

# FEARFUL DISASTER BEFALLS ITALY

## Terrible Toll Taken By The Earthquake Which Devastated Central Italy, Last Wednesday

**Late Reports from Stricken Districts Indicate Great Loss of Life and Property—Fifty Thousand Believed to Have Been Killed or Injured—Whole Towns Said to Have Been Wiped Out While Others Were Partially Wrecked—Considerable Damage Wrought in Rome Where Many of the Historical Structures Suffered—Shock Was So Violent and of Such Lasting Nature that It Broke the Needles in the Seismograph at Naples—Premier Salandra Has Personally Taken Charge of the Relief Work and the Pope Has Expressed Desire to Go to the Spot and Comfort the Distressed—Doctors and Supplies Rushed to the Scene.**

Rome, Jan. 14.—With every hour additional and more accurate details are received and the horrors of yesterday's earthquake increases, threatening to place it in the list of similar catastrophes in Europe, second only to the Messina disaster of 1908.

The list of dead, dying and injured has increased from a relatively small figure last night to more than 50,000 according to an official announcement today, and it is expected that this number may grow before the day is over. The full extent of the property damage has not yet been determined. Here in Rome, priceless statues, century old buildings and structures that for years have been the mecca of all visitors, have been destroyed or injured. Though the loss of life and possibly the damage may be less than it was in 1908, the area of the disturbance greatly exceeds the Messina earthquake. It covers the whole central portion of Italy, extending from Naples on the south to Ferrara on the north.

The most disastrous disturbance, from all reports, seems to have centered in the vicinity of the town of Avezzano, where 15,000 persons have been killed or injured according to the latest official reports. Reports of damage in varying degrees of severity have come from Latium, Abruzz, Umbria, the Marches, Tuscany, Emilia, Campania and Apulia.

Rome, Jan. 14.—Late reports from the zone which suffered from yesterday's earthquake while still fragmentary indicate that there has been an appalling loss of life and property. Latest estimates of the killed and injured place the total figures at 50,000.

The earthquake zone so far as can be gathered here, extends for a distance of nearly three hundred miles, from below Naples in the south to Ferrara in the north and across the entire width of the country in the district indicated. The country to the east and southwest of Rome suffered the most apparently for reports of losses of life and damage to property come from all over this district. Avezzano, a town with 12,000 inhabitants, 63 miles east of Rome, seems to have been the centre of the district disturbed and this place with a number of nearby towns and villages is reported as having been destroyed. At Avezzano and vicinity the number of dead there is being placed at more than 15,000.

Among the towns reported destroyed are Capelle, Sourcola, Magliano, Cappadocia, Celano and Pesciro and Sora and Arpino are said to have been partially wrecked. Naples felt the shock severely but suffered only slight damage. Sulmona and Aquila in the province of Abruzzi and other towns in that region report much damage and some loss of life.

No one was killed in Rome but there is considerable material damage. Several of Rome's historical structures were damaged but it is hoped not irredeemably so. About 100 persons were killed in towns near Rome, according to reports. Relief work is under way and it is said that King Victor Emmanuel will himself visit the most severely stricken districts at the earliest possible moment.

Premier in Charge of Relief Work  
Premier Salandra has personally taken charge of the relief work. He has established quarters in the home office, from which he will direct the rescue work in the earthquake district. Special trains with doctors

recent birth of a princess, as she ardently desired to go personally and give succor to the victims. The duchess of Aosta has gone to Montedison where she has installed herself as a hospital nurse for the wounded.

Pope Benedict is awaiting a report from Mgr. Sagni, archbishop of Aquila, on the gravity of the situation and the probable loss of life. He has expressed a desire to go to the spot if his presence is necessary to encourage and comfort the distressed.

The anxiety concerning the province of Potenza seems unnecessary, as the latest reports say that while the earthquake damaged buildings there it caused no loss of life. The greatest injury occurred in the villages around the extinguished volcano Vulture.

