

THE RAILROAD DISASTER.

Scenes and Incidents of the
Terrible Wreck at Chats-
worth, Illinois.

Miraculous Escapes and Awful
Experiences of Surviving
Passengers.

Plundering the Dead—The Rail-
road Company Bitterly
Censured.

At the Scene of the Wreck.

A close inspection of the wreck causes one to wonder how a single person escaped death. The momentum of the train must have been appalling. The cars not only telescoped but in some cases were crushed down into the earth. On the flooring of one car the bulkhead of the rear car had torn the boards up for a distance of ten feet. Iron work had been torn and twisted to a formless mass, and chairs, partitions, and stoves crushed into fragments. It



was as if a cyclone had lifted the train up bodily, whirled it round with resistless force, and then dashed it to the earth in a chaotic heap.

The Company Blamed.

On all sides, too, the railroad officials are blamed for the accident. It is charged that the inspection of the road was neglected, and this in face of the fact that it was about to send a train of unusual length and weight over the line. People think that the officials should not have been content with the ordinary and regular inspection of the track and its supports. Knowing that hundreds of souls were about to go over its line in one long train it is argued that a more than usually careful investigation of the track should have been made. Again, the company is charged with almost criminal heedlessness and recklessness in allowing a train of such length to go over the line loaded to its full capacity with human beings.

A Chicago Man's Thrilling Experience.

Thomas Trimm, a Chicago commercial traveler, tells the following story: "I was sitting on the coal-box in the rear of the fifth coach back of the baggage-car, and the first warning I had of the accident was a cracking sound from the front and realized at once that there was trouble. In a moment the car I was in began to sink and I jumped for the strap that holds the bell-cord, but missed it; and at that moment the car was telescoped. The lights went out, and instantly I found myself wedged in as in a vise between the door of the car at my back and car-seats, irons, beams, sticks, and a heap of humanity, dead and alive, all around me. I soon found that my legs were wedged in so that I could not get out. I was not hurt, and began to feel around near me to learn what was holding my legs. It was very dark, and I could not see anything.

"My chin was resting on top of a dead woman and all around me were the bleeding dead and wounded. Under my right arm was a man struggling and crying for help, but in a short time I knew that he was dead. The air was filled with the most melancholy and heart-rending cries, some calling out the names of loved ones, either in the wreck or left at home, and others begging for aid. For three hours I remained in that fix, and to add to the other horrors of the situation I could smell smoke and see blaze and sparks, and of course I thought the cars were on fire, and began to feel around near me to learn what was holding my legs. It was very dark, and I could not see anything.

"At first when I learned that I was not seriously injured I had hopes of getting out sooner or later, but when I turned my head and looking out, saw sparks, my heart sank, and I longed for my gun so that when the fire would be too close to be bearable I could end my life. I tried to get my pocket-knife out to use if I found that I was to be roasted, but could not get into my pocket. Great beads of sweat ran down my face, but my mouth and tongue were parched. Every one and everything in our car was confined in a space about ten feet square, and about two-thirds of those



in the car were killed outright, while all were injured more or less. I was the least hurt of any in the car. Many men were offering gold watches and \$100 to any one who would get them out.

"The men were worse than the women. One woman, although severely wounded, was trying with comradely words to soothe the agony of the wounded and dying around her. For more than two hours no one came to their relief, and during that time many audible pleas and prayers were offered for divine assistance. When assistance did come the first thing asked for was water. That was an opportunity for the selfishness of humanity to show itself. They would grab the water cup from the lips of each other, so eager were they to moisten their own tongues. A small piece of ice was given to the only living lady in that car, and she generously shared it with all within her reach. I felt resigned to my situation when I

heard men chopping below me and I knew that I would not burn. I knew then I would be rescued."

Mr. Church's Experience.

Mr. P. C. Church, a commercial traveler for a New York hardware house, relates many incidents of the disaster. "A friend and myself," said he, "thought we would take a run over, but we never expected to see what we afterward did."

"At Chatsworth there was a row of dead bodies lying side by side upon the depot platform. A piece of paper pinned to the breast gave the name of each one. The first body we came to was that of a Chicago drummer, whose name I can't remember, but he was running for a large wholesale grocery house here. We had met him the day before, and I afterward learned that he got on the excursion train at a little town above Peoria, intending to save time by making another place that side of Chatsworth. But he went to sleep, passing the place where he was to get off, not being wakened, until by the accident he was killed outright."

