

DIRE DEVASTATION.

A VALLEY OF DESTRUCTION.

The Worst Calamity of the Age on the Western Continent.

THE SOUTH FORK LAKE.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DAM.

The Waste Gates Were Blocked to Save the Sportsmen's Fish.

The first accounts of the flood in the Conemaugh seemed like the wildest exaggeration to those accustomed to hearing tales of disaster, but when sober and intelligent eye-witnesses described the scenes at the time the mad waters dashed upon the helpless villages and cities in the ill-fated valley, and from the facts now obtainable as to the extent of the destruction to property and the awful fatality of the watery avalanche, they are found to be far below the truth.

It is now certain that the South Fork dam gave way about 3 o'clock Friday afternoon from the erosion of the waters which overflowed it, and that the contents of that lake which covered an area of three square miles with an average depth of 20 to 40 feet, rushed down the valley of the South Fork and the Conemaugh which were already above high water mark. The fall of these streams both being very great, the swiftness of the flood exceeded the speed of the fastest express trains. A solid mass of water, driftwood, rocks, trees and everything that lay in its path, to the height of forty or fifty feet dashed down the narrow valley sweeping houses, railroad cars and locomotives down to the dam formed by the stone bridge of the P. R. R. at the lower end of the city of Johnstown.

Warning that the dam was likely to break at any moment was sent out, and all the residents in the valley might have escaped, but many did not hear the alarm and many who did made no effort to escape. That any of the thousands who had not fled before the deluge struck the city should have escaped was miraculous.

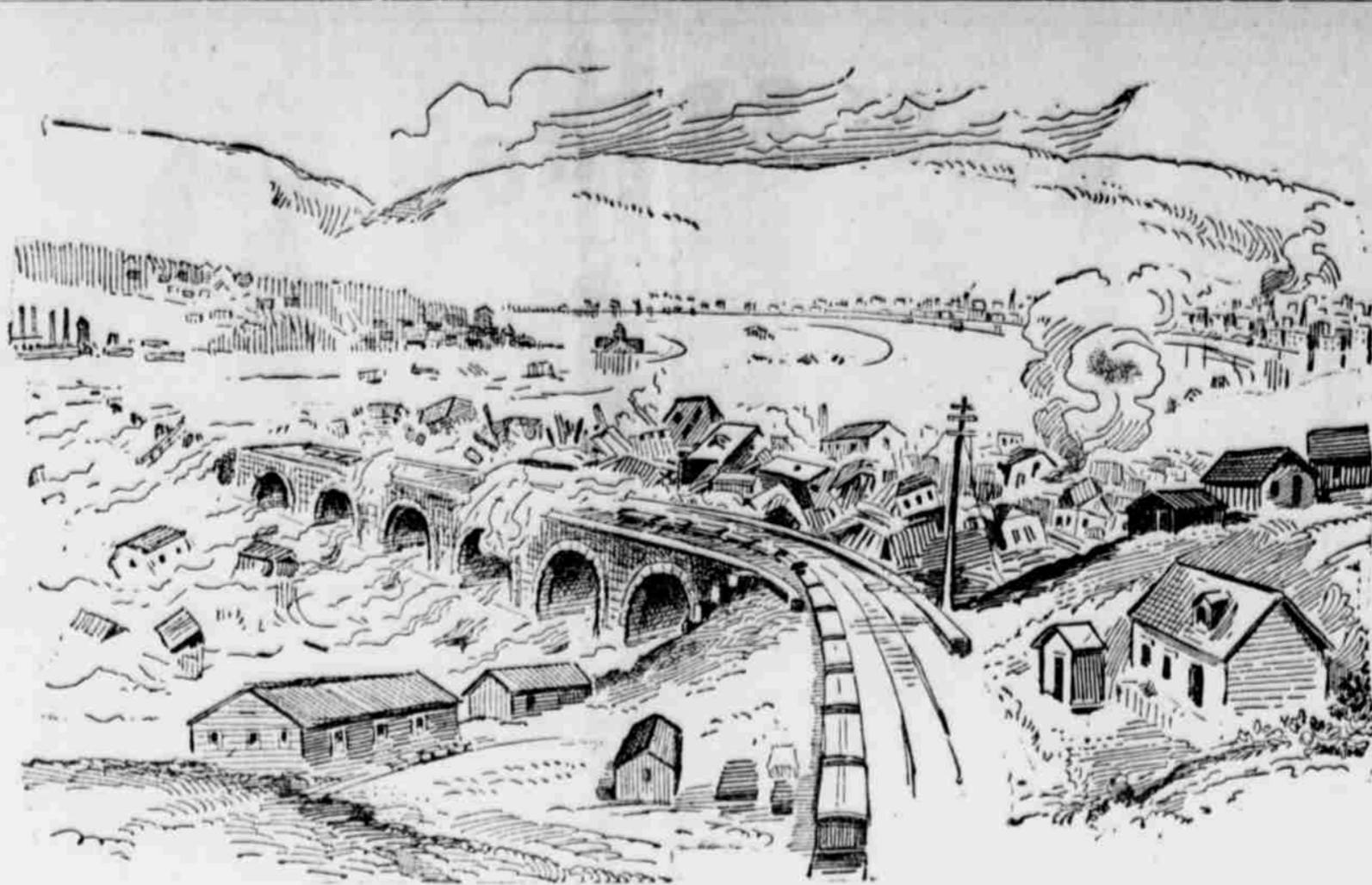
The work of removing the debris and caring for the dead, whose bodies are to be found everywhere along the banks of this modern Styx, goes on every day. Thousands of men are at work, but it will be many days before their task is completed.

