday among the wreckage at the second pier of the west end of the stone bridge. Beyond a terrific report it failed to dislodge any of the debris. Lieutenant Liggett, commanding a squad of one of the companies of the Fifth Regiment, yesterday placed guards all over the burning bridge above the bridge, and gave orders to shoot all persons not working who would not keep off the wreckage.

It is now definitely settled that at least twenty and perhaps forty persons were lost on the two sections of the day express that left Pittsburgh at eight a. m. Friday, and the accommodation train that was about to leave Johnstown that afternoon. There have been numerous and conflicting reports about how many trains were caught in the flood, but from most reliable sources it has been ascertained that three trains were caught in the water.

Relieved communication with the outside world was established shortly before noon yesterday, the first relief train passing over the bridge across the temporary trestle and track up the incline to the Johnstown depot. The train was loaded with thousands of pounds of assorted provisions and 500 caskets. The large dry goods store of P. A. Coburn was the only store left from the flood. It is said to have had \$20,000 worth of stock on hand, but have it all away to the flood and ruin. The officers yesterday reported upon the situation. A young man, who was a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard, was killed by a falling piece of debris. He was killed by a falling piece of debris. He was killed by a falling piece of debris.

From this place to Conemaugh the whole region along the river is cleaned out. At Conemaugh the flat portion of the town was carried away, only a small part of the place being saved. At this place, where the round house was, all that can be seen is a stinking deep in the sand. At Woodvale nothing was left but a part of the old wooden mill. The Cambria barbed wire mill at this place is completely wiped out. The Atlantic express was carried up against the mountains, and the Johnstown express is at Sonoma station. The New York and Chicago express is laid up at Wilmore station. The special locomotive and car which left Conemaugh are safe. Some of the cars were badly burned.

Tuesday was the day set aside by the citizens' committee for the burying of all the unidentified dead that have been lying in the morgue since Sunday. At ten o'clock in the morning the men who were in charge of the burying started to work and were busy all day. There were no pathetic scenes at these burials. The men hired to do the work seemed to do it just as a matter of business. A large detachment of men arrived from Pittsburgh during the day and they were immediately put to work digging graves. Altogether about 500 bodies were taken to the different cemeteries yesterday morning.

At 1:30 o'clock Tuesday afternoon bodies were being taken from the ruins at the rate of one every five minutes. The supply of coffins on the west side of the bridge run out and the corpses had to be laid on the ground. An extension of the coffin is expected from Pittsburgh, and if they do not arrive soon the work of rescuing the bodies from the burning ruins will have to be stopped, as the stench arising from the place is terrible.

While the total loss of life at Johnstown and the surrounding boroughs of Cambria, Morelandville, Kerasville and Conemaugh will never be known, yet it is safe to say that no being made to ascertain it within a reasonably fair limit. This is being done through a bureau of registration, which was established Monday. Twenty-eight agencies have been established within the flooded districts, and all survivors have been notified to register themselves and their families at once. At noon 9,000 persons had registered. There were 30,000 people residing in Johnstown and the boroughs named before the terrible catastrophe.

When the work of registration is finished, which may be to-night, then it will be known how many persons are missing. The work is very carefully and thoroughly done, special care being taken to prevent duplications. Superintendent Morgan, of the Cambria Iron Company, who is regarded as an exceptionally level headed man, returned yesterday from a tour of the entire flooded district. He declared that only about 15,000 persons are alive where 25,000 lived and had their being before the flood.

Adjutant General Hastings maintains that the death list may not exceed 8,000, and of this number he thinks 3,000 bodies will never be recovered. Mr. McConaughy, the chief of the bureau of registration, says he is convinced that the number who perished is fully 10,000 or more.

SOUTH FORK, Pa., June 5.—It was John G. Parke, an excellent civil engineer of Philadelphia, who first saw the danger that threatened the valley by the bursting of the dam. Early Friday morning he discovered that the waters would have to have an additional outlet or the dam would give way. Hastily securing a force of thirty Italians he set to work to prepare another sluice. In half an hour his purpose had been accomplished, but still the water continued to rise. Giving orders to his men to cut another outlet, Mr. Parke himself remained at the sluice and broke neck speed to warn the village below. As he rode he warned the people on every hand of their danger. Soon hundreds of families were fleeing to the hills for safety. Reaching South Fork station, he telegraphed the warning to Johnstown. Some headed the warning; others laughed at it.

JOHNSTOWN, Pa., June 6.—In the midst of this scene of death and desolation, a relentless Providence seems to be exerting a subduing influence. Six days have elapsed since the great disaster, and the temperature still remains low and chilly in the Conemaugh valley. When it is remembered that in the ordinary June weather of this locality from two to three days are sufficient to bring an unattended body to a degree of decay and putrefaction that would render it almost impossible to prevent the spread of disease throughout the valley, the inestimable benefits of this cool weather are almost beyond appreciation. The emanations from the half mile of debris above the bridge are more offensive than Tuesday, and should this cool weather continue a few days longer it is possible that hundreds of bodies may yet be recovered from the wreck in such a state of preservation as to render identification possible. Many hundreds of victims, however, will be roasted and charred into such shapeless masses as to preclude all chance of recognition by their nearest relatives.

The work of clearing up the wreck and recovering the bodies is now being conducted most systematically. Over 900 men are at work in the various portions of the valley and each gang of twenty men is directed by a foreman who is under orders from general headquarters. As the rubbish is gone over and the boxes and scattered articles of value recovered, the debris is piled up in one high mass and the torch applied. In this way the valley is rapidly assuming a less devastated condition. In twenty-four hours more every mass of rubbish will probably have been searched, and the investigations will be confined to the smoking wreck above Johnstown bridge.