"When we reached the place where the accident occurred, the first thing we saw was a pile of mangled-up coaches as high as a telegraph pole. The top of the second chair-car shot up on top of this, standing like a monument at least fifteen feet higher. We arrived just in time to see Mr. Murphy, a hotel-keeper from Galesburg, climb out of a hole in the top of the first chair-car, which was just in view, upon a pile of broken timber at the top of the heap. He pulled out his wife and baby, uninjured, but almost exhausted from having been penned up for nearly twelve hours. It was with great



difficulty they were assisted to the ground. Mr. Murphy then went back into the hole and brought out alive a little baby. He had snatched it from the arms of a dead mother. After that he helped out an aged woman whose back had been injured. These five, together with two others, were all that were rescued from that car. Then the hotel-keeper came down I asked him how it happened that he was not killed. He replied that when the crash came his wife was sitting in one seat and himself and the baby were in the one just behind, near the front of the car. The baby was knocked off the seat and he stooped to pick her up as they shot into the mass of ruins ahead. Just at that moment, he said, a timber penetrated the car, shooting across the place where he had been sitting and struck a young lady who sat opposite him in the neck. He was thus pinned down by the timber, which also protected him from being smashed and saved his life. He looked across the aisle and saw the young lady's head



had fallen over on the back of her seat and hung only by the skin.

"The sight of the dead and wounded lying in the adjacent fields was horrible. They were lying in little heaps of about a dozen, all having been killed in a different manner. The entire side of one man's face would be mashed in, while a hole as large as your fist in the forehead of another would show where a timber had penetrated. Three-fourths of the dead never knew what killed them. It was a sight I never want to look upon again. There were young ladies in picnic dress, with their white skirts saturated with blood and the front of their faces mashed beyond recognition. One young-looking mother had left her baby in her arms, when a timber, striking the child in the back, impaled both victims in instant death. The mother's face did not bear a scratch, but the expression upon it will haunt me to the grave."

Mr. Church said that the action of the railroad officials after the accident was condemned by almost everybody. Hundreds of people got as far as Forest on their way to the wreck but had to walk the rest of the distance—six miles. Officials rode up and down the tracks, and a few slow trains brought in the dead, but the wounded and dying were left on the ground, with no relief except that which their partners in grief could give them. They lay in the muddy fields all night, with the rain beating down, while their groans and cries went up in vain. As fast as baggage could be taken from the cars, no matter whose it was, it was torn open, and dresses and shirts appropriated for blankets to dress the wounded and suffering. After the physicians and nurses had finished with the trunks thieves rifled them and carried off what was valuable.

A Remarkable Escape.

Mr. Murphy, a farmer living at Cuba, Fulton County, Ill., in speaking of the disaster, says he felt a premonition that one would come to the train from the time it started. In the first place, he did not believe it was good road-loading to place both engines in front. "The terrible weight would be almost certain break down any frail bridge. The train started half an hour late, and stopped quite a while on the other side of the Illinois River. At another station at which the train stopped the brakes were not thrown off of one of the coaches, and when it started the coupling broke, and it was necessitated sending it forward for another coach. All these delays threw the train over an hour late, and it was running at a terrific speed to make up for lost time. Mr. Murphy says the estimate of forty miles an hour was given. It was too slow. When Mr. Murphy and his wife stepped on the train they entered the second car from the sleeper but finding no two seats together unoccupied they went forward two cars further and tried to get seats there. They failed, and to this failure they owe their lives, as every one in that car was killed. Returning to the car which they first entered, they found two seats which had been turned so as to face each other which were occupied by E. S. Harter and wife, of Peoria. On expressing a wish to occupy one of these seats Mr. Harter at once courteously complied, and they sat down and were chatting pleasantly up to the time of the disaster. These seats were in the rear, and of the whole party occupying the car, about forty-five, only five were saved—Mr. Murphy and

wife, Mr. Harter and wife, and one other, unknown. The first intimation of the disaster was a bumping sound, followed almost immediately by a sound resembling the hissing of steam, caused by the cars sliding over each other. The next minute passed as though in a dream, Mr. Murphy waking up to find that he was badly bruised and that the car was in ruins. There were few groans, as nearly all were killed as quickly as though struck by lightning. The roof of the car had fallen in with the exception of the little corner occupied by the party alluded to. In that corner, the wreck was still hanging, but vibrating back and forth as though it might fall at any moment. A bright light shone in through the roofless car caused by the fire on the bridge and probably from the reflection from the locomotive headlight, and Mrs. Murphy exclaimed, "My God! The train is on fire." Mr. Murphy, whose shirt was covered with blood, realized for the first time that he was badly hurt. Mr. Harter at once kicked out a window, crawled through, and was followed by his wife. The light by this time had gone down, and in the midst of the almost Egyptian darkness that preceded the storm Mr. Murphy crawled through the window and stood on the outside, when he realized that he was at a considerable height from the ground. How he got down he does not know, but he told his wife he would jump, and if he could safely, for her to follow. He then leaped into the unknown distance, found it about nine feet, encouraged his wife to do the same, and, being a strong, stalwart man, was able to catch her in his arms and hold her.

