

## STORY OF THE DELUGE.

### HEARTRENDING SCENES IN CONEMAUGH VALLEY.

William Henry Smith's Graphic Description of the Flood's Awful Approach—Mad Plunge of the Aqueous Avalanche on the City of Conemaugh—How Trains, Houses, Everything, Went Down Before the Fierce Niagara—Awful Scenes of Destruction.

Mr. William Henry Smith, General Manager of the Associated Press, was an eye-witness of the awful scenes in Conemaugh Valley on the night of the great calamity. He tells the following story of the flood's devastation:

The fast-line trains that leave Chicago at 3:15 and Cincinnati at 7 p.m. constitute the day express eastward from Pittsburgh, which runs in two sections. This train left Pittsburgh on time Friday morning, but was delayed for an hour at Johnstown by reports of a washout ahead. It had been raining hard for over sixteen hours, and the sides of the mountains were covered with water descending into the valleys. The Conemaugh River, whose banks is followed by the Pennsylvania Railroad for many miles, looked an angry flood nearly bankful. Passengers were interested in seeing hundreds of saw-logs and an enormous amount of driftwood shoot rapidly by, and the train pursued its way eastward. At Johnstown there was a long wait, as before stated. The lower stories of many houses were inundated by the flood, and the inhabitants were looking out of the second stories. Horses were standing up to their knees in water in the streets; a side-track of the railroad had been washed out; loaded cars were on the bridge to keep it steady, and the huge poles of the Western Union Telegraph Company, carrying fifteen wires, swayed badly, and several soon went down. The two sections ran to Conemaugh, about two miles this side of Johnstown, and lay there about three hours, when they were moved on to the highest ground and placed side by side. The mail train, which had run to the end of the first section, and a freight train was run to the end track on the bank of the Conemaugh. The report was that a bridge had been washed out, carrying away one track, and that the other track was unsafe. There was a rumor also that the reservoir at South Fork, some time ago

passengers and perhaps forty or fifty inhabitants. The loss of property enormous. The track of the railroad company is certainly destroyed for at least ten miles below South Fork, and all other property of the company on the line. The destruction of Johnstown's industries will alone reach many millions. Then to this great sum add the value of the houses and public buildings in that city and of the villages above and below it, and some idea can be formed of the wealth created by the flood created by the breaking of the reservoir.

And this reservoir was maintained for the pleasure of a Pittsburgh club. Upon the mountain was suspended a body of water three miles long, one mile wide, and seventy feet deep, for the recreation of a few pleasure-seekers. What would happen if there should be a break must have been imperfectly apprehended, since it is said that a bond of only three millions had been exacted from the club. What are three millions to the gross sum for the destruction of property? Can the reservoir be dead to life as a dead man? The question of mere responsibility swallows up the financial as completely as the angry waters did the city of Johnstown.

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH.

### THE SCENE SIMPLY AWFUL.

#### Pen Pictures of the Heartrending Condition of the Valley.

This is certainly one of the world's greatest catastrophes, telegraphs Fred R. Giles, the Chicago *Newspaper* special correspondent at Johnstown. The scene is awful. The dead lie so thick that a corpse scarcely commands attention, save as the committees proceed on their rounds. In a schoolhouse on the hillside there are 150 bodies. Many of them are frightfully cut and bruised. Every condition of life and both sexes in almost equal number are among the dead. The people were left without warning in the midst of their regular pursuits. Merchants, lawyers, and business men generally are the most numerous victims. The great number of young women, who can be seen to have had attractive faces despite the distortions of death, is deeply touching. Letters are soon identified and dressed for burial. Thousands of coffins are coming in on the trains and are being rapidly used. In many cases whole families perished. In a small room of the school-house lay eleven little children. A big boy sat by contemplating them. They were his brother and sisters. His father, Scire Fisher, and his mother were washed away; their bodies have not yet been found. The children were in the attic and would have been saved, but a locomotive was hurled through the house and knocked down.