The first body taken from the ruins yesterday was that of a boy, who was found in the debris near the bridge. He was badly bruised and burned. The remains were taken to the undertaking rooms at the Pennsylvania railroad station, where they were identified as those of Willie Davis. The boy's mother has been making a tour of the different morgues for the past few days and was just going through the undertaking rooms when she saw the remains of her boy brought in. She ran up and down the stairs, and seemed to have lost her mind. She stated that she had lost her husband and six children in the flood and that this was the first one of the family that had been recovered. She said she had not slept a wink since Saturday, and had visited the different morgues at least 100 times and was almost crazy from the sights she had witnessed.

During the work of removing the rubbish from the Methodist Episcopal church a man and his wife were found clamped so tightly in each other's arms that it was found necessary to bury them together. Just as the flood struck the city a wedding was going on, and the principals were drowned just as the ceremony was completed. The minister married, together with nearly all the wedding party, and the bride and groom were found dead. Two hundred and thirty-six bodies were found Wednesday, 100 of which the

forty have been identified. This swells the list to 3,113 bodies.

In the town of Conemaugh there are only thirty-eight persons positively known to have perished.

The mill-dollars is how some of the Pennsylvania railroad officials now at this place figure the loss and damage to their property. Through trains will not be run for three weeks at least. The damage at East Conemaugh station will run into the millions. Further up, where the railroad crossed the river diagonally on a fine iron bridge, not even a suggestion remains to show that there ever was a bridge there, nor is there a particle of road-bed, rails or ties remaining for three-fourths of a mile. From there for a distance of a mile the ballast was washed away and the track badly twisted. The viaduct at South Fork, having a span of eighty feet and supposed to be one of the strongest in the country, has entirely disappeared. The Duncan bridge, a large iron structure, is also destroyed.

A large number of bodies were buried in Grandview Cemetery yesterday. Kerasville has been overlooked in the great rush and excitement, and the 3,000 people at that place were in a half-famished condition until yesterday, when a supply was established and their wants supplied. The stock of burial caskets at Kerasville has become exhausted and necessity has compelled many bodies to be placed in the ground with no other protection from the earth than a winding sheet and a few loose boards laid over them in the graves. The list of unidentified recovered from Kerasville is very small. Fifty diggers were busy excavating and filling the graves in Grandview Cemetery yesterday.

W. H. Devore has been given charge of the impromptu embalming establishment in the Pennsylvania railroad station by Benjamin Lee, secretary of the State Board of Health. The best estimates on the loss of life, based on the registry of living and the official poll, put it at 15,000. The drift of opinion among intelligent men, physicians, engineers and railroad men is that from 1,000 to 1,500 bodies will never be heard from.

An eye-witness of the horrible scene in and about the stone bridge of the railroad during Friday night and Saturday states that nothing in art or literature can half delineate the horrors of that night after the ruins had taken fire. Dore's wonderful imagination would be at fault were it to attempt to depicting so fearful a scene. The accumulation of horrors is this showed. Low Johnstown, are that there is plenty to eat but a lack of tents, blankets and other comforts. Altogether seventy dead bodies were taken out Tuesday near this point. The work of removing the debris is being pushed as rapidly as possible. The majority of arrests made thus far have been for petty offenses, such as stealing from private houses, and suspicious characters residing there. There is no doubt, however, in spite of all precautions, but that the bodies of the dead have been mutilated by ruffians to remove rings and other valuables.

The Fourteenth Regiment, reinforced Wednesday until it is now 600 strong, is still camped in freight cars beyond the depot opposite the lake city proper. Space is rapidly being cleared for the tents, however, near the ruins of the Catholic church, which was on fire when the dam broke. Early yesterday morning the regiment went into service. Company F was detailed to Cambria City, where the element of ruffianism, meeting that of desperation, foreshadowed a storm. During the day many people of questionable character were escorted out of the city limits.

From Johnstown up the valley easy communication has been opened as far as Conemaugh, two miles, and it is possible for any one here to readily behold a sight never before seen in this world, and which no one who does not see it himself will never believe it really exist. It is described here as well as words can describe it, but merely as a duty to history and not with the idea that any one who can not look at it will ever think it true. Every one has seen the light iron beam shafts and rods in a factory lying in a twisted, broken and criss-cross shape after a fire has destroyed the factory. In the gap above Johnstown the water has picked up a four-track railroad covered with trains—freight and passenger—and with machine shops, a round house and other heavy buildings with heavy contents and has torn the track to pieces, twisted, turned and crossed it as fire never could. It has tossed huge freight locomotives like barrels, and cars like packing boxes, torn them to pieces and scattered them over miles of territory. It has in one place put a stream of water a block wide between the tracks, and in another place it has broken up a four-track railroad covered with trains—freight and passenger—and with machine shops, a round house and other heavy buildings with heavy contents and has torn the track to pieces, twisted, turned and crossed it as fire never could. It has tossed huge freight locomotives like barrels, and cars like packing boxes, torn them to pieces and scattered them over miles of territory. It has in one place put a stream of water a block wide between the tracks, and in another place it has broken up a four-track railroad covered with trains—freight and passenger—and with machine shops, a round house and other heavy buildings with heavy contents and has torn the track to pieces, twisted, turned and crossed it as fire never could. 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