Shocking Incidents.

Both Mr. Kirk and Mr. Wadsworth relate many shocking incidents of the work of rescuing which came under their observation. The latter tells of finding a woman of singular hardihood who was caught in the tender close to the engine. Both legs were crushed, but she managed to sit up, and watched and advised the men who were sawing the timbers to release her. In the end of one car where Mr. Kirk worked among the bodies no less than twenty-nine dead were taken out. This car had gone inside another car and its occupants had all been jammed together at one end. The car of Superintendent Armstrong was in the height of the wreck and was crushed to pieces, yet none of its occupants were injured beyond scratches. This is accounted for by the circumstance that there was little in the car to hurt any one. Its slight contents did not make a crush so grinding and close that escape was unlikely.

Mr. Divine, of Ellenville, N. Y., was in the second sleeper from the front. He saw much of the tragedy and his account is graphic. "I had not retired," said he, "when the first shock came. I had just taken the button from my collar and was going forward with my undressing when I felt the car quiver and divined at once that there was a collision. I dropped flat in the aisle, and was scarcely jarred. The shock over, I got up, though I was helpless as I could see three dead women in the car. I then stumbled upon a woman whose legs were twisted together in the timbers, though they did not seem to be broken. I leaned her back against a cushion while I helped a boy out, and when I turned back to release her she was dead. I subsequently found that my sleeves were bloodied when I had reached my arm around her neck to raise her, and I suppose her head must have been crushed, though I did not notice it. There was simply no end to such scenes and such experiences."

Plundering the Dead.

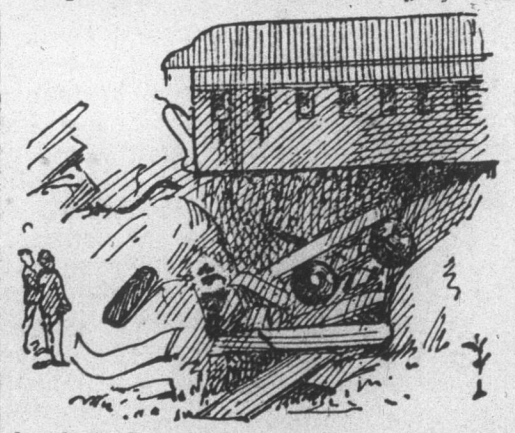
Mrs. Charles Carlton, of Oneida, one of the



survivors, corroborated the stories of robberies committed, and says that there were instances in which the vandals cut off the fingers of imprisoned women to secure the rings. Four men are stated to have swarmed to the front immediately after the disaster, and to have engaged in the awful sacrilege of stripping the desolate dead under cover of darkness and confusion. That such impious pillage prevailed is not to be denied. Mr. H. D. Gould, General Freight and Passenger Agent of the road, caught one of the devils in the act and kicked him within an inch of his life, forcing him to desist. Another scoundrel, caught in the act, said he was merely securing a memento of the wreck. J. D. McFadden, one of Peoria's dead, was robbed of \$20. Mrs. Dea's rings were stripped from her fingers. Mrs. Potthoff, of Third street, was robbed, though unhurt. F. D. Weinert's pockets were turned inside out when his body was found and his watch and \$2.00 were gone. The wife of Capt. Dal'e, the harbor-master, swears that her husband was stripped of \$4,755, and there are other cases. The entire Zimmerman family, three in number, were robbed.

The Mysterious Suicide.