VILL OF FLOOD IN JOHNSTOWN—THE OPEN SPACE WAS KNOWN AS IRON STREET.

feeder of the Pennsylvania Canal, but latterly the property of a club in Pittsburgh, and used for hunting and fishing, was unsafe for a night's break. This made most of the passengers uneasy, and they kept a pretty good lookout for information. The porters of the Pullman cars remained at their posts and comforted the passengers with the assurance that the Pennsylvania Railroad Company always took care of its patrons. A few gentlemen and some ladies and children quietly seated themselves apparently contented. One gentleman, who was ill, had his berth made up and retired, although he advised not to do so. Soon the cry came that the water in the reservoir had broken down. The bedroll and was sweeping down the valley. Instantly there was a panic and a rush for the mountain side. Children were carried and women assisted by a few who kept cool heads. It was a race for life. There was seen the black head of the flood, now the monster of destruction, whose crest was high raised in the air, and with this in view even the weak found wings for their feet. No words can adequately describe the terror that filled every breast, or the awful power manifested by the flood. The round-house had stalls for twenty-three horses. There were eight or twenty of these standing at the rails at the time. There was an ominous crash, and the round-house and locomotives disappeared. Everything in the main track of the flood was first lifted in the air and then swallowed up by the waters. A hundred houses were swept away in a few minutes; these included the hotel, stores, and saloons on the front street, and residence adjacent.

As the fugitives on the mountain side witnessed the awful devastation, they were moved as never before in their lives. They were powerless to help those who had lost everything; the despairing ones who had lost everything except life, and the wailing of those whose friends or friends were missing filled their breasts with unutterable sorrow. The rain continued to fall steadily, but shelter was not thought of. Very few passengers saved anything from the train, so sudden was the cry, "Run for your lives; the reservoir has broken." Many were without hats, and, as their baggage was left on the trains, they were without the means of relieving their unhappy condition. The occupants of the houses still standing on the high ground threw themselves into those houses, and out to the passengers of the train. During the night of the flood the spectators were startled by the sound of two locomotive whistles from the very midst of the waters. The engineers, with characteristic courage, had remained at their posts, and while there was destruction on every hand, and apparently no escape for them, they sounded their whistles. This they repeated at intervals—the last time with triumphant vigor as the waters were receding from the sides of their locomotives. By 5:30 the force of the reservoir had been spent on the village of Conemaugh, and the Pullman cars and locomotive of the second section remained unmoved. This was because they were on the highest and hardest ground.

The destructive current of the reservoir flood had passed between the town and the mountain, while the current of the river did not eat it away. But the other trains had been destroyed. A solitary locomotive was seen imbedded in the mud where the round-house had stood.

As the greatest danger had passed, the people of Conemaugh gave their thoughts to their neighbors of the city of Johnstown. Here was centered the greatest and iron industries the pride of Western Pennsylvania, the Cambria Iron Works being known everywhere. Here were churches, daily newspapers, banks, dry goods houses, warehouses, and the comfortable and well-built homes of 12,000 people. What was their fate? In the contemplation of the irresistible force of that awful flood gathering additional momentum as it swept on toward the Gulf, it became clear that the city must be destroyed, and that, unless the inhabitants had telegraphic notice of the breaking of the reservoir they must perish. A cry of horror went up from the hundreds on the mountain-side, and was instinctively turned their steps toward Johnstown. The city was destroyed. All the mills, furnaces, manufacturers; the many and varied industries, the banks, the residences—all were destroyed.

