

A STORY OF THE STORM.

It is Graphically Told By Mr. H. F. Bowen.

News and Courier, 27th.

"I have never been in a great storm at sea," said Mr. H. F. Bowen, a big, hearty, genial-looking commercial travelling man, to a newspaper reporter yesterday, "but as near as I could judge the experience I had in Galveston during the trouble was pretty much the same as that of a man on board a small ship hundred of miles from shore, and with a hurricane blowing directly off the coast. I represent a large firm in Mechanicsburg, Pa., and part of my time is spent in the South. I had been down on the Gulf coast for a day or two and stopped in Galveston the Thursday before the storm to make one of my regular calls. Our house has some good customers there, and in making the rounds I found that one partner of a firm which always gave me good orders had gone up into the State on business, and that my only chance for an order was to wait and see him.

"Well, I waited, and I got my order, too; but now I am getting ahead of the story. I was comfortably fixed at the Tremont House and so, when I decided to stop over a day longer, I thought that would be something like a day off. The day after my arrival, however, was not particularly pleasant. A storm had been predicted and the weather was heavy. There was no especial apprehension, however, and I retired at a reasonable hour Friday night and slept until about 4 a. m., when a gust of wind blew down the inside blinds of my window and awakened me with a jump. I went down-stairs pretty soon after that, for the wind was then blowing pretty lively, and found that a great many of the guests had also dressed and come down-stairs. All of the morning the wind increased and at 10 o'clock it had done considerable damage. The Tremont is situated upon the highest knoll on the island, and early in the afternoon the water and wind had done great damage along the beach, and carriages began to roll up to the hotel entrances with women and children, flying from houses that were creaking and groaning and suggesting immediate collapse. As the afternoon wore off the water, which had at first only submerged the lower streets, came up to the Tremont. As long as the carriages touched the ground they continued to come to the Tremont, and the men there would carry the half-fainting women and children to a place of safety indoors. The water kept rising. The wind was of such force and fury that some people were brought into the hotel stark naked, their clothes having been torn from them on the streets. The streets became raging torrents and more and more filled with floating debris of every kind. As long as we could, a party watched at the doorways and rescued all who came within reach. The water finally drove us to the second floor of the hotel, and after that we were simply, as I said before, like sailors tossed on an angry sea. The Gulf of Mexico was in front, Galveston Bay behind and the nearest land fifty miles away at Houston, which itself was under a foot of water at the time. The entire island was submerged to a depth varying from six to twenty feet, and a furious hurricane raged and grinding all above water.

"There was nothing for us to do but to wait and listen and watch. From 6 o'clock the city had been in total darkness. There was not even a lamp in the Tremont and the thousand and more of people, huddled chiefly in the long hall of the second floor, in the position most sheltered from the storm, were as silent as though stricken dumb. For five mortal hours we stood, or sat, or lay, just as circumstances would admit, waiting and listening. Occasionally a woman's voice would be heard in prayer, and as some particular heavy blast would strike the house and cause it to tremble and shudder a convulsive sob could be heard. But for the most part of that long watch there was only the roaring of the winds as they lashed and beat about the place and the frightful roar of the water as it swept unbidden through the open doors and hurried along the street, carrying towards destruction and the Gulf its priceless freight of lives and property.

"The Tremont is five stories high and built with a rotunda and galleries, surrounded by a large cupola made of iron and glass. That is to say, it was so constructed. Well, the wind blew up the iron cupola in a very short time and the glass just rained down. Every glass in the building was shattered by the wind, the plating was broken through and the window blinds blown off. You can see that this made the room uninhabitable and it was in the hallway that the refugees were mostly placed. I must say that

the women and children acted splendidly. When it became apparent that a crowd would be there some one insisted that there must be no running about. So the ladies were carried from the street to the second floor, placed in the best spot available and told to stay there. If you can imagine a thousand people under such circumstances and so situated, in Egyptian darkness, you can see how necessary it was that they keep still. I mean remain where they were placed.

"Every hour must end, so after what seemed eternity some one who had ventured to go on an expedition reported that the water had gone down two feet in the rotunda. This venturesome spirit had found a candle somewhere and his assertion was the first bit of cheering news we had. It was then about 11 o'clock. The wind was still blowing with terrific force, but I could notice that it came in gusts and not steadily. That, I knew, from hearing the sailors talk about it, meant that the storm was passing, and right glad was I to be able to communicate this fact to my neighbors. The effect of the candle and the news about the water falling acted like magic on the refugees. From the silence of the tomb the place became like a bee hive. Each man, woman and child had something to say to those nearest them, and while the strain had been terrible there was the true ring of courage in most voices.

know who did the work for them when the city was at a serious crisis.

"Through the efforts of Capt. Felling men were brought to realize the necessity of taking hold with their own hands, and influential citizens were seen helping with the removal of the dead bodies. At first an attempt was made to have the dead all brought to the undertakers' places and have them identified; but when about 1,500 bodies had been accumulated it was seen that this would not do at all. Then the bodies were carried out to sea; but they floated back, and at last they began to burn them. You read of that, didn't you? You have read, too, of the funeral pyre of some countries, where, after all due and formal ceremonies, the body of a dead chief or other is laid in state upon a heap of faggots and incinerated. In Galveston a heap of poor, disfigured, half-naked bodies, maybe a score, but more likely several hundred, were laid together, and broken lumber, trees and rubbish of any kind, piled upon them and fired. There was no ceremony; a solitary attendant stands beside the dreadful pile and places more fuel until the mass is reduced to ashes. Sometimes there were a dozen of these fires burning on all parts of the island. 'Horrible!' you say; well, what could be done? The sea refused the dead, and the ground was merely mud, and a hole dug filled with water before the spade could be removed. To burn the dead was the only recourse, and while it took strong hearts and strong nerves to do such work, there were men ready to undertake it.