Inquiries regarding the identity of the man who shot himself to be rid of his agony are without avail. The best information concerning him was obtained Sunday from a man from Lacon, Ill., Mr. E. Wadsworth. He was a passenger in one of the sleepers. "I was awakened by a crash, and I was thrown against the end of the berth, and of course I soon up and dressed and doing what I could to assist the wounded. I heard cries in the field, and going to the source found a young man of about twenty whose leg was so broken that the bone protruded and whose cries of agony were



dreadful. I went to him, and he said he had got out of a wrecked car himself and crawled where he was. I got a mattress and pillows for him and some water, and a lady who had brandy gave him some of that. He talked reasonably for a moment or two, and then said he was from Macomb, in Macoupin County. I asked him what more I could do for him, and his only reply was 'Stay with me.' He seemed to fear being left alone. Just then I heard a woman screaming and told him I must go to her. I had gone but a little way when I heard a pistol-shot. He had shot himself in the forehead.

CHARLOTTE WOLTER.

The German Tragedy Queen—Sketch of Her Life.

Charlotte Wolter, who has for years been connected with the Burg Theater of Vienna, is expected to be brought to this country under the management of Messrs. Conried and Herma n, during the course of the winter of 1887



and 1888. The German tragedy queen has recently celebrated by a jubilee performance the twenty-fifth anniversary of her engagement at the Royal Burg Theater. The Emperor, Crown Prince, and other high dignitaries were present, and the house was literally packed. The play was "Sappho," with Madame Wolter in the title role. She was received with an encore of enthusiasm and was overwhelmed with flowers. The Emperor presented to her a diamond bracelet, and other gifts came from all parts of Austria and Germany. At the close of the play Madame Wolter made a touching speech of thanks to the Emperor and to the audience at large. She was presented to the Austrian Empress by her rightful title as the Countess O'Sullivan. But the Empress in turn presented her to the Court as Madame Wolter, saying, "I am proud of you as 'the Wolter,' as that is the name I like to present you. I have so many Countesses at Court that your other title conveys no distinction." Madame Wolter was born in the city of Cologne in 1834, of poor but respectable parents, and had to overcome many difficulties, and battle through innumerable hard times before obtaining the recognition her talent deserved. She now occupies the undisputed place of the first among German tragic actresses, and only her objection to play in foreign countries has prevented her name from becoming one of world-wide fame. In 1875 she married Count Charles O'Sullivan, but family considerations obliged her to keep the marriage secret for many years. Not only Vienna, but all Austria, may be said to be at her feet, and although she is over 50 years of age, she is still young-looking and attractive, as the accompanying cut of her shows.

Conquered by Napoleon.

Trousers came into use for general wear with the French revolution. The gentleman, the supporter of royalty and sound constitutional principles, wore breeches. The term "sans culottes" sufficiently explained what were not worn by the masses who forced constitutional reform into revolution. By an apparent contradiction of purposes and principle, says the Atlanta Constitution, the "sans culottes," who denounced every one who wore breeches, finally went beyond their opponents and wore twice as much cloth around their legs; in a word, adopted the modern trousers and made them the badge of a party as well known as a class. Napoleon, who was too thin at one period of his life and too stout at another to look his best in small clothes, nevertheless wore them on state occasions after he had set up a throne and gone into the Emperor business. His army was the first that wore trousers, and trousers made progress in general adoption step by step with the march of the French army. The French trousers and neat gaiter were seen in Egypt, in Spain, in Italy, in Germany, in Poland, and in Russia, on the banks of the Tagus and those of the Vistula. People thought that the manner in which a great conquering nation clad its legs was the model, and when the trousers wearers marched over the wearers of pig-tails and knee-breeches at Jean and Auerstadt a decision was given from which the world did not care to appeal. The world is usually easily convinced of the wisdom of the victor. England stood out the longest against trousers, but finally she yielded, and her army marched to Waterloo wearing the universal leg funnels.

Our grandfathers generally fell in with the ways of the world, though Federalists here and there would not yield. There is a story of a clergyman who, greeted with the rough inquiry, "How are you, democrat?" responded: "How are you, democrat?" "By your dress. How do you know I'm a democrat?" "By your address." Doubtless the clergyman wore knee-breeches, while the admirer of Jefferson and "dangerous French principles" clothed his legs with trousers.

PROF. NEUMAYER of Hamburg urges the necessity of antarctic explorations, laying special stress on its importance for geology and paleontology. He anticipates that it will show that the south pole was a center of dispersion of animals and plants of the southern hemisphere, as the north pole is supposed to have been for the northern.

INDIANA STATE NEWS.