All were swallowed up before the shadows of night had settled down upon the earth. What of the inhabitants? Who can tell with any certainty? Those who came back by daybreak said that from 5,000 to 8,000 had been drowned. Our hope is that this is an exaggeration, and when the roll is called most will respond. In the sight of this calamity the destruction at Conemaugh sinks into insignificance. In this latter place they were already bringing in the dead on stretchers. How many had been lost here, at Mineral Point, and at South Fork could not be known. There were some

### DAZED BY THE HORROR.

#### Johnstown Like a Great Tomb—Scenes in the Stricken City.

A sad and gloomy sky, almost as sad and gloomy as the human face, under it shrouded Johnstown to-day continuing. Millions. Rain fell all day and added to the misery of the wretched people. The great plain where the best part of Johnstown used to stand is half covered with water. The few sidewalks in the part that escaped the flood are inches thick with black sticky mud, through which tramped a steady procession of the poor women who are left utterly destitute. The tents, where the people are housed who cannot find other shelter, were cold and cheerless. The temperature like a great tomb. The people of Johnstown have sprung so many stories of horrors that they go about in a sort of a daze and only half conscious of their griefs. Every hour as one goes through the streets he hears neighbors greeting each other and then inquiring, without show of feeling, how many each had lost in his family. To-day a gray-haired man hailed another across the street with this question.

"I lost five; all are gone but Mary and I," was the reply.

"I am worse off than that," said the first old gentleman; "I have only my grandson left."

And so they passed on without apparent excitement. They and every one else had heard so much of these melancholy conversations that somehow the calamity had lost its significance to them. They treat it exactly as if the dead persons had gone away and were coming back in a week.

The melancholy task of searching the ruins for bodies went on today in the soaking rain. There were little crowds of morbid curiosity-hunters around each knot of workingmen, but they were not residents of Johnstown. All their curiosity was directed toward the city. Even those who came from neighboring towns with the idea of a day's strange and gaudy experiences did not care to be here after they had seen one body exhausted. There were hundreds and thousands of these visitors from the country.

One thing that makes the work of searching for the bodies very slow is the strange way that great masses of objects were rolled into intricate masses of rubbish. As the flood came down the valley of the South Fork it obliterated the suburb of Woodvale, where not a house was left nor a trace of one. The material they were left with a great deal of difficulty, and were over the top of the dam. All of a sudden it burst with a report like a cannon and the water started down the mountain side, sweeping before it trees as if they were chips; bowlers were rolled down as if they were marbles. The roar was deafening. The lake was emptied in an hour and a half. All the water, he said, is now out. The railroad is in a terrible condition. At some points holes twenty to thirty feet deep were washed in the tracks. On the way down he stopped at Mineral Point, where fifteen houses were washed away and several lives lost. At East Conemaugh thirty houses were carried away by the flood. The loss of life is large at this point.

In the side of one of them was seen the remains of a carriage, the body of a harnessed horse, a baby cradle and a doll, a tress of woman's hair, a rocking-horse, and a piece of beef-stuff still hanging to a hook.

### SMALL TOWNS SWEPT AWAY.

#### Little Left of Kernville—Woodvale a Sea of Mud.

Out of the 1,000 houses that once made up the little town of Kernville only 15 remain standing, says a Johnstown special. One thousand people is a low estimate of the number of lives lost from this town. But a few of the bodies have been recovered. It is directly above the ruins at the bridge, and the bodies have floated down into them, where they burned. A wall through the town revealed a desolate sight. Only about twenty-five able-bodied men have survived and are able to render any assistance. Men and women can be seen with black eyes, bruised faces, and cut heads. The appearance of some of the ladies is heartrending. They were imprisoned in the flood and since that have not slept. Their faces have turned a sickly yellow, and dark rings surround the eyes. Many have succumbed to nervous prostration. For two days but little assistance could be rendered them. No medical attention reached them. The wounded remained uncared for in some houses cut off by the water and died from their injuries alone. Some were alive on Sunday, and their souls could be heard by the people on the shore.

A man is now in a temporary jail in what is left of the town. He was caught stealing a gold watch. A shot was fired at him, but he was not wounded. The only thing that saved him from lynching was the smallness of the crowd. His sentence will be the heaviest that can be given him. A milkman who was overcharging for milk this morning narrowly escaped lynching. The infuriated men appropriated all his milk and distributed it among the poor and then drove him out of the town.

Services in the chapel from which the bodies were buried consisted merely of a prayer by a minister who was present. Each coffin had a descriptive card upon it and on the grave a similar card was placed so that bodies can be removed later by friends.