"Hunger, thirst and nakedness stared the survivors in the face that Sunday afternoon. There was sorrow enough for those who had lost family, loved ones, friends, property and home, but there was no time for lamentations; the living must be cared for.

"I think it would be safe to say that for twenty-four hours at least the survivors never had a drink of water of any kind. Hundreds and hundreds of people never tasted food for forty-eight hours, and it was several days before many had a full suit of clothes. I spent two days and two nights in a bathing suit, and know of a great many others who were similarly situated. Not only men, but women, lost their clothing in the storm and were forced to wear whatever they could get. I remember one day on the Gulf beach a friend, walking with me, pointed to a group searching in a lot of debris—not for money or valuables—but no doubt fearing to find a missing relative—and said: 'Do you see that woman? Well, she is one of the richest women in Galveston.' And her costume? It was an old bathing suit, and she had neither shoes nor hat. Her home had been carried completely away, and she was only able to be about and looking for some missing one through the kindness of another woman, who had loaned her the suit.

"The patrol did its work well, and no doubt the closing of the saloons was one of the moves that saved Galveston from a second storm. If the rough element had been turned loose to drink and steal as it willed the island would have indeed become a hell within a few days. Possibly some people may be found who would condemn the summary orders given about looting. Well, if there are any worse who think that the negroes who cut fingers and ears from dead men and women, in order to get rings and earrings, did not deserve their fate they should go down that way and see what they will be told. I saw a negro who had been shot one day, and it made me almost wish that he was alive so that he could be killed over again. He was caught by a sentinel chewing the finger of a dead woman's hand in order to get a gold ring. The papers have told also of how several were found with the fingers and ears in their pockets.

"The doctor and I, walking down the Strand, one day turned over a piece of lumber lying near the sidewalk, and there, lying with her little face turned upwards and her golden curls still damp from the cruel water, lay a child of about 5 years. The storm had torn her clothing all away, and her little life had gone out, after all of a mother's care and a father's pride, like a candle snuffed by the wind. A cart was passing and, getting a piece of cloth from a store, we wrapped it about her and passed her tiny body to the driver. It was placed on top a score of bodies, and the cart rattled on towards some place where the fires were burning red and low, hungry for their glut of human flesh. That is just a passing incident, but I can hardly forget it. It was so different from the little white casket, the flowers and the music and the friends that usually attend the death of a child.

"There were some reunions and some gatherings, where dear ones were missing, that would bring great lumps into the throat of the average man or woman under ordinary circumstances. But they passed as matters of course in Galveston. The people were as if walking in a dream for a few days, and it is well that it was so. A few determined men gave the orders and the men who had suffered obeyed.

It was an emergency when the lack of a leader would have been fatal. "Do I think that Galveston will be rebuilt? Yes I do. There was no indication to my mind that any amount of business men who still had interests there would want to go away. They argue, and no doubt with good excuse, that it may be a hundred years or never when another such cyclone strikes their city. They are now hard at work getting things in shape, and within a few months Galveston will be a flourishing city again. The firm which kept me waiting, or rather for which I waited, bought a fine bill of goods from me Thursday after the storm. The partner, who had been away, walked thirty miles to get back, and then chartered a sail boat and crossed the bay. He found that his house was gone and his place of business damaged, but his wife and little ones were safe. After his anxiety the reaction made him almost hysterical. 'Bowen,' he said to me, 'I am the happiest man in Texas. When I got here and found my wife and babies all right, I wanted to dance. My house is gone, not a timber left, and the store is damaged about \$10,000, but all that don't count. My family is safe and well, and to celebrate I will give you a big order.' So that was how I got my order."

Escaped From the Penitentiary.

Columbia, S. C., Sept. 20.—A daring escape was made from the South Carolina penitentiary during last night, it being the first in some years. No less distinguished a prisoner than Murphy, who was convicted of the assassination of County Treasurer Copes of Orangeburg a few years ago, was one of those who escaped. Collins, a white burglar from Pickens county, went with him.

The prisoners at the institution are now confined in the old main building, a massive structure of steel and stone. The fellows managed to get hold of a piece of wagon tire. With this they forced the steel cage through far enough open to squeeze out on their backs, and with E I clothes, etc., they made a rope. They were on the third tier.

Going to the roof they let themselves down just outside the patrol fence. They managed to get across the yard to the west wall and scale it is a mystery. On the top of the wall where they went over they left a message reading, "God be with you till we meet again."

A new remedy for biliousness is now on sale at Hill-Orr Drug store. It is called Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets. It gives quick relief and will prevent the attack if given as soon as the first indication of the disease appears. Price 25c. per box. Samples free.

A good woman is good because she doesn't know any better, but little children are good because they don't know any worse.

Strengthen the tired kidneys and purify the liver and bowels with a few doses of Prickly Ash Bitters. It is an admirable kidney tonic. Evans Pharmacy.

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Now we tried our best to rent about half an acre in front of our Store, where we load our customers' wagons, on which to stack the—

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That we sell every day, but we failed because it was feared that any further obstruction of the public square might impede the progress of the city. We will, however, perfect our delivery system so that no one will have to wait, and the dangers of a crush will be reduced to a minimum.

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