The investigations of a New York Sun reporter show clearly that the major part of whatever responsibility may belong to human agencies for the calamity that has desolated the Conemaugh Valley must be placed upon the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club, the association of wealthy Pittsburgh gentlemen that has for four or five years past been endeavoring to establish a sportsman's paradise at Conemaugh Lake. When they leased the lake they closed the waste gates through which all the water that had ever before accumulated in Conemaugh Lake had found a safe and speedy exit.

When the Pennsylvania Canal was abandoned the dam became a necessity and was erected. The tower in which the machinery for managing the waste gates was located is said to have fallen to ruins. A few years ago the lake was leased by the Pittsburgh Sportsmen's Association. Engineer Fisher, of the Cambria Iron Company, made an inspection of it and pronounced it in a condition dangerous. The Association set out to try to clanger to improve and strengthen it. They did not cut off two feet from the top of the dam and many of the stone blocks were made of soft limestone, but either because the water was so high or because they had to repair them would have been an expensive job, or the other reason mentioned—the fact that the fish would escape—the warden, so every one who lives near says, were permanently stopped up.

The present appearance of the wreck of the dam indicates the truthfulness of the story. There are remnants of the waste-gate masonry, but there is no indication that they have been of any practical use for a long time. Whatever may have been the indirect cause of the giving away of the head of it that dammed the upper Conemaugh, the fearful power of the mass of water which was the direct cause of its yielding is evident all about the place now. All the water in that area of three miles long by a mile and a quarter wide, passed out through the gap in the dam a distance of 100 feet upon the valley below to a distance of 75 feet deep and 200 feet wide. Running through with a velocity of 200 miles an hour, it was a mass of water that took a full hour to pass over the reservoir and the tremendous pressure behind that wrecked the dam in the most disastrous manner.

