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CORVALLIS, OREGON, JUNE 3, 1903.

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Editor and Proprietor.

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CORVALLIS OREGON

MANY HOMELESS.

FLOOD AND FIRE DESTROY A
KANSAS TOWN.

Burning Buildings Floated in the
Flood—Cries for Help Heard a
Mile Away—A River Five
Miles Wide—Other
News.

Topeka, May 30.—Fire has added to horror of the great flood now prevailing here. Four hundred houses in North Topeka were burned this afternoon, and that whole section is doomed. As near as can be learned, 150 people are dead, most of them being burned to death. A request for aid has been sent to the Kansas City fire department. It will be met, but the condition of the railroad tracks prevents any fast time.

The whole central portion of North Topeka had been burned out at 10 o'clock tonight, and it is safe to say by morning not a house will be left standing. When it is stated that North Topeka has 10,000 inhabitants, the extent of the disaster can be calculated. The people are climbing to the roofs of houses and the limbs of trees, and many are giving up in despair and dropping into the water below to be carried away by the swift current. It is death by fire or drowning of 200 people unless means can be found for the rescue. Great efforts are being made to construct a steam launch to go to the aid of the sufferers, but whatever is done must be done promptly or the loss of life will be appalling. A pontoon bridge is also under construction.

Burning houses are floating about, setting fire to others. The lower stories of the burning buildings contain 10 feet of water. The current is so strong that no boat can approach any of the burning buildings. Hundreds of people are gathered on the tops of houses, and the cries for help can be distinctly heard a mile away. The whole city is wildly excited because of the fact that no aid can be extended to the sufferers.

The river at North Topeka is five miles wide. No possible estimate of the financial loss can be stated. It will run into the millions. North Topeka was the manufacturing district of the city. Three large flour mills, three woolen mills and other manufacturing establishments are entirely destroyed. The water supply of the whole city has been cut off. The water from the river extends nearly a mile on the south side. The Rock Island depot has had to be abandoned, and more than 500 people on this side of the river are also homeless, but no loss in South Topeka. The Kansas avenue bridge is the only one across the river for miles, and the approach to that bridge is flooded by 30 feet of water.

Seven thousand or more people are on this side of the river sheltered in public buildings and in the homes of citizens. Topeka is now able to take care of all the unfortunate. The work of caring for the refugees is being pushed with the most rapidity. Standing on the state house dome, as many as 30 fires can be counted in different parts of North Topeka.

A. F. Baldwin, who at great risk to his life crossed in a boat to the North Side, returned at ten o'clock tonight, and reports that nothing possibly can be done to save the city from burning.

Oakland, a suburb, five miles northeast of Topeka, is deserted. The people began leaving at 2 o'clock this afternoon after having been warned by the city engineer.

An unconfirmed report from Wamego and Manhattan, west of Topeka, says another rise is coming down the Republican and Blue Rivers. If this is true, the situation here will be greatly intensified. The fire on the east side of Kansas avenue in North Topeka is rapidly taking the remaining buildings. The fire is going toward the wind, and this will serve to check its progress, but there is so much burning wreckage floating about that the destruction of the remaining houses is regarded as certain. It is reported

that two boats loaded with people were swamped and that a dozen or more were drowned.

Shorey, another suburb of Topeka, is now inundated. The Jackson schoolhouse shelters 100 people. They entered the building before the water became so high, and now they cannot escape. The building is on slightly raised ground, and if no further rise takes place the prisoners may be rescued. They are now standing on benches, the water covering the floor several feet deep. The Harris elevator also shelters 50 persons. The water is now so high that it is rapidly spreading out over the country north of Topeka.

At midnight earlier estimates of the number of dead are confirmed by refugees coming to the city. In the darkness and rushing water no bodies can be recovered, and the dead will not be counted until the flood abates. All energies are concentrated on rescue and relief, and it is impossible at this time to even attempt to make up a list of the missing.

