

Pyramids of Egypt. The awful disaster would seem to confirm the alleged use of inferior material in the structure.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DELUGE.

The following dispatch was sent by courier from Ebensburg on June 1st by William H. Smith, general manager of the Associated Press, who was a passenger on the day express and was an eye witness of the scene at Connemaugh on the night of the terrible tragedy:

"The fast line trains leaving Chicago at 1:35 and Cincinnati at 7 p.m., constitute the day express eastward from Pittsburg, which runs in two sections. This train left Pittsburg in two sections Friday morning, but was stopped at Johnstown by reports of washouts ahead. It had been raining hard for over 16 hours and the sides of the mountains were covered with water descending into the valleys. The Connemaugh river, whose bank was followed by the Pennsylvania railroad for many miles, looked angry and was nearly bank full. The passengers were interested in seeing hundreds of sawlogs and an enormous amount of driftwood shoot rapidly by, as the train pursued its way eastward. At Johnstown there was a long wait, as before stated. The lower stories of many houses were submerged by slack water, and the inhabitants were looking out of the second storey windows. Horses were standing up to their knees in water in the streets. Loaded cars were run on the railroad bridge to keep it steady, and the huge poles of the Western Union carrying 15 wires swaying badly and several went down. Soon several sections of the train ran to Connemaugh, several miles this side of Johnstown, and lay there about two hours, when they were moved on to the highest ground and placed side by side; the mail train was placed in the rear of the first section, and the freight train was run on to a side track on the bank of the Connemaugh. The report was that the bridge had been washed out, carrying away one track, and that the other track was not safe. There was a rumor also that the reservoir at the south fork, some time ago a feeder of the Pennsylvania canal, but later the property of the club in Pittsburg, used for hunting and fishing, was unsafe and might break. This made most of the passengers uneasy, and they kept a pretty good outlook. The porters of the Pullman cars remained at their posts and comforted the passengers with their assurances. "A few gentlemen and ladies and children quietly seated themselves apparently contented. One gentleman had his bed made ready to retire, although advised not to do so. Soon the cry came 'the water has broken in the reservoir and is sweeping down the valley.' Instantly there was a panic, and a rush for the mountain side. Children were carried and women assisted by the few who kept cool heads. It was a race for life. There was seen the black head of the flood,

now a monster of destruction, whose crest was high-raised in air and with this in view even the snake found wings for their feet. No mere words can adequately describe the terror that filled every breast, and the awful power manifested by the flood. The round-house had stalls for 23 locomotives. There were 18 or 20 of these standing there at this time. There was an ominous crash, and the round-house and locomotives disappeared. Everything in the main track of the flood was first swallowed up by the waters. A hundred houses were swept away in a few minutes. These include the hotel, stores and saloons on the front street and residences adjacent.

"The locomotive on the train was struck by a house and demolished. The side of another house stopped in front of another locomotive and served as a shield. The rear car of the mail train swung around in the rear of the second section of the express, and turned over on its side. Three men were observed standing upon it as it flooded. Will they trust to it, or is it still upright? The Pullman car coupling broke and the car moved out upon the bosom of the waters. As it moved on, the men would shift their position. The situation was desperate, and they were given up for lost. Two or three hardy men seized ropes and ran along the mountain side to give them aid. Later it was reported that the men escaped over some drift wood as their car was carried near the bank. It is believed there were several women and children inside the car. Of course they were drowned. 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 seized upon by the water. The despair of those who had lost everything except life, and the wailing of those whose relatives 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 is broken!' Many had left their hats, and as their baggage was on the train they were without means of relieving their unhappy condition. The occupants of the houses still standing on the high ground threw them open to those who had lost all, and to the passengers of the train. During the height of the flood the spectators were startled by the sound of two locomotive's whistles from the very midst of the mad waters. Two engineers, with characteristic courage, had remained at their post, 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 water was receding from the sides of their locomotives.

"By half-past five o'clock the force of the reservoir water had been spent in the village of Connemaugh, and the Pullman cars and the

locomotive of the second section remained unmoved. This was because being on the highest and hardest ground the destructive current of the reservoir had passed between there and the mountain, while the current of the river did not eat it away, but other tracks had been destroyed. A solitary locomotive was seen embedded in the mud where the round-house had stood.

"As the greatest danger had passed, the people of Connemaugh gave their thoughts to their neighbors in the city of Johnstown. Here were centered great steel and iron industries, the pride of Western Pennsylvania, the Cambria Ironworks being known everywhere. Here were churches, daily newspapers, banks, dry goods houses, and comfortable and well-built homes of 12000 people. What was their fate? In contemplation of the irresistible force of that awful flood, gathering additional momentum as it swept 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.

"Cries of horror went up from hundreds on the mountain sides, and a few instinctively turned their steps toward Johnstown. The city was destroyed; all its mills, furnaces, many banks and residences, all were swallowed before the shadows of night fell. The loss of inhabitants who can tell with any certainty? Those who came back by daylight said that from 5000 to 8000 were drowned. Our hope is that this is exaggerated. In the light of this calamity the destruction at Connemaugh sinks into insignificance. There they were all ready to bring in the dead on stretchers. How many were lost here at Mineral Point and at South Fork could not be told and may never be known. There were some passengers and possibly forty or fifty inhabitants.

The loss of life is certainly enormous. The track of the railroad is certainly destroyed from at least ten miles below South Fork and all other property of the company on the line. The destruction of the Johnstown Industries will alone reach many millions of dollars. Then to this vast sum add the vast number of houses and public buildings in that city and the villages above and below it, and some idea can be formed of the property obliterated by the flood created by the breaking of a reservoir, and this reservoir was maintained for the pleasure of the Pittsburg club. Upon the mountain was suspended a body of water three miles long, one wide and seventy feet deep for the recreation of pleasure seekers. What would happen if there should be a break must have been imperfectly apprehended, since it is said that the sum of only \$3,000,00 had been exacted from the club. What was \$3,000,000 to the gross sum of property destroyed? Can they restore the dead to life or assuage the grief of the bereaved? The question of moral responsibility swallows up the financial as completely as the angry waters did the city of Johnstown.