Where Woodvale once stood there is now a sea of mud, broken but rarely by a pile of wreckage. Nothing is standing but the old woolen-mills. The place is swept bare of all other buildings but the ruins of the Gautier wire-mill. The boilers of this great works were carried 100 yards from their foundation. Pieces of engines, rolls, and other machinery were swept far away from where they once stood. The wreck of a horse carriage is stuck up out of the mud. It belonged to the creek company of Johnstown. The engine house is swept away and the cellar is filled with mud, so that the site is obliterated.

A German watchman was on guard at the mill when the waters came. He ran for the hillside and succeeded in escaping. He tells a graphic story of the appearance of the water as it swept down the valley. He declares that the first wave was as high as the third story of a house.

The place is deserted. No effort is being made to clean off the streets. The mire has formed the grave for many a poor victim. Arms and legs are protruding from the mud, and it makes the imagination sick.

The Cambria Hospital has now 300 patients. Several injured people have had operations performed on them.

The hospital in the upper part of Johnstown is full to overflowing. Many have been carried to the surrounding houses.

Hospitals have been established at Conemaugh and Mineral Point.

A rope ferry is now being operated in the lower part of the town. An effort is being made to construct a bridge across the Conemaugh at the point where the old county bridge stood.

Water is slowly arising out of chaos. The survivors are slowly realizing what is the best course to pursue. The main cry is for men—men who will work and not stand idly by and do nothing but gaze at the ruins.

A man named Dougherty tells a thrilling story of a ride down the river on a log. When the waters struck the roof of the house on which he had taken shelter, he jumped aside a telegraph pole, riding a distance of some twenty-three miles from Johnstown to Bolivar before he was rescued.

### THE FATAL DAM.

#### Its Owners Were Aware of Its Rotten Condition.

Messrs. H. Singer, George Singer, Louis Clark, and R. Hussey Bins, of Pittsburgh, relatives of members of the South Fork Fishing Club, have arrived from the broken dam, says a dispatch from Johnstown.

The lake is completely dried out. The dam broke in the center at 3 o'clock on Friday afternoon, and at 4 o'clock it was dry. The great body of water passed out in one hour. Messrs. Clark and Bins, who were in the lake, are building a new drainage system at the lake, tried to stop the disaster by digging a sluice-way on one side to ease the pressure on the dam. They had about forty men at work, and did all they could without avail. The water passed over the dam about a foot above its top, beginning at about 2:20. Whatever happened in the way of a cloud burst took place during the night. There had been but little rain up to dark. When the workmen awoke in the morning the lake was very full and was rising at the rate of a foot an hour. It kept on rising until 2 o'clock, when it first began breaking over the dam, undermining it; it was sent three or four times during the day to warn the people below of their danger. When the final break came at 3 o'clock there was a sound like thunder, and trees, rocks, and earth were shot up into mid-air in great columns, and then the wave started down the ravine. A farmer who escaped said that the water did not come down like a wave, but jumped on his house and beat it to fragments in an instant. He was safe upon the hillside, but his wife and two children were killed. At the present time the lake looks like a cross between the crater of a volcano and a huge mud-puddle with stumps of trees and rocks scattered over it. There is a small stream of muddy water running through the center of the lake. The dam was seventy feet high, and the break is about 200 feet wide, and there is but

known, says one correspondent. All estimates have been made up to this time are conservative, and while all known will doubtless be found to have been killed. Over one thousand bodies have been found since sunrise to-day, and the most skeptical concede that the remains of thousands more rest beneath the debris above Johnstown bridge.

