

## DEAD AMID DEBRIS.

Appalling Scenes of Desolation in the Wind-Swept City of Mount Vernon, Ill.

Over 350 Residences Levelled by the Cyclone in Three Minutes.

Only a Few of the Business Structures Left on Their Foundations.

Thirty-six Persons Killed or Burned to Death, and Several Fatally Injured.

[Mount Vernon (Ill.), special to Chicago Daily News.]

The world at large has already been informed that the town of Mount Vernon, the beautiful little capital of Jefferson County, has been visited by a great calamity, but what has been printed gives but a feeble idea of what has befallen the 6,000 people who had their homes here. When the sun rose, bright and beautiful Monday morning, it revealed a sight that sickened the stoutest heart and made even the most hardened express feelings of sorrow for those who had lost their lives or their friends and the still greater number who had lost their homes and their little fortunes. Even at this writing those who have attempted to count the dead and compute the loss in dollars and cents are unable to give accurate figures. The most reliable and accurate figures obtainable show that thirty-six people are now numbered among the dead who were alive and in good health Sunday at 4 o'clock, while the count of



THE CYCLONE PASSING OVER THE TOWN.

injured shows that 147 people received injuries more or less serious. Many of those injured are suffering from wounds which may cripple them for life, and some cannot survive their hurts. A moderate estimate shows that 480 buildings, large and small, were leveled to the ground or twisted and crumpled so that they will have to be rebuilt before tenants dare occupy them.

The loss financially has been placed at \$300,000, but an estimate, based on a careful survey of the situation as revealed to-day, shows that \$1,000,000 will hardly cover the loss. Those who suffer most, though their losses are not the largest financially, are the railroad employees and other mechanics and working people who owned their homes. These were mostly one-story frame houses, though some were pretentious, and are now swept completely out of existence.

### Appearance of the Storm.

It has been discovered that the cyclone formed five and one-half miles southwest of Mount Vernon and traveled in a northeasterly direction. It was first seen upon the crest of the hill, where it appeared as a black and funnel-shaped mass of whirling, twisting clouds. The roar was loud and ominous, and the natives say it closely resembled the rumble of a heavily loaded train. A minute later the farm house of Lon Beall was picked up, whirled around two or three times, and in less than a moment scattered in a thousand different directions. The funnel then dipped into Case's grove, a valley in which huge elms have grown for a century or more, and swept down toward



RUINS AT MOUNT VERNON.

the city. The noble trees in the grove were broken and twisted, and instead of a neatly preserved park it looked more like a heavy growth of leafless underbrush, with here and there a ragged stump. Trees a foot and more in diameter were broken as if they were reeds and laid flat on the ground.

Sweeping on the West End School House was struck and its cupola torn from the roof. If there is a vestige of it left nothing has been found.

### Queer Pranks of the Storm.

And just here the tornado began to play its pranks. Not a window was broken on the side that bore the brunt of the storm, but the tower, which was thought to be securely fastened on, was torn away and utterly demolished. From here the destroyer seemed to leap into the air and descend just in time to catch the northwest corner of Squire Yost's house, which was the only portion damaged. This is considered remarkable, as the storm came from the southwest.

Going diagonally across the street from Squire Yost's house it struck into the quarter of the city where the people of moderate means had their homes. Three of these, skirting the city, were blown entirely away, and the adjoining block was completely destroyed, except one house, which was altogether uninjured. Eight houses were blown into splinters, but this one, which was in the center of the block, was left whole and unharmed. Strattan & Ferguson's woolen-mill was totally wrecked. The rear building and the brick casing around the boiler were blown over the entire square, and the roof of the front building was not yet been seen. Jumping across the street again the tornado tore into splinters a whole settlement and left not one member upon another, and the ground

where houses had stood showed no sign of previous occupancy.

### Width of the Tornado's Path.

The path of the tornado was about three hundred yards in width, but the outer edges of the revolving circle seemed as destructive as any other portion, and they seemed to have the power of jumping from one point to another, which the funnel did not have. The wind then stripped the tin roof from the Supreme Court house, and seemed to have wrapped a piece of it about every tree in the neighborhood. The Presbyterian Church cupola fell next, and then the rear portion of the Methodist parsonage was blown away and the church caved in, not one brick being left upon another. Next came the house of S. E. Ferguson, the rear portion of which was torn out, and then a row of six two-story houses was swept out of existence. An entire block of small homes followed. The Mount Vernon Milling Company's flour-mill was next attacked and the roof and upper story of brick torn away. The four chests—light wooden boxes—set undisturbed on the pile of ruins, but the heavy wall had been scattered to the winds. Sweeping across this stretch of flat, three more blocks were destroyed and over a hundred houses were completely ruined. The amount of debris was frightful.