**Broke Needle in Seismograph**  
Director Friedlander of the International Volcanological Institution at Naples, says the origin of the earthquake is geological and not volcanic, with its epicentrum in the valley of the Garigliano river. The registration of the earthquake at the observatory lasted forty seconds and was so violent that the needles broke.

Mount Vesuvius, according to observers in that district, has shown no signs of unusual activity.

**Fifteen Thousand Dead at Avezzano**  
London, Jan. 14.—The Express in an edition issued at 7 o'clock today estimates the dead at Avezzano, Italy, as a result of the earthquake at fifteen thousand.

The correspondent of the Express in Rome in his story of the earthquake says that the shocks were felt with varying results throughout the whole district between Rome and Naples. In Rome, he says, it is established there was no loss of life, although many ancient works and buildings were severely damaged.

"The serious loss of life occurred outside of Rome," the Express correspondent continues, "especially in the mountain towns on the road to Naples. The towns entirely destroyed include Bussi, Sourcola, Capelle, Magliano and Cappadocia. The shock was severe in Naples but the damage is slight. The heaviest casualties undoubtedly occurred at Avezzano, where 15,000 persons are reported buried in the ruins."

"Troops are being rushed to the afflicted districts. There is need for the quickest assistance owing to the fact that snow covers the country and blocks the roads. Communication over the entire wrecked section is exceedingly difficult."

**King Leaves for Afflicted District**  
"King Victor Emmanuel is leaving at once for the afflicted district."

According to the Rome correspondent of the Daily News, there is still no news from Avezzano, which is reported razed to the ground.

The railways in the stricken district are well nigh useless, the Daily Mail's correspondent says, as the bridges and tunnels were destroyed and the tracks broken and covered with debris. The highways are impassable owing to the heavy snowfall.

The officials in Rome make no effort to estimate the damage done in the provinces, the correspondent says. They are bending all their energies in relief work. The loss of life near Rome, it is estimated by the Mail's correspondent, is about 100.

A despatch from Rome to the Daily News gives the following official statements issued there regarding the earthquake:

"The district of Sulmona is badly damaged and the victims are numerous. Twenty persons were killed and many injured at Villaggio. Rescue work has started at Popoli and Pescara where many houses are damaged. The damage is extensive at Aquila and Isola Dell'iri and several other small towns in the province of Rome. The village of Sora has been

razed to the ground.  
At Sulmona the barracks, St. Dominic's church and many houses collapsed, with others threatened to fall.

Loss of life is feared at Chieti, Teramo and other towns in Abruzzi."

**Survivor Tells Experiences**  
Rome, Jan. 14.—A young Italian driver, who left Avezzano a few minutes before the earthquake gave a brief account of his experiences when he reached Rome at an early hour this morning.

His first intimation of trouble was when his horses suddenly stopped, trembling, and refused to go farther. At the same moment there came a deep rumble like a railroad train going over a bridge. Three minutes later the standing walls of some quarries along the road had crumbled and were lying in dust-covered heaps.

From Avezzano came the cries of frightened people. Amid the roar of falling houses could be heard the voices of women calling on the saints to help them. The city was under a cloud of dust. To the driver it looked as if the earth had opened to emit columns of white smoke.

He tried to drive back to Avezzano but could make no headway. He and his horses were blinded by the dust. Many had received injuries and were dragging themselves through the dust and confusion in pitiable plight. Some were so weak that they fell by the roadside. The objective of the refugees was the railroad station, which was soon crowded with half frantic men, women and children.

Before the driver left the vicinity organized efforts were being made to convey the most severely wounded to nearby hospitals.

**Avezzano Completely Destroyed**  
Paris, Jan. 14.—A despatch to the Havas agency from Aquila, Italy, says that later news received there confirms the report that Avezzano has been completely destroyed by the earthquake. The towns of Celano and Pescina, close to Avezzano, are partially wrecked. There is a great number of dead, says the despatch, and many victims are buried in the ruins.