SIGNS OF THE TORRENT'S POWER.
Feeling of the awful force of the current can be seen in the sand below the dam. Formerly it was a densely wooded little valley nearly straight away for half a mile, where it turned so abruptly to the right as to make almost a right angle. The creek ran down through the slope way, and it was the mountain side, wind-rod and a crooked course through the bottom of the valley. Just before the turn it swept out a good way toward the left, and made on the right bank a long point of land. This point was particularly heavily wooded. On the opposite bank was a high bluff covered with forest down to the water's edge. For three-fourths of the distance from the dam to the turns the formerly wooded flats are now covered with gravel, coarse stones and boulders 20 feet deep at the upper end, and not less than 10 at any point. The creek runs through the 40-foot gap, where the waste gates used to be, and through a deep gully in the mass of gravel and stone there is no vestige of trees or underbrush. Just before the long curve begins, where formerly there was



SCENE AT THE STONE BRIDGE.

FIFTEEN PASSENGERS LOST.

Fifty-six People Were Lost Besides the Colored Porter.

The official railroad reports of the dead and missing from the eastbound train that left Pittsburgh last Friday now give the number at 15 passengers and the colored porter of the Pullman car New Orleans. There were no losses from the first two trains.

A PASSENGER'S STORY.

Swift Davis, of safe Harbor, formerly a Pittsburgh citizen, was one of the passengers of the doomed Dry Express. He was in company with his wife, three children, Miss Jennie Paulson and Miss Bryant. All but two young ladies escaped, and Mr. Davis came to Pittsburgh and told the following story of their escape:

"The Express arrived at Conemaugh about 10:30 and we were informed that it would be necessary to lay over on account of a bridge at Lilly's being washed away. We were all on the first section of the train and had nearly been side-tracked before a piece of the railroad track next the river was washed away, the rain in the meanwhile coming down in torrents. I became very anxious about this time and held a consultation with the conductor, who said that he would go into the town to find out the cause of the trouble, and I decided that if the dam should burst or anything of that sort happened, that we would take to the hills alongside of which our train was standing.

THE WARDING WHISTLE.

"We waited there until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when an engine, coming down the track and whistling loudly, apprised us of the danger. The conductor took our baby and I and my wife kept the other two children, and we all fled up the hills for half a mile. When I went back afterward the baby was all right in a farm house, but no traces could be found of the two young ladies, although it was said by the conductor that both had been saved. The water had during this time come down the track at a terrific rate, being only a minute later than the engine which gave us warning.

"One passenger coach and the baggage car were thrown from the track. A freight train coming alongside, and having one car full of live, caught fire about 5 o'clock in the evening, but it was soon extinguished.

"If the people had not fled in the Pullman car many who perished would be living today. Late evening I learned from a young lady, a Miss Maloney, who remained in the Pullman car, that the Misses Paulson and Bryant both jumped from the train into the water at a place beyond the bridge, and they were never seen after that.

THE SUSQUEHANNA FLOODS.

Loud Cry For Help From Another Section of our State.

Dispatches from Lewisburg, Pa., declare that 80 persons went down with one of the bridges at Williamsport and were drowned.

The flood on the west branch of the Susquehanna was unprecedented. Five spans of the railroad bridge at Lewisburg, Pa., were swept away, and the gas works, water works and mills floated out. The loss at this place is \$75,000. Every bridge on the river from Sunbury to Clearfield was washed away.

The situation in the town of Lewistown which has been cut off from the world since last Friday, is thus briefly described: Eight river bridges were swept away. There is only one open road here. The highways of the town are covered with debris 10 feet high. Many of the population are bare feet and sheltered in the Court House. The waters rise to a height of 10 feet in 1847. No lives were lost. The damage to property cannot be estimated.

Superintendent Pettit of the Pennsylvania Railroad, succeeded in getting to the edge of Lock Haven Tuesday morning at 9:30. All the houses had from six to ten feet of water in them. The receding water left considerable mud in the streets and dwellings. Only one person is known to have been drowned at Lock Haven, but several lives were reported lost at Mill Hill, four miles from Lock Haven.

Pennfield, Pa. The flood here was the highest for 25 years. All the dams on Bennett's Branch are gone, 11,000,000 feet of logs escaping from Caledonia. Craig's mill at Winterburn and Hoover & Hugu's mill and tramway here are much damaged. No lives are lost nor dwellings carried off.