The wind then jumped to the brick boarding house of Mrs. Calhoun, of which not a brick was left. All of the boarders escaped except one poor stranger.

### Climbing the Hill.

From this point the tornado began to climb the hill, and here it trailed along the ground, caught every house at the base and lifted them high in the air, splintering them into a myriad of pieces and scattering them over the whole country. On its way up the ascent it destroyed the Baptist church and parsonage, burying the preacher, his family, and a young lady under the ruins. Looking up the side of the hill the sight was sickening. The storm had borne with it a mass of mud and dust and pelted it against the sides of the houses and covered the timbers that lay between, making them of a dull, dead ash color, one vast expanse of ruin, bordered on both sides with half-demolished buildings and wrecks of habitations. Valences, legs of chairs, mattresses, lamps, pieces of bureaus and quilts are scattered over the entire territory, with here and there an article of clothing lying, bloody, perhaps, under the broken timbers.

Laney, able to be out; William Brazzle, wife and child, badly injured; John Isam (colored), arm broken; Sam Pountney, arm broken; Mrs. Gase Gerles, not expected to live; John Dodson and wife, badly injured, not expected to live; George Jones and children (colored).

### Caring for the Injured.

As soon as the injured were removed from the ruins they were conveyed to their homes or to the Supreme Court room, which was quickly fitted up as a hospital. All the physicians of the town were soon in active service, and by 10 o'clock they were reinforced by many from neighboring towns who have devoted themselves assiduously to the duty before them. Dr. Watson, of the local force, and Dr. Owen, of Evansville, Ind., have taken charge of the work. They report that the patients are generally doing very well, though there are eight or ten who can not recover.

Three of the Jones children, colored, were cared for as soon as taken from the ruins, but the physicians in charge left them for a few



TAKING OUT THE DEAD.

minutes, and on returning found that they had been carried away. They were laid out on the common on mattresses and well covered with comforts, and this afternoon they were discovered as they were left. They did not complain of exposure, and as the covering was warm and the day charming no harm resulted. Examination of their wounds found them to be desperately injured, and on two of them amputation was necessary. The other was hurt about the hip and had received internal injuries.

### Demolished Houses.

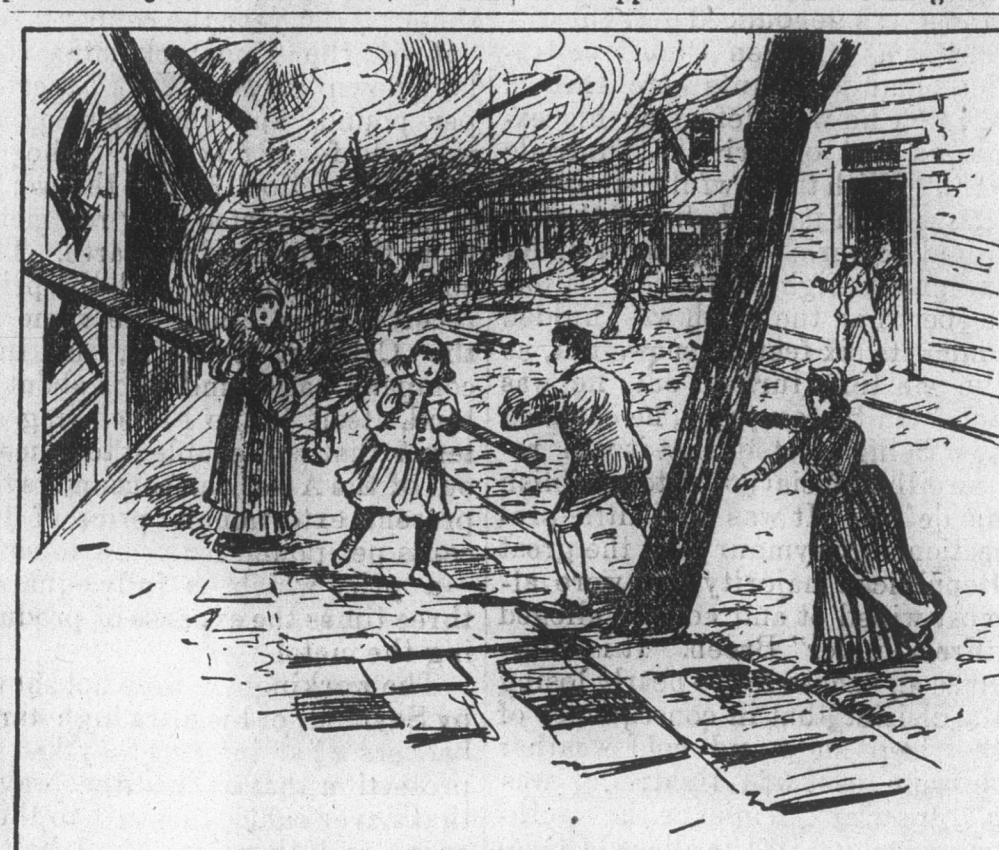
The first building that attracts the attention of visitors alighting from the train is the two-story Supreme Court building, a few yards from the depot, without dome or roof, but with shreds of tin hanging from its sides, marking a pivot around which the storm seemed to swing. All else in this direction is untouched. A few steps onward along the railroad discloses to the southwest an appalling sight of devastation. It is in this direction that the laboring classes have built their little one-story cottages among the timber, and here it was the cloud first dropped down and in swirling fury twisted immense oaks from the ground and mashed houses flat, then gathering up the pieces, it strewn them along a path, tearing down fences and wiping out landmarks. Scarcely can the direction of the wind be traced, for in this quarter grading had not been attempted. How many houses were here destroyed is not known, for nothing is left in many places to mark the lot. Fifteen foundations still remain. In six acres formerly well built up, but three houses are standing in the path of the storm, and these are wrecked. On the right and left of the path the debris plunged like catapults in homes more fortunate.

