THE EVENING NEWS.
Friday, January 31, 1873

SPEAK NAE ILL.

Other people have their faults,
And so have ye as well,
But all ye chance to see or hear
Ye have no right to tell.
If ye canna speak o' good,
Take care and see, and act
Earth has all too much o' woe
And not enough o' weal.

Be careful that ye make nae strife
Wi' meddling tongue and brain,
For ye will find enough to do
If ye but look at hame.
If ye canna speak o' good,
Oh, dinna speak atall
For there is grief and woe enough
On this terrestial ball.

If ye should feel like picking dawks,
Ye better go, I ween,
And read the book that tells ye all
About the mote and beam.

Dinna lend a ready ear
To gossip or to strife,
Or, perhaps, 'twill make ye see
Nae funny thing of life.

Oh dinna add to others' woe,
Nor mock it with your mirth,
But give ye kindly sympathy
To suffering ones of earth.

Terrors of the Tempest.

The sufferings endured by men, women and children in that part of Minnesota visited by the late terrible snow storm were extreme. Nothing like it had been known for years. The loss of life was frightful and the destruction of property was immense. A Winona correspondent furnishes the New York *Herald* with the following description, dated Jan. 18—

I was in Minnesota after the awful massacres of ten years ago, when the red wave of Indian invasion swept over the smiling land and left it a waste of ashes soaked in blood, but the scalping-knife and bullet of the Sioux did not do such havoc as the snows have wrought this year, nor were all the tortures of the red fiends productive of more agony than I have witnessed within the past ten days. What has been suffered and how many have been slain have not yet been ascertained, for the settlements are far apart and communication is difficult; but by every mail come particulars that chill the blood, and we can now fairly estimate the extent of the calamity.

Up to that fatal Tuesday, at whose mention many a heart will ache in Minnesota for years to come, there had been winter weather of the usual sort, clear, cold with occasional storms of snows, some of which had seriously blockaded the railroads and induced considerable suffering from scarcity of fuel.

Tuesday, the 7th, was a lovely and mild day. The sun was bright and the air balmy. Every pulse of the country was astir under the genial influence, and the wild swans that clanged overhead once or twice from their meres must have seen the prairie roads alive with teams. The farmers were all out at the nearest settlement. They were getting short of fuel; there was but a handfull of flour at the bottom of the barrel; not a scrap of meat was left. But the snows had ceased, their shaggy little horses were well again, so every farmer hitched his team for the town. In the little cottages of wood were women and children; the schoolhouses were full of little ones. Such was the country, thus its dwellers, when the blow fell. Nature would seem to have arrogated to herself all the savage attributes which had marked her first children there, their careful and patient watch for an easy opportunity, and their sudden and relentless onslaught.