At 2 o'clock this (Sunday) morning rain has been fallen for two hours, and this has a tendency to check the fires in the dwellings.

Word from Council Grove says the outlook there is appalling. On a smaller scale, the situation there is much similar to that in Topeka. Nine or more people have been burned to death in a fire started by lime. Reports received from there late today say there is small prospect of the water falling for another 24 hours.

The Rock Island railroad has received a report that the water has fallen at Manhattan. Offsetting this comes a report that a water spout has started a foot rise down the Blue river. Flood conditions are getting worse at Lawrence. Over 500 people in the northern part of town are homeless. The large flour mill belonging to Representative J. D. Bowersox was destroyed at a loss of \$150,000. Several miles of railroad track are washed out.

A big rise in the Smoky Hill river last night caused many more to leave their homes, and hundreds are now camped on the hills east of town. Hill City has been on an island since the first of the week. No trains have been running there this week. The town is small, and the stock of provisions is getting very low. The people are suffering greatly.

Des Moines, Ia., May 30.—Four feet of water was coursing through a large section of East Des Moines business district at daylight this morning, due to a rise of the river of one foot over all past records, and the carrying away of a section of the levee and dam at Center street. Thirty-five thousand people in East Des Moines, 5,000 in Des Moines, and 4,000 in North Des Moines are practically cut off from communication with the main section of the city. Absolutely no attempt is being made to transact business. The street railway company does not expect to be able to start cars for a week. Six thousand persons are homeless, 30 per cent of whom are practically without shelter, and have been unfed for 24 hours, during which time they have been exposed to the inclement weather. Women and children shivered all night long in rain-soaked garments, unable to find a dry place to lie down. Box-cars were placed within reach of the refugees in which they could find shelter from the rain. Inestimable suffering prevails. This morning the Des Moines river is two miles wide. The damage cannot be computed because of the fact that close to 2000 buildings are submerged and it cannot be told whether they will be carried away. Of the seven bridges in the city only one is open for traffic. To get to the Northwestern hotel this morning at 9 o'clock it was necessary to use a boat.

"I have been troubled for some time with indigestion and sour stomach," says Mrs. Sarah W. Curtis, of Lee Mass, "and have been taking Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets which have helped me very much so that now I can eat many things that before I could not." If you have any trouble with your stomach why not take these tablets and get well. For sale by Allen & Woodward.

SPOKE NO WORD.

WHILE FLAMES LOKED AWAY
HER SKIN AND BURNED
FLESH FROM BONES.

Stood in Center of Room With
Hands Uplifted, a Veritable
Pillar of Fire—Terrible
Act of Insane Woman

—Other News.

Salem, May 30.—With flames which she had started with suicidal intent, burning her body to a crisp, Mrs. S. P. Towle, a patient at the state insane asylum, failed to give tongue to the awful agony she must have felt, and calmly permitted the fire to do its work of death. This phase of a tragedy enacted at the asylum this morning reminds one of the early Christian martyrs, who endured the most terrible pain without a murmur.

Mrs. Towle, a woman of 41 years, was an inmate of what is known as the restraint ward. This morning, despite the precautions of the attendants, she managed in some way to procure some matches. This find evidently aroused to full activity the suicidal mania characteristic of the woman's complaint, and with extraordinary cunning she set about preparing to end her life.

Adjoining the ward where Mrs. Towle was confined was a linen room. Ordinarily no one goes into this apartment and the insane woman evidently calculated on being unobserved for a sufficient length of time to accomplish her purpose of suicide.

Carefully closing the door, she ignited the matches and deliberately set fire to her clothing, beginning at the hem of the skirt, and started a blaze at several other parts of her dress. Within a few seconds the flames were leaping about her, licking the skin from her body and scorching the flesh to the bone.

But from the room where this scene was enacted there came no cry of pain or of terror. The crazed woman bore the agony with the silence of a stoic.

One of the attendants came into the ward. She was at once surrounded by a frightened mob of patients.

