

46TH. YEAR. NO. 19551

THE ADVERTISER, LONDON, ONTARIO, THURSDAY DECEMBER 31, 1908—TEN PAGES.

MESSINA'S FAMISHING BATTLING FOR FOOD SLAY ONE ANOTHER WITH GUN AND KNIFE ADDING NEW HORRORS TO THE SITUATION

Appalling Tales Told by
the Refugees at
Naples.

ESTIMATED DEAD
NOW IS 150,000

Reported Destruction of Palmi,
With 14,000 Inhabitants,
Has Been Confirmed.

Messina, Dec. 31.—A frightful scene occurred here today amid the ruins of the customs house. Bands of famished individuals were groping among the debris in the hope of discovering food. The first of the searchers were successful, and others attracted by their cries of joy, fell upon them with revolvers and knives. The lucky ones defended each morsel literally with their lives. The struggle was of the most unhuman description. The famished men threw themselves upon each other like wolves and several fell disembowelled in defending a handful of dry beans or a few ounces of flour. One of the unfortunate was pinned to a plank by a knife, while clinging to his hand was his little child for whom he had sought food.

Rome, Dec. 31.—To the terrifying spectacle of death caused by Monday's earthquake has now been added the horror of starvation, and the fear of a spread of pestilence.

Peril of Pestilence.
In the ruins of Messina and Reggio and various towns in Sicily and Calabria lie the bodies of the dead, which it is impossible to extricate, while everywhere thousands of hungry and homeless persons throng the littered thoroughfares. Words are inadequate to express the horror of the ruin and desolation that has overwhelmed Calabria and Sicily, where the earth's tremblings and fire and water have combined to change the smiling, verdant country into desert. Messina exists no longer, and at least thirty years will be necessary to repair the ruin that nature's violence has wrought there.

As yet it is been found impossible to obtain any news whatsoever of the fate of the little villages along the coast, many of which it is believed have been utterly wiped out.

Wiped Off the Map.
In many cases entire buildings have been swept out to sea, and no trace of them remain. It is no exaggeration to say that flourishing and industrious villages have been wiped off the map. In some of the smaller towns, such as Palmi, near Monteleone, the suddenness and the completeness of the catastrophe was overwhelming. Of the 14,000 people living in Palmi, but a handful remain.

Silence of Death.
The Bishop of Morabitio and other priests, with touching devotion, and courage, have done much to preserve order by the example of calmness and self-denial. They are busy carrying comfort and consolation to the dying and the bereaved. The first of the survivors of Reggio to reach Catanzaro were so broken down by the shock of their experiences that it was almost impossible for them to give any connected account of the destruction of the city. They speak disconnectedly of whole districts swept away in a moment, and entire families of well-known people annihilated. Reggio remains isolated in a ghastly silence of desolation. The railroads and the footpaths through the surrounding country, have been utterly destroyed.

Stories of Refugees.
Numberless recitals from eye-witnesses of the terror are now becoming available.

A survivor of Messina says: "The first thing I knew I was thrown out of bed. Then the floor of my room collapsed, and I fell into the apartment under me. Here I found a distracted woman searching for her sister and son, whom she found dead. We remained in the ruins for twenty-four hours entirely alone, without food or drink. We made a rough shelter of boards to keep off the rain. Our ears were filled with the cries and moans of the wounded. These sounds ceased somewhat during Monday night. Still no one came to our assistance. We were as in a tomb with the dead bodies of our children beside us. We could see no one, but every time sounds were heard from the street there would come an outburst of pleading cries for mercy and help from the injured hidden and pinned down in the wreckage.

"Tuesday morning we finally ventured forth, and were taken aboard a vessel in the harbor, on which we (Continued on Page Nine.)



Main Street in Reggio, destroyed by the earthquake. The cathedral, of which the dome is shown, was completely wrecked, with the rest of the city.

Prison's Collapse Kills 1,800 Felons

Monteleone, Calabria, Dec. 30.—The tidal wave that swept into Reggio flooded the city to a depth of 30 feet, above the sea level. Some of the houses along the water front were swept from their foundations and dragged out to sea.

Twelve miles of the railroad near Reggio were destroyed. A tempest added to the terror of the scene. A dispatch received here from Tripoli says that a few Reggio survivors are wandering nude and demented about the ruins of the city, searching for food. Practically all the pupils of the Reggio College perished. The little villages located on the heights above are in a heap of ruins.

The local prison collapsed and all the convicts, estimated to number 1,800, lost their lives.

A group of travellers who were at the railroad station awaiting the arrival of a train were crushed under the debris of the building. It is not known whether any foreigners were among them. All the railroad stations in a radius of twelve miles from Reggio have been destroyed.

The sea is still strong. A torpedo boat left Santa Venera for Reggio loaded with provisions, but she had to return back on account of the bad weather.

Modern Cassandra Predicted Disaster

Naples, Dec. 30.—The newspapers are reproducing the prophecy of Matilde Serao, which was printed in Les Annales a week ago, and in which, predicting the destruction of Naples and expressing Italy's constant fear of nature's upheaval, she said: "Today the city is beautiful, because God wishes it. We believe her immortal, but she is destined for death."