So utterly unprepared were the people for the change in the weather, and so suddenly did it come upon them, that one man at Winnebago City describes it as "it was as if a man had clapped his hands—so, and the snow came in our faces." Knowing what the hurricane boded, men leaped into their sleighs, and with voice and lash urged their cowering horses out into the storm. Then the work of death began. For more than fifty hours, till late on Thursday, the freezing wind and falling snow continued. It was not a steady fall of snow, but a howling hurricane, the wind sometimes attaining a speed of twenty-eight, thirty or thirty-two miles. The snow came in ariful flurries, with a wild screech and a stinging whiz. The thermometer fell steadily, till at Champlain it registered fifty-four degrees below zero. At other places the mercury or spirit marked from eight to forty-two degrees below. Some of the farmers who set out soon found that if they valued life they must turn back. They were enveloped in sheets of snow that blinded them. The wind came so fiercely that they were fain to stop and turn round till a momentary lull came. The road—why, the level prairie was all road now, without one track of wheel or runner to indicate the path of safety. Wherever there was a slight knoll or a tree the driving snow-sleet curled round it and broke over it like yeasty billows over a wreck, and far to leeward grew up drifts of eccentric form. Then the snorting horses that toiled along, pressing with their heaving flanks closer to each other for warmth and dumb protection and sympathy, refused to go forward; the driver felt himself becoming listless, his cold limbs were growing warm, and warned of the swift coming of death, he turned and retraced his steps. Happy they who did so betimes! There were many who held on stubbornly till it was too late. There were many more who, goaded on by a dreadful fear of the fate of their wives and little ones, left alone in their frail cabins, forced on through the drifts that grew deeper at every step and cold that became more intense every moment. And there were others who grew weary of the contest, and, lying down in their robes, were lulled by the elemental rage into a slumber which knew no awakening. Sometimes the horses gave out, and the unhappy driver, benumbed and chilled, his movements impeded by his heavy clothing, had to abandon his team and take to the drifts. The moans and shrieks of the horses that found themselves thus deserted by their masters are said by some few who survived such scenes to have been agonizing to hear. And at their homes things were as bewildering. There was perhaps a scanty supply of fuel in the corner and but a day's food in the larder. Night trod closely on the heels of noon. Perhaps the mother was alone with her sucking child, her husband ten miles away in one direction, her children two miles away in another. These hapless parents suffered countless deaths. The wooden buildings creaked and rocked in the swing of the storm like ships at sea. The timbers cracked with the frost like rifles. Beads of frost stood on every piece of woodwork, the small panes of glass were so thick with them there was no chance that the lamp set in the casement could send its feeble light to the belated strugglers without. It was impossible to open the doors, so high had the drifts become. The fragile furniture of it was replenished with the bounty furniture. Day succeeded to darkness, but the day was as the night. Only the chimney of the house appeared above the drifts. The poor woman knew that her children lay dead, hand in hand, on the prairie, and that her husband's corpse was somewhere entombed in a giant drift. The little babe's blue lips were cold against her empty breast; the soul had sped from between them in a little cloud of frozen vapor. She lay down and died, and the relenting wind wafted through the apertures of the room a decent drift of diamond snow for her winding-sheet. These pictures, terrible as they may appear to the readers of the *Herald*, who sit by warm fires and find the music of the snow as it tinkles against the glass a musical and a cheerful sound, are less than the reality. The advance of death was like that of a torturer, who comes with all his horrid engines to the victim bound at the stake. Only they were to be envied who met a swifter fate in the raging storm without, and were spared the sight of their children dying before their eyes of hunger as well as of cold. On the railroads there was not absolute suffering. Of course trains were snowed in for days in drifts that towered to the telegraph wires, and passengers had to shiver and be scantily fed. But this was only a trifle.

When Friday the 16th came, the sun rose upon a land of snow and silence. Drifts many feet deep and many square miles in extent were there. Here and there the chimney of a house stood up like a tombstone in a vast cemetery. The land lay like a corpse under a winding sheet that had moulded itself into occasional wrinkles over the dead limbs or set features. Now came the giant labor of clearing away the giant drifts and setting free the imprisoned trains, and the sadder task of tracing through the prairies the steps of the dead. Everywhere they were found lying still and statue-like in the icy embrace of death.

Sometimes the searchers would find man and horses together, the former lying dead, wrapped in his robes, with the whip in his hand, in the sleigh, one horse down, the other standing in the spot where he was fastened by his partner's fall till he shared his partner's fate. Sometimes the sleigh was found overturned with the traces cut. Then to right or left would be discovered the driver who had wandered round in a despairing circle to the last. Occasionally the beasts showed in their dilated nostrils, widely spread lips, and staring eyes, the signs of mortal terror. And the men too, were sometimes. Thocons of ice, signs of writhing despair. But, as a rule, death came quietly, as it generally does in these cases, first robbing the victim of the consciousness of approaching death, which begets an agonized struggle for life, and stilling him with a stupor said to be as delicious as it is deadly. The death roll cannot yet be made up with any reasonable degree of certainty. We are only now getting detailed reports from the nearer settlements, and it will be fully a week ere these are so complete as to be trustworthy. Many of the missing will not be found till spring; but it is safe to set down all the missing as dead. After carefully collating the various reports received thus far, and making all allowance for the remaining parts of the State, I am led to conclude that the loss of life in Minnesota will range from two hundred and fifty to three hundred. It is just possible, though not probable, that the higher figure may be reached. Almost all of these are men, and a very large portion of them fathers of families in straightened circumstances. The surviving widows and children will thus be left without means of support of any description. The charitable of the East will here find an object for their sympathy.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Z. C. M. I.

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