A Portland, Me., business man lost a \$20 gold coin on his way to work a few days ago, and, returning at night, found the same piece on the pavement, where it had remained unnoticed all day.

TALES OF DISTRESS.

Extent of the Devastation in Lycoming, Clinton and Hoga Counties.

In all the history of Central Pennsylvania there has never been known such high water, or have local floods been attended with such disastrous results as that of the last day of May and 1st of June. In 1815, and again in 1876, Centre county had floods, but this time the waters were two feet higher than on either previous occasion. At Coburn the waters reached their worst. They spread over the entire town, and in some places the waters, by actual measurement, were thirty feet deep. To add to the horror of the situation was the fact that it was at night and pitch dark, while the rain descended in torrents. There is not one good house left standing in Coburn. Individual losses cannot be enumerated, but the total loss will aggregate fully \$300,000 in Coburn. The valley is strewn with dead bodies of all kind of animals.

The Lewisburg Railroad, from Coburn to Lewisburg, a distance of 45 miles, is a complete ruin, only 15 miles of track yet remaining.

The best estimates puts the loss of life in Williamsport at 25. Three hundred houses were carried away, and every building was flooded. The greatest wreck is along the river bank north of the Rading depot.

The lumber men estimate that of the 250,000,000 feet of logs an 80,000,000 feet of sawed lumber is the boom, valued in all at \$4,000,000 nearly one-fourth remains, a great deal can be recovered, and the loss will not exceed \$2,500,000. The merchants estimate their loss at \$89,000.

Wellsville, Hoga county, is in a very bad shape. A number of people were drowned. Much property was destroyed, and the people are suffering for the necessities of life. All the bridges in the lower end of Lycoming county are gone.

THIRTY LIVES LOST IN CLINTON.
Reliable reports from Lock Haven state that while only one person was drowned in that city, the list of those known to have perished in the county of Clinton is 30 or more. The property loss will reach millions of dollars, and business is at a standstill. Danger is now threatened them from sickness.

In Maryland the loss of life by the floods may not foot up more than 50, but the damage to property is enormous. Hundreds of people are homeless and many are half-starved and without sufficient clothing. The Baltimore people, believing that charity begins at home, have decided to divert a portion of the Johnstown fund to the relief of those who have been made destitute nearer home.

AT WILLIAMSPORT.
Thousands Homeless and Without Clothes—State Aid Promised.
Mayor Foreman, of Williamsport, Pa., in a telegram to Governor Beaver says the town was cleared of logs and lumber. The awful mass carried away many houses and all their contents. Thousands of people of Williamsport are homeless and without anything but the clothes upon their backs. Many of the people are in absolute want for the necessities of life. At the meeting called Tuesday, \$7,000 in cash were raised. The city badly needs disinfectants. Dead animals and all kinds of filth are strewn upon the streets, and grave fears of an epidemic are entertained. Stocks of goods of stores in the center of the city are ruined. It is impossible to estimate the loss and damage to different kinds of property. Five million dollars is a low estimate of the loss on lumber alone. Other losses are larger. The surrounding country has suffered just as badly. Farms, bridges and villages have been swept away and the loss of life has been considerable.

Decrease in Circulation.
A statement prepared at the Treasury Department shows that there was a net decrease of \$16,780,608 in circulation during the month of May last, and a net increase of \$1,973,910 in money and bullion in the Treasury during the same period. The principal loss in circulation was in gold certificates. United States notes and national bank notes, and the principal gain in Treasury holdings was in standard silver dollars. United States notes and gold notes in the order named. The total circulation June 1 is stated at \$1,097,470,751, and the total money and bullion in the Treasury on the same date, \$664,692,250.

AFTER THE DELUGE.

SCENES IN THE RUINED CITY.

Registering the Survivors and Caring for the Dead.

Restoring the Waste Places—Town Rising From the Ruins.