### Naked Foundation Walls.

Looking northeast across the railroad the ruin appears more terrible. The buildings were larger, heavier, and more compact, and the wave that swept for 600 yards piled up the debris on either side and left naked the foundations and foundation walls to mark the spots of residences. There still remain on either side of the path dismantled frame houses half buried under other roofs. To the southeast stand the monumental ruins of the three-story brick flour mill, the walls stripped down and the machinery exposed, and on the north, partially surrounded by uninjured houses, are the crushed Baptist Church and the large brick Commercial Hotel, unroofed and partly torn down. Six hundred yards farther on, the ruins of the postoffice corner, and in the front stands the shattered Court House, with dome thrown down over the entry, the walls cracked and partially tumbled down, and in the Supreme Court yard lie rows of men-timers and roofs of adjacent buildings. In front of the postoffice, across Burton street, a brick building was razed to the ground, and nearly all to the south and east fared likewise, but Uncle Sam's quarters were scarcely touched.

### Streets Filled with Debris.

The broad streets are filled with the debris of the business houses of Burton and Washington streets, along the eastern side of which not one house remains standing. Unable to thoroughly tear asunder the framework of the buildings, they were washed and twisted into useless masses, the roofs carried away, and the fronts and rears knocked out. Several three-story brick blocks gave an air of substantiality to the streets. The cyclone ground the walls to the ground, and the debris was piled up to the roofs and destroyed the last plank. The Evans bank, on the corner, exhibits a burning pit, the safe cracked with the heat. Under the ruins lie the charred remains of J. C. Murray, owner of this corner, and the south and east from this corner the spectator will see a line of groceries, warehouses, and a few reputable places leaning against each other, but still



PANIC AMONG THE PEOPLE.

holding together. The wines and liquors had been swept out, but the enterprising burner had headquarters and signs up long before the excursionists began to pour in or the ruins were clear of their dead. The reputable portion of this block—a bakery—caught fire and was consumed. Other bakeries were wiped out of existence, and to-day not a loaf of bread was to be purchased in the town. However, no one suffers for want of food, shelter, or clothing.

Along Washington street, just back of the Court House, it was hard to tell just where one building began and the next left off. Floors, roofs, sides of buildings and partitions were shuddered up in confusion and crushed against the few brick walls that still remained standing. Everything along here was a dead loss, not even the protection of fire insurance being available. But in street, east of Washington, was completely blocked by the walls of Stratton & Johnson's fallen block, from the rear of which the destroyed warehouses and handsome residences broke like an abandoned lumber-yard and rubbish lot. There were buildings here, and the lumber shows it, but the chaos is complete. Where houses have been torn asunder and swept away and the timbers scattered hither and thither there is not to the eye the desolation that is present. By a row of mansions with the sides stripped of the roofs carried away, and the upper floors left down upon the parlors below, yet supporting what shows plainly was a tidy chamber, but is now strewn with rubbish; or, in many places, only a portico or steps

and a foundation wall and cellar covered by a swaying floor, supporting all that is left of once luxurious furniture. This is all that is left of East Mount Vernon, the home of luxury. The able corps of physicians that responded to the first call was quickly organized, and all day long has moved from place to place. The shock to many has been terrible, and outside of breaks and bruises the physicians have had plenty of work.