No Word Received From Sicily Yet

The several families in this city who have relatives around the destroyed cities of Messina and Reggio in Sicily, are still anxiously awaiting word of their friends. It is believed that Mr. Sansone is at present at Termoli, a seaport midway between Messina and Palermo, on the north coast of Sicily. An effort is being made to get Mr. Sansone by wire. His relatives are naturally somewhat anxious regarding his safety, and it is also hoped that information regarding the friends of other Londoners may be obtained through him.

Mr. Fenech, whose brother is in charge of the astronomical department of the University of Messina, is making every effort to obtain news of him, but so far the effort has been unavailing. The congested condition of the telegraph lines to Messina and that locality making it almost impossible for private messages to be transmitted. This may account for the failure to get an answer to the numerous cablegrams that have been sent from London in the past two days.

John Stevely.
"Note.—Mr. Gibbons is now in Washington, but his son, Mr. Geo. S. Gibbons, authorizes the use of his father's name."

ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CAMPAIGN

Statement issued by the Members of the Sunday Car Committee.

In view of the charges that are being made in the public press of this city by two reverend gentlemen, we, the undersigned members of the Citizens' Sunday Car Executive Committee, declare that we accept responsibility for all that has been done and all that shall be done in the Sunday car movement purporting in any way to be under the auspices of our committee. Signed: Sir John Carlisle, "Geo. C. Gibbons, K. C., Dr. J. B. Campbell, John Garvey, sen., R. C. Struthers, S. F. Lawrance, Arthur W. White, C. W. McGuire, John Pringle, R. C. Eckert, W. W. Gammage, J. S. Moore, W. P. Meredith, J. A. McConvery, M. Masuret, P. Walsh, R. R. Bland, R. D. McDonald, Chas. E. Sterling, J. P. Faulls, M. A. Keene, T. J. Murphy, E. J. MacRobert, Jas. C. Duffield.

ESTIMATE OF EARTHQUAKE CASUALTIES

Population.	Loss of Life—Damage.
Messina (The Commune) 147,000	70,000
Reggio (Calabria) 34,617	40,000
Palmi (Calabria) 14,000	14,000
Gioia (Calabria) 7,000	Almost totally destroyed.
Soylla (Calabria) 5,042	
Baguara (Calabria) 7,500	Large numbers killed.
Barcellona (Sicily) 16,490	
Castroviebi (Sicily) 3,375	
Florida (Sicily) 12,165	
Neto (Sicily) 22,285	
Vittoria (Sicily) 30,800	Loss of life and damage reported in all these cities and towns.
Paterno (Sicily) 20,000	
Catania (Sicily) 146,500	
Terranova (Sicily) 22,019	
Maronepoli (Sicily) 12,900	
Naro (Sicily) 16,600	
Augusta (Sicily) 3,437	
Ensenara (Calabria) 9,172	In ruins.
Pizzo (Calabria) 22,800	100.
Catanzaro (Calabria) 8,100	17 destroyed.
Reposito (Sicily) 8,842	1,000.
Cassano (Calabria) 2,500	500.
Cozenza (Calabria) 43,203	In ruins.
San Giovanni (Sicily) 1,500	In ruins.
Catanzaro (Calabria) 43,203	Wiped off the map.
Calanisetta (Sicily) 9,734	Engulfed by the sea.
Gazzari (Calabria) 9,734	
Cantello	
Velpasso (Sicily)	

\$801,170 Worth of New Buildings Erected in London During Past Year

Figures Prepared by City Engineer Graydon Are Very Satisfactory.

In spite of the fact that this year has not been looked upon as favorable for building operations, the city has experienced a very fair growth in buildings.

Over three-quarters of a million dollars has been spent in buildings this year in the city of London. Up till noon today there have been 27 building permits issued by City Engineer Graydon for the month of December, making in all 242 for the year.

The Total Value.
The total value of the buildings erected was \$801,170.

"We can now keep a closer watch on building than we could formerly," said City Engineer Graydon. "This year has been a fine year for building, one of the best we have had in some time. I have no figures for comparison at hand just now, as we did not keep a close tab on building operations in former years. The year has been most satisfactory from all viewpoints."

them, according to their story: "You'll find her anyway; she's over there."

Breitag was placed under arrest charged with slaying the woman. The police say he told them he choked her to death on the day her disappearance was reported, Dec. 6.

"She bothered me too much," he is reported to have given as the reason for the crime.

BURIED HIS SLAIN WIFE IN CELLAR

Laborer Put Concrete Floor in Cellar the Day After She Disappeared.

New York, Dec. 30.—Like a chapter from the horror tales of Poe was the finding yesterday of the body of Matilda Breitag in the cellar of her husband's home in South Brooklyn.