There is no break in the dreary work of recovery. Captain Jones, manager of the Edgar Thomson Steel Works and the immense Carnegie interests, arrived Tuesday. He was accompanied by 800 men, principally from Braddock, Little Washington, the yards, East Liberty and McKeesport. They made their headquarters just beyond the depot, and began operations. One hundred and fifty tents were pitched and a rough table, two or three hundred feet long, was erected between the long, white rows of cars. In the first attempts to clear out the wreckage the methods were to fire the great piles and burn them up as rapidly as possible. Captain Jones at once protested against this, as he declared it was inhuman. He said every stick of timber should be turned over and the rubbish examined before the torch was applied. While this point was being discussed a man, who had been overhauling a pile of debris, came upon the body of a woman. This made the captain's arguments irresistible, and his plan was at once adopted.

In less than two hours 16 bodies had been found in the immediate vicinity of the cars, and from this out thorough examinations will be made of everything before the day is over.

Superintendent A. V. Patton, of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, was in inspection of the valley of death from the South Fork to the railroad bridge at the mouth. His estimate is that between 400 and 10,000 people have perished, while 6,000 dead animals are buried in the wreckage. This is not an exaggerated estimate, but the result of a careful investigation. Superintendent Patton having put in two days looking over the flooded districts, and gathering the facts from all sides. He estimates that it will require fully two months to dig his valley of the mountains to the sea.

Run to the Hills.

A Paul Rogers, lies somewhere among the nameless dead. Who he is may never be known, but his ride will be famous in history. Mounted on a grand, big bay horse, he came riding down the pike which passes through Conemaugh to Johnstown like an angel of wrath of olden times his proud warbling: "Run for your lives to the hills!"

The people crowded out of their homes along the thickly settled streets, were in a daze. No one knew the name of the man who was a man and a hero. On a deadly pace he rode, and his horse rang out his awful cry. In a few moments, however, there came a cloud of rain, and he broad streets, down the narrow girding, twisting, turning, and roaring, rushing—annihilating the weak and the strong. It was the charge of the flood, and its coronet of ruin and devastation, which grew at every instant of its progress. Forty feet high, some say, 50 according to others, was this sea, and it traveled with a swiftness like that which lay hidden in the coils of Mercury.

On and on raced the rider, and as the water rushed the wave. Dozens of people who had fled to the hills, and many who had not, were turned across the railroad tracks by the mighty wave fell upon him, and he and his horse went out into the air together. A few feet further on another of the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, the Pittsburgh were caught up and hurled to the caudron, and the roar of the waves reached. The hero had turned his right nor left for himself, but the death for his townsmen.

COUNTING THE LIVING.

The Only Way to Number the Dead—One Authority Places the Loss of Life at 15,000.
While the loss of life at Johnstown and the surrounding boroughs of Cambria, Sellersville, Kerrville and Conemaugh will never be known, yet a fair attempt is being made to ascertain it within a reasonable limit. This is being done through a registration, which was established in the direction of H. G. McCormack, county treasurer. Twenty-eight agencies within the district and all survivors have been required to register themselves and families.

The work was begun Monday and by Friday evening 8,000 persons had registered. There were 25,000 people residing in town and the boroughs named before the terrible catastrophe. When the work of registration is finished, it will be known how many persons are missing. The list is being thoroughly and carefully made.

IN OTHER PARTS.

Wide Spread Destruction Outside the Conemaugh Valley.

Since telegraphic communication has been restored, it has become known as a matter that all the central and northern portions of the State are completely washed out, with few exceptions, than in any case yet reported. The information is that floods have been laid waste the valleys of all rivers between Jefferson, Elk, Cameron, McKeesport, Tioga, Lycoming, Sullivan, Columbia, Luzerne, Northumberland, Dauphin, York, Adams, Mifflin, Huntingdon, Blair, Berks and Clearfield counties.

Major's have been received of 100 lives on the west branch of the Susquehanna, and details have not yet been received from many of the districts that have suffered. Enough is known, however, to make it certain that the total loss will run up into many thousand lives and millions of dollars.