### The Losses.

The property loss will aggregate nearly \$800,000, and falls heavily upon a thriving community. The churches, business houses, and stocks of goods aggregate a loss of \$410,000; fine residences totally destroyed, \$38,000; fine residences injured, \$10,000; cottages, warehouses, barns, etc. \$115,000; total, \$573,000. Other incidents will increase this. None of the merchants or others carried storm insurance, so there will be total loss.

### Appealing for Aid.

The citizens of Mount Vernon, as soon as the injured had been released from their perilous positions and the wounded turned over to the care of physicians, held a meeting and organized permanently. The city council acted promptly and appropriated \$500 for immediate relief, and although there is no money in the city fund, the order was quickly cashed by the banks. An appeal for financial aid was at once sent out, and Governor Oglesby also issued a proclamation, calling upon the public to contribute. Contributions are coming in liberally.

### The Committee's Appeal.

The following circular has been issued and is now being sent through the mails:

MOUNT VERNON, Ill., Feb. 20.

To the Mayor and Citizens: The city of Mount Vernon, Ill., was visited by a terrible cyclone yesterday afternoon, which carried death and destruction in its path. About thirty people were killed outright and scores of men, women and children are maimed, wounded and bleeding, and about one thousand people are made homeless by the disaster. Some three hundred houses are swept from the face of the earth, among which are the County Court House, public school buildings, Methodist and Baptist churches, Supreme Court house, roundhouse of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, and many of the leading business houses are also total wrecks, their contents being buried beneath the debris. A raging fire which broke out also destroyed much of the property which might otherwise have been saved from the ruins. We are sorely in distress and are forced to call upon the charitable people of the country for money and such other assistance as they may feel able to contribute. Money is needed more than provisions, as there are a few business houses that may be able to apply the demand. Send cash contributions, if possible, to:

Chairman Finance Committee,  
NORMAN H. MOSS, Secretary.

### The Governor's Proclamation.

Gov. Oglesby has issued a proclamation, in which he says:

"A calamity such as this falling suddenly upon a peaceful people at this ineluctable season of the year must of necessity inflict serious and distressing loss and misery. Such a misfortune cannot but appeal to the deepest sympathy of a generous public, and to that public in the name of the people of the State I appeal for immediate aid and encouragement. It is well known that the General Assembly places no appropriation at the disposal of the Executive to be used on occasions like this. I therefore request the aid of citizens and all religious and charitable institutions, societies, and associations to lend a helping hand in this hour of sorrow and distress by assisting in raising contributions for the relief of those who are in need of money and other supplies will be forwarded to George W. Evans, chairman of the local Finance Committee, Mount Vernon, Jefferson County, Ill."

"RICHARD J. OGLESBY."

### The Crown Prince.

The reassuring bulletins which the doctors send from San Remo regarding the health of the German Crown Prince do not have the desired effect. People distrust the reports because they have learned that the greater the importance of the patient the greater is the probability that his physicians will conceal the truth as to his condition. In Berlin the feeling is quite general that the Crown Prince is doomed never to ascend the throne.

### Looks Like War.

Russia's continued military activity strengthens the probability that with the approach of spring a revival of war talk and war preparations may be looked for. A very important movement of troops from Odessa in the direction of Kischineff leads confirmation to this belief. Thirty-six train loads of Russian soldiers transferred to quarters within easy marching distance of the Austrian frontier does not look like peace for any great length of time.

