

# THOUSAND PEOPLE PERISH

## A Mighty Tidal Wave Sweeps Over Society Island.

### HURRICANE RAGES SEVERAL DAYS.

Eighty Islands Devastated by the Wind and Wave—Makeno and Hao Completely Depopulated—On Hikura Island, Where 1,000 Were Engaged in Pearl Diving, Nearly Half the Number Were Drowned.

San Francisco (Special).—News of a terrible loss of life in a storm that swept over the South Sea Islands last month reached here by the steamer Mariposa, direct from Tahiti. The loss of life is estimated at 1,000 persons. On January 13 last a huge tidal wave, accompanied by a terrific hurricane, attacked the Society Islands and the Puamotu group with fearful force, causing death and devastation never before equaled in a land of dreaded storms.

The storm raged several days, reaching its maximum strength between January 14 and January 16. From the meager news received at Tahiti up to the time of the sailing of the Mariposa it is estimated that 1,000 of the islanders lost their lives. It is feared that later advice will increase this number.

The first news of the disaster reached Papeete, Tahiti, January 23 by the schooner Eimeo. The captain of the schooner placed the fatalities at 500. The steamer Excelsior arrived at Papeete the following day with 400 destitute survivors.

The captain of the Excelsior estimated the total loss of life to be 800. These figures comprised only the deaths on the three islands of Hao, Hikura and Makokoa, the ordinary population of which is 1,800. On Kikera Island, where 1,000 inhabitants were engaged in pearl-diving, nearly one-half were drowned. On an island 100 miles more were washed out to sea.

Makeno and Hao are depopulated. Conservative estimates at Tahiti place the number of islands visited by tidal wave and hurricane at 80. All of them are under the control of the French governor at Tahiti.

The surviving inhabitants are left destitute of food, shelter and clothing, all having been swept away by the storm.

The French government, upon receipt of news of the disaster, took prompt measures to relieve the distressed districts, and dispatched two warships with fresh water and provisions. The Italian man-of-war Calabria accompanied the French vessels on their errand of mercy.

As the supply of fresh water and provisions was totally exhausted by the storm, it is feared that many lives will be lost before the relief ships can arrive. So far as is known, eight white people were among the drowned.

As the islands were barely 20 feet above sea level and were not surrounded by coral, it was necessary for all the inhabitants to take to the coconut trees when the tidal wave began to cover the land. These trees grew to an immense height, many reaching an altitude of 100 feet. All of the lower trees were covered by the raging seas, which swept with pitiless force about and over them. The natives in the taller trees were safe until the coconut roots gave way, and then they, too, were swept out into the sea.

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# THE LATEST NEWS IN SHORT ORDER.

## Domestic.

A Cincinnati court set aside the stenographic report of the will made on his deathbed by Millionaire John McCormick, by which he left his estate to Miss Henrietta Cecilia Wolfe, who married him shortly before he died.

Col. F. N. Wicker, United States appraiser at New Orleans, and who was second in command to Colonel Buckley in the Russo-American telegraph expedition to Alaska in 1867, died at New Orleans.

The miners and operators in the soft-coal districts of Western Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana and Illinois agreed upon a scale of wages which is a general increase for the men.

The grand jury failed to find a true bill against Miss Katherine V. Richardson, who was arrested in Revere, Mass., on the charge of administering poison to her mother.

Mrs. Catherine Bendler, aged 50 years, disappeared January 31 from her home, in Bridesburg, Philadelphia, and her children and friends believe she was murdered.

It is semi-officially stated that the proposed increase in the capital of the Pennsylvania Railroad will be from \$235,000,000 to \$400,000,000.

Dr. Edward Vanderhant, a former prominent physician of New York, died at a hospital from excessive use of drugs.

A silver service of 64 pieces was presented by a delegation of the City of Albany to the cruiser bearing that name.

Fireman McCarthy, of the Philadelphia and Reading express locomotive, told the jury at the hospital at Plainfield, N. J., that he did not know that anything obstructed the engineer's view, but at Trenton Junction the locomotive was leaking.

General Manager Allen, of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad, announced that the differences between his company and the trainmen had been settled. The conductors say their demands were conceded.

The body of Mrs. Tracy Peck, wife of Professor Peck, of Yale University, was found in a park at Morris Cove. She had been afflicted with grip, wandered from her home and died from exposure.

Samuel Martin, colored, testified at the trial of Dr. J. C. Alexander, at Indianapolis, that he had an agreement with the latter to furnish him with bodies taken from the cemeteries.

The National Petroleum and General Construction Company of London has secured 333 oil wells in Ohio, 4,000 acres of leases and a monthly production of 20,000 barrels for \$85,000.

By direction of his physician Maurice Grau has decided to give up his work for a year, and the Metropolitan Opera Company decided to abandon business until he returns.

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