"Smoke! Smoke! Fire! Fire!" they yelled, while some, seized with greater panic clambered for egress at the iron bars over the window.

The attendants quickly glanced around and saw smoke issuing from the linen room. It was but the work of a moment to open the door. Therein a perfect mass of flames completely hiding her from sight, they found Mrs. Towle. She was standing upright in the center of the room, her hands raised high above her head, a veritable pillar of fire. At great risk to themselves, the attendants grasped the burning woman, and with blankets smothered the flames, which by this time had burned almost all the clothing from the unfortunate woman's body. While the attendants were working to save her life, and while the hastily summoned physicians were working over her, not a sound escaped the lips of the woman, save that of labored breathing.

Surgical skill was of no avail. The woman had inhaled the flames and she died a few minutes after the doctors reached her side.

In the meantime a hard fight was being made to avert a disastrous fire that threatened the entire institution. The mass of clothing in the linen room had taken fire and was burning fiercely, and so soon as the flames, surrounding Mrs. Towle had been extinguished, the attendants turned their attention to saving the asylum from destruction. This they did by a narrow margin, succeeding in putting out the fire only after hard work.

Supt. Galbraith reported the facts of the suicide to the coroner and an inquest over Mrs. Towle will be held this afternoon. The dead woman was committed to the asylum from Marion county.

New York, May 29.—Marguerite Boyenval, of Thelles, near San Juan, who had been in cataleptic condition since May, 1883, has awakened, cables the Herald's correspondent. For some time past she has suffered from phthisis, and it is believed that the effect of this

malady on her system conduced to her awakening. She moved her hand Saturday for the first time and groaned slightly, and subsequently replied to questions by "Yes" and "no." She was, however, in a state of great weakness and gradually sank, dying the day after awakening.

Marguerite Boyenval's lethargy was caused by fright. She had had a child, which died shortly after its birth under circumstances which led to the opening of an investigation. One day in May, 1883, while Marguerite was ironing, a neighbor said to her: "The gendarmes are coming to arrest you." Marguerite had a stroke of fits, and gradually fell into her long slumber.

In 1896 the girl was described as being white as a statue and corpse-like as a mummy. Her body wasted away almost to a skeleton, and her bone seemed to be covered with parchment instead of skin. The body was rigid and only the pulse-beats showed that she was alive. She was sustained by washing her body with milk every day and pouring a few drops of milk or spirits into the sleeper's mouth through a reed.

Many prominent physicians visited the patient during her 20 years' sleep.

Baker City, Or., May 30.—The electric power plant of the Baker City Electric Light & Gas Co. at South Baker was destroyed by fire this afternoon about 4:30. The wind was blowing almost a gale at the time, and for a while the town of South Baker and the large mill and lumber yards of the Oregon Lumber Company, with several million feet of lumber, were in imminent danger of destruction. The firemen made a heroic fight, and succeeded in confining the flames to the power buildings.

The power plant was totally destroyed, entailing a loss of \$25,000. The insurance is only \$10,000. The light company canceled a policy of \$2500 yesterday because of the high premium charged for insurance. It is thought the fire caught in the shavings from the big planing mill near by, which are used to furnish fuel for the electric light boilers.

The company will rebuild just as soon as new machinery can be procured from the East, but at best it will be ninety days before the new plant will be completed.

The gas plant owned by the company is being fitted up tonight to supply the city with lights. Coal oil and candles are at a premium this evening, as most of the people depend on electricity for light.

Portland, May 30.—George Smith the wife-murderer, may now count the remaining number of days of his existence on the fingers of one hand. Next Friday morning, at an hour when most people are in bed, he will forfeit his life in expiation of his crime, on the gallows, and with his passing away will pass the last legal execution in Portland.

Preparations for the hanging will begin next Monday. There is little to do by way of this, other than to issue the usual invitations to witness the gruesome affair. The same scaffold and high enclosure used at the execution of Lester Belding will be made to serve the same purpose in Smith's case. This is virtually in a case of readiness at the present time.

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