The population of Johnstown, the surrounding towns, and the portion of the valley

affected by the flood is, or was, from fifty thousand to fifty-five thousand. Associated Press representatives to-day interviewed numerous leading citizens of Johnstown who survived the flood and the consensus of opinion is that fully 90 per cent. of the residents of Johnstown and Cambria in the immediate vicinity of the combined disaster of fire and water. If this be true the total loss of life in the entire valley may reach 15,000. Of the thousands who were devoured by the flames, and whose ashes rest beneath the smoking debris above Johnstown bridge, no definite information can ever be obtained. As little will be learned of the hundreds who sank beneath the current and were borne swiftly down the Conemaugh to be deposited hundreds of miles below on the banks and in the driftwood of the Ohio. Probably one-third of the dead will never be recovered, and it will take a list of the missing weeks hence to enable even a close estimate to be made of the number of lives that were snuffed out in that brief hour. That this estimate can never be accurate is understood when it is remembered that in many instances whole families and their relatives were swept away and found a common grave beneath the wild waste of waters. The total destruction of the city leaves no data to even demonstrate that the names of these unfortunate ever found a place of record in history.

"All indications point to the fact that the death-list will reach over five thousand names, and in my opinion the missing will reach 8,000 in number," declared Gen. D. H. Hastings.

At present there are said to be 2,200 recovered bodies. The greatest difficulty experienced in getting a correct list is the great number of morgues. There is no central bureau of information, and to communicate with the different deadhouses is the work of hours.

In answer to questions from Gov. Beaver, Adj't Gen. Hastings has telegraphed the following:

"Good order prevailed throughout the city and vicinity last night. Police arrangements are excellent. Not one arrest made. No need of sending troops.

"About 2,000 bodies have been rescued, and the work of embalming and burying the dead is going on with regularity. There is plenty of medical assistance. We have a bountiful supply of food and clothing to-day and the fullest telegraphic facilities are afforded, and all inquiries are promptly answered. The Pennsylvania railroad will be completed to Johnstown station to-night. Have you any instructions or inquiries?"

The most conservative estimate places the loss of lives at fully 5,000. The prevailing

## POPULAR SONGS ILLUSTRATED.



"Jamie's on the stormy sea."



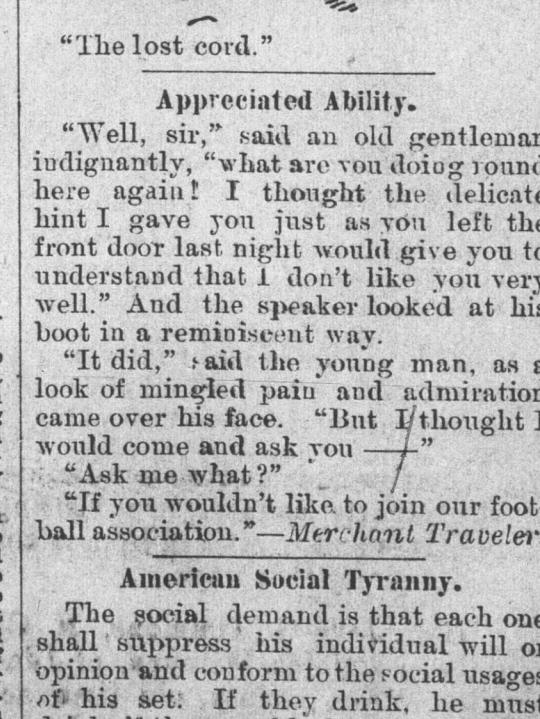
"Robbin' Adair."



"With verdure clad."



"The lost cord."



"Well, sir," said an old gentleman indignantly, "what are you doing round here again? I thought the delicate hint I gave you just as you left the front door last night would give you to understand that I don't like you very well." And the speaker looked at his boot in a reminiscent way.

"It did," said the young man, as a look of mingled pain and admiration came over his face. "But I thought I would come and ask you—"

"Ask me what?"

"If you wouldn't like to join our football association."—*Merchant Traveler.*

American Social Tyranny.

The social demand is that each one

shall suppress his individual will or opinion and conform to the social usages of his set. If they drink, he must drink; if they gamble, he must gamble; if they smoke, he must smoke; if they eat supper, he must eat late supper.

Whatever the vices of society are, he must indulge in his full share of them or be ostracized and called a fool. This sort of tyranny is written large all over American society.—*Boston Herald.*