It was the "Black Cat" and "The Telltale Heart" in real life. Carl Breitag was pursued by no remorse for the killing of his wife, but like the principals in Poe's two famous tales he was led to reveal the cement-sealed tomb of his victim through the insistence of the police.

As in "The Black Cat," the body was buried in masonry. As in "The Telltale Heart" it was hidden beneath the floor.

Their suspicions aroused by the fact that Breitag had the floor of his cellar concreted the day after his wife disappeared, three weeks ago, the police made a visit to the Breitag residence and in a corner of the cellar, two feet under the concrete, discovered Mrs. Breitag's body.

Breitag, who made strenuous objections, was present when the digging was begun. Finding them in earnest about the task he pointed to a corner of the cellar and said to

citizens who prefer to defeat the bylaw so that artesian wells might be tested, have asked that they be given an opportunity to ventilate the question, and Mayor Stevely has issued a proclamation accordingly.

Speeches will be made by prominent citizens.

The action of the committee of citizens has given a new direction to the discussion of the water question, and has greatly stimulated interest in the matter.

Some time ago it was thought that the bylaw would carry, but it is now extremely doubtful, owing to the interest taken in the artesian well experiment.

MEETING TONIGHT AT CITY HALL

Citizens Who Favor Artesian Well Plan Call It.

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LITTLE ONES THAT AWAIT ADOPTION

Twenty-Five at the Shelter That Need Foster Homes.

There are at present 25 children in the Children's Shelter, Wharfedale road, awaiting adoption, ranging in age from three to ten years. The society is empowered by the Dominion Legislature to become the guardians of any young children who are left orphaned and destitute, or whose parents are not considered morally fit to bring up children. During the past fifteen years, foster homes have been found for more than 500 of these waifs. During the current year homes have been found for sixty children.

London does not bear all the expense of these children. Those from outside municipalities pay \$125 for any child they send to the institution. The others are supported by the \$700 grant given by the county council.

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DEATHS FROM TUBERCULOSIS ARE GREATLY ON INCREASE

Vital Statistics for 1908 in London Are Not Reassuring—Natural Increase for the Year Was, However, Two Hundred and Ninety-five—Marriages Show Falling Off.

The vital statistics for the year are remarkable in that the number of deaths from tuberculosis is increasing rapidly.

The number of deaths in December from this disease reached the high water mark for the year, namely 9.

For November there were 8, making the total for the year 55, or an average of a trifle more than 4½ deaths a month the year round.

In 1907 there were 48, and consequently the increase for the year is 7.

The Stork Busy.
The stork had a good year, and was busy all the time. The national bird of Ireland brought 1,040 babies to the city during the year.

This is an increase of 82 over 1907, showing that race suicide is not so popular as it once was.

As the number of deaths during the year was 745, the natural increase in the population for the year was 235.

The Death List.
The number of deaths show an increase also. During 1908 745 crossed the Great Divide, as compared with 686 last year, an increase of 59.

Falling Off in Marriages.
According to the statistics, Leap Year is a hand-painted frost. There is a great falling off in marriages during 1908; in fact, there were 101 less weddings this year than last. That is a reduction of almost 25 per cent a somewhat serious loss.

During the year, there were 457 weddings, while in 1907 there were 558. The girls are becoming more independent, seemingly, all the time, and will not "go after" the men as they used to.

During the year 17 cases of typhoid fever reported with 5 deaths. Last year there were 3 cases and 3 deaths.

December Figures.
The statistics for the month of December show 75 visits from the stork, 24 marriages, and 60 deaths. In 1907 there were 76 births, 25 marriages and 50 deaths. The December wedding crop, the last chance for the Leap Year girls, was better than December, 1907.

Tuberculosis was responsible for 9 deaths, pneumonia 2, cancer 4, alcoholism 1, and appendicitis 3. There were 8 people over 70 who succumbed, and 16 youngsters died.

The police are keeping a close watch for two other men.

Marley was bailed in the sum of \$2,000. This makes in all four arrests in connection with the case.

As stated, Herald had nothing to do, it is said, with the assault on P. C. Robinson.

Harvey Paul, the young man from Bloomfield, Ontario, who several weeks ago was found guilty of stealing Laundry Girl, the well-known race horse, and several overcoats, was sentenced to fifteen months in the Central Prison.

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A Farmer's Barn Wiped Out by Fire

The barn of Neil McGugan, near Talbotville, was completely destroyed by fire this morning about 6 o'clock, and the grain and winter stock of feed which was stored therein are a total loss.

Mr. McGugan was feeding his cattle about a quarter to six, when suddenly

the lantern exploded. The fire spread rapidly through the barn, and it was only by the hardest kind of work that Mr. McGugan managed to get his horses and cattle safely out. His wagons and implements were also saved.

The loss, which will amount to \$1,500, is partly covered by insurance.

Customs Revenue Shows Improvement

Ottawa, Dec. 31.—During the first nine months of the year the collections at the Canadian customs houses during the month of December the collections totalled \$3,875,090, which is only \$217,000 behind the record for the previous December. It is anticipated that the collections will reach the old level early in the year.

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