

THE AWFUL AVALANCHE.

FOUR FATAL SNOW SLIDES IN COLORADO.

Ten Lives Lost—Destruction of Engines and Machinery at the Aspen Mine—Narrow Escape.


DENVER, Col., Jan. 20.—A special from Aspen says: Snow has been falling continuously for three days, and covers the ground to a depth of almost three feet. As the 4 o'clock shift was waiting to go on, at the Aspen mine, the men heard a noise, and looking up saw a snow-slide coming down Aspen Mountain. They made a rush for the dump and got under it, thus saving their lives. The slide struck the shaft and engine houses, completely demolishing them, and killing John Rose, mine carpenter. The engine and boiler were badly damaged. The engineer was thrown under the boiler, which was buried under ten feet of snow. He was afterwards recovered alive. John Leonard, one of the owners of the Conomara mine, and several other men were near the shaft house, but escaped with only a few bruises. At 5 o'clock the fire bell announced the occurrence of another slide, this time at Washington Mountain. Investigation showed that two drivers with their mules and wagons had been buried under fifteen feet of snow, near the Acquisition mine.

Seven men who started from here this morning for Maroon Pass to return at noon, have not since been heard from. It is supposed that they were buried under a third slide, reported to have occurred in the pass at about noon. There was another slide near Camp Bird mine, but no other damage is reported. All the avalanches followed in the track of the one three years ago that killed five men at the Kallejo mine.

1886 Multiple avalanche fatalities
reported CO NEWS

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ASPEN, Col., Jan. 20.—The shaft and engine-houses of the Aspen mine were demolished by a snow-slide, and John Rose, a mine carpenter, was killed. The night shift were just about to go on. Hearing the noise of the slide they ran under the dump and saved their lives. John Leonard, one of the owners of the Conemara mines, and several others who were near the shaft-house escaped with bruises. Later another avalanche buried two mule-drivers with their teams near Acquisition mine. Seven men who started from here in the morning have not been heard from, and it is supposed they are buried under a third slide reported in the Maroon Pass.



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UNDER AN AVALANCHE.

Snow - Buried Men Drinking
Their Own Blood,

WANT DRIVES THEM MAD.

Traveling Under the Snow--A Sickening
Sight Seen by Rescuers.

A tragedy of the winter solstice, almost rivaling the horror of the Black Hole, is told here, says an Aspen, Col., special to the *World*. Two of the men are dead; two are writhing in the last convulsive agonies; the lives of four others, who present an emaciated and sickening sight, are hanging in the balance, while three are unharmed.

Two weeks ago a snow cap settled down on Tennessee Mountain, at the head of Granite gulch. Below were several cabins occupied by miners and prospectors. The warning was passed along the gulch, and most of the men fled to Aspen. The occupants of the two substantial cabins some distance below timber line laughed at the fears of the fugitives, and remained. One cabin stood in a dense grove of tall pines in the bottom of the gulch. The other was elevated on an exposed spot 50 feet higher on the mountain side. The former cabin was occupied by James Fooley, Harmon Clinton and John McElroy; the latter by Charles Tuttle, Melville Patterson, Martin Riley, Clayton Garnett, Solomon Camp, John Farris, August Goodwin and Albert Somers. Last Sunday night the heaviest snow-storm of the season set in. Monday night, Jan. 18, four feet had fallen in the timber. Communication between the two cabins was cut off by the drift. Everybody except Patterson had retired early. Shortly after midnight, while engrossed in a novel, he heard a thundering noise, and then a mighty crash caused him to exclaim:

"The slide, boys!"

The cry awakened Garnett, Goodwin and Tuttle, and in his excitement Patterson upset the rickety table on which the candle stood, extinguishing the light. The next instant the cabin was crushed in like an egg-shell under foot and was carried 20 yards with drift. Then followed the silence of the sepulchre. By the resistance of the heavy forest the slide was divided, and one shoot deflected along the side of the gulch, and forced upward by the pressure, buried the other cabin. The weight was not overwhelming, and only a few of the side logs gave way. One of these crushed Fooley's leg. Just the bare edge of the slide, about eight feet deep, covered the cabin. Clinton and McElroy soon commenced to dig their way out with pick and shovel, tunneling to the surface. About 8 o'clock Tuesday morning they broke through and dragged their wounded companion out with them. Their provisions were still intact within. They prepared a frugal breakfast, carried Fooley back into the buried cabin, bound his wound and made him as comfortable as possible, and, armed with shovels, picks and an ax, started out to rescue the remains of their friends. Where the cabin had once stood, surrounded by stout fences, they found a mountain of snow with here and there a broken tree-trunk protruding. The main avalanche ended 100 yards further on, sloping out from a height of 75 feet or more to the bottom of the gulch like the dump pile of the mine, the whole monstrous weight resting against a mass of banded pines. Aspen was 20 miles away, and to go there, organize a rescuing party and return would require at least three days.

Clinton and McElroy decided to attempt the work of succor unaided. Making careful calculations, they began an incline on the slope of the slide, luckily pointing it, as it developed eventually, directly at the spot where the entombed lay, enduring all the agonies of slow suffocation, death, wounds and starvation.

1888 Avalanche traps and kills miners CO
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All day Tuesday they delved away, making such progress that it became necessary on the following morning to erect a windlass, lay a track of boards which they tore from the interior of their cabin and over this slowly hauled snow and debris. Never losing heart or confidence, they struggled on through Wednesday and Thursday, and were at last rewarded by uncovering at a depth of 36 feet a part of the wrecked cabin. A pit or chamber was cleared at the bottom of the incline, and then an aperture was hewn through the remnant of roof. Beneath they heard moans. Maniacal laughter greeted the first ray of light that flashed from their candles into the tomb below. Half an hour later they were dragging out the dead and living.

Camp and Riley had been killed in the first crash. Farris was pinned down by a log, four feet from the cabin occupied by the others. His back was broken. He was insensible. Goodwin's spine was also ruptured, and he was revived by the downpour of air. The upper half of his body went into convulsions. Garnett, Tuttle, Patterson and Somers were mad, though harmless from exhaustion. Garnett had suffered a scalp wound from which the blood flowed freely. It congealed later and the wound closed. When thirst assailed him he reopened the cut and licked the blood from his hand. He had told the others of the relief it gave, and they all imitated him, tapping the veins of their arms with bites. The agonized cries of the fatally wounded men completed the horrors of the snow-bound chamber. When succor came, sixty hours after the disaster, they were in insane delirium and must soon have fallen to eating one another. In fact the arms of Tuttle and Somers were partly divested of skin and flesh. They had been inclosed in a space barely large enough to permit crawling about. The strong center cross beam of the roof had in some unaccountable manner been sprung in a concave support, like a wagon hoop, and moving with the remainder of the structure in which the men happened to be confined, formed a breathing space for them. Some of the side logs that were broken in or borne down on the sleeping occupants caused the fatalities described. The survivors were borne to the other cabin and cautiously fed on boiled meat. Clinton came to Aspen Friday. Thirty men, with sleds, physicians, food and other necessaries, returned with him to care for the survivors and bring them to town. Grave doubt is expressed as to whether any of them can be saved except Tooley.

As the party left the scene the storm was raging fiercely and slides were roaring and thundering down the mountain in all directions. The half-way house between here and Crested Butte, occupied by a man named Larsen and wife, was swept away Thursday with several head of stock. The weather now is such that it would be impossible for a party to attempt to rescue any one who may be in danger in the Pass. As yet there are 15 men between Aspen and Buttes unaccounted for.

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