—The Terre Haute police arrested three men on information given by a farmer that they had been to his place and tried to work a confidence game on him, but as he was a reader of newspapers he declined to be misled. The men gave their names as Parker, Kerns, and Forbes. There could be no charge made against them at Terre Haute, and they were held to await information from the other localities. It turns out they are wanted in Jackson County, this State, for swindling a farmer named Zach Deputy out of \$3,000 in cash and a note for \$600. Mr. Deputy, who is quite wealthy, was considered a good subject to work upon. One of the men visited the farm of Mr. Deputy, into whose good graces he proceeded to get, which object was accomplished by paying very profuse compliments to his farm, etc. Finally the visitor became so much in love with the place that he determined to buy it. He didn't care what it cost. His father-in-law, at Fort Wayne, whom he represented to be the President of the bank, was literally reeking with wealth. He would bring down the old gentleman in a day or so and let him see the place. Mr. Deputy was much elated at the prospect of selling his farm at a bargain, and the dutiful "son-in-law" accordingly brought down the "old gentleman" the next day. The farm seemed to please them very much. With Mr. Deputy they drove out on the road. Of course, they met another man, quite unexpectedly. Would they like to be one of the beneficiaries in the new scheme he is getting up? The "old gentleman" and the "son-in-law" were willing. It was the same old story. Mr. Deputy had money in the bank. He drew \$3,000, hoping, presumably, to carry home with him three or four times that much. He supposed his money had been returned to him, because when moving off, in order to keep him from following them, the three swindlers threw back a package much resembling his, with a \$10 note on the outside and the rest Confederate money and advertisements.

—The oldest woman in this State is Mrs. Magdalene Boggs, who resides with her daughter, Mrs. Ann Rothermel, at Milton, Wayne County. Mrs. Boggs was born on December 22, 1783, at Elizabethtown, Lancaster County, Pa. Her father, Peter Shafer, was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He died in 1848 at the age of 97. She was married to Alexander Boggs in 1801. Mrs. Boggs is the mother of eleven children, four of whom are living, the oldest being 81 and the youngest 64. She has forty-eight grandchildren, ninety great-grandchildren, and twelve great-great-grandchildren. One of her grandchildren is over 50 years old, and one of her great-great-grandchildren is over 25. He is editor of the Latham Signal in Butler County, Kas. Mrs. Boggs is able to make her bed, and does all her own sewing. During the past year she has pieced a dozen quilts. Her faculties are all well preserved. She enjoys good health and her appetite is remarkably good.

—A disease resembling distemper is becoming prevalent among the horses in the vicinity of Martinsville. It attacks young horses more frequently than old ones, but very few of the latter have been afflicted yet. The animal's throat swells to a very large size, so as to make it difficult, if not impossible to swallow anything. The swollen part rarely breaks, but emits matter freely when lanced. Several horses have died of the disease and it is spreading continually. It is slow in its effects but quite fatal.

—The water from the artesian well at Martinsville is attaining a wide reputation for the cure of rheumatism and liver and kidney diseases, and is being shipped to Spencer, Gosport, Mooresville and other places, on account of its excellent medicinal qualities. All who use it are enthusiastic in praising its good qualities. People visit the well from early morning until late at night, drinking the water and carrying it away in jugs, cans, buckets, and kegs.

—William Patterson, of Indianapolis, was instantly killed at Lafayette. Patterson stepped from an engine on the Lake Erie and Western road to the track of the Cincinnati, Indianapolis, St. Louis and Chicago. A locomotive on the road came rushing by. He attempted to step off the track, but his foot caught in the double rail and held him fast. He was horribly mangled.

—A terrible murder and robbery occurred near Fredericksburg, Washington County, recently. John Hertel and Daniel Wyninger, long time enemies, met on the turnpike, renewed their quarrel and finally ended it by Hertel stabbing Wyninger to death with a huge butcher knife. Hertel then robbed the dead man of \$2,000 and fled.

—A stranger was accidentally and instantly killed by the local passenger train, near the depot of the Pittsburgh road, at Fort Wayne. He hailed from Chicago, was apparently a tramp, and probably insane. There was nothing found on his person to lead to his identification.

—Edward T. Brush, switchman in the yards of the Pennsylvania Company, at Fort Wayne, while coupling cars, fell under the cars and was run over, causing death shortly afterward. Decayed was 30 years of age and leaves a family.

—Silas Shroyer, a Bartholomew County farmer, while driving an ox-team attached to a threshing engine descending a hill, fell off, the wheels passing over him, crushing him badly and injuring him internally. He cannot recover.

—Marshall Ellis, of Wabash, went to Marion in pursuit of thieves, and put up at a hotel over night. He got up in the night and walked out of a second-story window, falling thirty feet.