DR. D. D. WICKHAM'S house at Port Jervis, N. Y., during the absence of the family, was taken possession of by thieves, who shipped all the furniture and goods to

## INDIANA STATE NEWS.

—McLainsburgh, a hamlet on the Shelbyville pike, five miles south of Indianapolis, was the scene of a most distressing accident recently. Sarah Jane Reed, 76 years of age, was literally burned to death at the home of her son-in-law, Fred Lichtenauer, while he and his wife were absent from the house. Mr. and Mrs. Lichtenauer had left the house early in the morning and went to Indianapolis, leaving their two children in charge of the house. One of them, a young girl, was told to get dinner, and about 11:10 o'clock she went into the kitchen to look at the fire. The old lady at that time was sitting, as usual, in her chair. Ten minutes afterward she returned and was horrified to see her grandmother lying upon the floor in a dying condition, with her clothes almost burned off. Mrs. Reed was paralyzed upon one side, and it is thought that while moving about in the kitchen she fell against the stove, and before she could make any alarm she was enveloped in flames.

—Silas Irick, employed at E. C. Atkins & Co's saw-works, Indianapolis, met with a horrible death while in the discharge of his duty. In attempting to shift a belt he was caught in the machinery, and was thrown head foremost against a wheel, under which he was crushed. His body would have been torn into pieces had not some of the employees witnessed the accident and stopped the machinery promptly. Death was instantaneous. His neck, shoulder, and arm were broken, and his head badly bruised. Mr. Irick was 40 years of age, and leaves a wife and three children. His wife was just recovering from a long spell of sickness, and, when the news of her husband's death was broken to her she suffered a relapse, and her recovery is regarded as doubtful.

—The boiler in the saw-mill of Mike Frutis, north of Alamo, exploded, blowing out the side of the mill, killing James Frutis, the engineer, and demolishing some of the mill machinery. The boiler was found in a small creek fifty rods from the mill, and some of the bricks were thrown across the road, striking the house of Frutis, and, going through the same, landed on a bed, setting it on fire. Several persons about the mill had narrow escapes. The man who was killed was fearfully scalded, and lived about three hours, his sufferings being extremely severe. The cause of the explosion is not known, but it is supposed to have been caused by a too heavy pressure of steam. The deceased leaves a wife and three children.

—Wesley Hatfield and Theodore Jessup, Park County farmers, while hunting, the other day, came across a fine specimen of the Golden eagle in the woods. Their attention was attracted by its shrill shriek. They brought it down in the act of flight by a rifle shot. A year ago the farmers in that vicinity were annoyed greatly by eagles carrying off lambs and chickens. A raid on the roost was organized, but abandoned on account of its probable great distance. Since an eagle has been shot in Sullivan County, some miles south. Prof. Collet, ex-State Geologist, says there are eagle roosts in the State, but where they are is a question. They may be miles from the scenes of the occasional raids that indicate the existence of the eagles.

—The Pendleton Board of Trade has succeeded in raising the amount of money and material demanded by a large glass factory of Ohio to place their works there. It will employ about seventy-five hands, and have a monthly pay-roll of \$5,500. A large cooper shop will also be located at that place within thirty days, in connection with the sand-mill now nearly ready to commence operations. Pendleton is laying the foundation for a manufacturing town.

—Lee Sinclair, living at Cloverdale, was killed there recently. He was on his way to church to be baptized and join. In crossing the track of the Louisville, New Albany and Chicago Railway he stepped in front of a fast moving freight train and attempted to cross, but slipped and fell. He was struck by the guard of the engine, his head being crushed in an unrecognizable shape. Death was instantaneous.

—For some time past telegraph wire No. 4, along the line of the Wabash road, has refused to work and was apparently grounded. Line repairers have just succeeded in locating the trouble. About four miles east of Wabash an old man had cut the wire and run a line into his house, where he was utilizing the electricity as a cure for rheumatism.

—DePauw's Plate-glass Works in Portland, which have been idle for several years, are now being placed in first-class condition, and work will soon be resumed in this large factory. It is the intention of Mr. DePauw to employ all the old hands who live in Portland. This will give employment to quite a large number of men.

—Patents have been issued to Indiana inventors as follows: Amos Barker, Spencer, seed-planter; Emery Q. Darr, Shelbyville, sweat-pat fastener; William O. Mills, Zionsville, throat-protector for horses; Elijah Neff, Rochester, assignor of three-fourths to J. Gilchrist, Lima, O., and A. W. Felts, Fulton County, pump.

—Scarlet fever, of a dangerous type, is raging in Tipton, and causing considerable uneasiness. The City Council has ordered that red flags be displayed at each house where there is a case of the fever, and every effort is being made to prevent its spread.

—The proposition to vote \$100,000 in cash to the proposed Terre Haute and Mississippi Railroad, to run southwest from Terre Haute, was voted upon in Terre Haute, and, after a hot contest, was beaten by 222 votes. There was a full vote cast.