**Repetition of Messina Disaster**  
Rome, Jan. 14.—The fate of Avezzano, 63 miles east of Rome, and the surrounding Abruzzi country, called the Italian Switzerland, and which has become one of the most fertile lands in Italy, has plunged the whole country into the deepest mourning.

In this section, which suffered most severely from the earthquake of yesterday, there seems to have been a repetition of the earthquake disaster at Messina. It is in part a rocky and inaccessible country and practically all communication has been interrupted. A train which should have arrived in Rome yesterday morning from Aquila has disappeared and so far it has been impossible to trace it.

Despite the fact that communication even by carriage roads has been interrupted, King Victor Emmanuel, notwithstanding contrary advice, intends to attempt to reach the place of disaster by automobile.

News received from Arpino, 30 miles south of Avezzano, says that forty persons were killed there and 110 wounded. The tower at Arpino in memory of the great Roman orator born there, collapsed as a result of the earthquake.

The under-prefect of Sora, 25 miles south of Avezzano, telegraphs that half the town has been razed. He implores assistance.

**Rome Suffered as Well**  
London, Jan. 14.—Several of the morning newspapers report great loss of life in the earthquake zone.

The latest Rome despatch to the Times reports that eighty houses were destroyed in Rome. The despatch adds that telegrams received from the province announce further damage and additions to the death roll, especially at Tivoli, where the populace is camping in the open in fear of further shocks. It is feared that serious damage has been done in the department of Abruzzi.

Calabria and Sicily report that the shock was felt there. Other special despatches say that owing to the breaking down of telegraph and telephone lines it has been impossible to

ascertain the exact results of the disturbance.

The Daily Telegraph's Rome correspondent declares the damage done was very great, especially in the environs of Rome and in the Abruzzi, where, he says, some villages were destroyed. The correspondent adds that the number of victims has not been ascertained but that certainly there are thousands of them.

The Standard's Rome correspondent, referring to the report that there were 8,000 victims at Avezzano, says that in all probability this report is untrue, but that in any case the loss of life is appalling.

**Another Shock Felt**  
London, Jan. 14.—A news despatch from Rome says that a further distinct shock was felt in Rome about 3 o'clock this morning. In several quarters of the city people fled from their homes into the open.

**MILITARY POSITION OF OTTOMAN EMPIRE HAS BECOME DESPERATE**

The belief is growing that Constantinople is now really in Great Danger.

Petrograd, Jan. 15.—The belief is growing here that Constantinople really is in danger. The military position of Turkey has become desperate through the clearance of their transports from along the southern shores of the Black Sea.

The Russians in their cruise there destroyed 51 Turkish vessels, mostly sailing craft, which the Breslau and Hamedieh should have guarded. They opened fire on the Russian cruisers at night, using projectors, but the second Russian broadside destroyed the Breslau's projectors. The Hamedieh then extinguished hers and both disappeared in the darkness.

Previous to this the Breslau, through confusion in signals, bombarded the Turkish position near Chioptasao so severely that the Russians entered it without loss.

**POINTED QUESTIONS BY NAVAL WRITER OF LOSS OF H.M.S. FORMIDABLE**

**Morning Post Correspondent Has Complaint of Brevity of the Govt. Announcement.**

London, Jan. 15.—The Morning Post's naval correspondent complains that beyond the brief announcement on the day of the disaster the government has issued no statement describing the circumstances or explaining the cause of the sinking of the Formidable, and himself proceeds to supply the missing information. His account is the first narrative of the occurrence to be published and it has been passed by the censors.

According to this expert the battleship was the last of a squadron of warships steaming slowly in single line on a clear, moonlight night off Torbay, when she was struck by two torpedoes in quick succession. The German submarines, he says, were known to be in the channel, yet the practice usually followed of holding a court of inquiry or court martial following such losses has not been adhered to and declares that the nation has the right to know the reason.

The chief points, he says, which require explanation are:

First—Why was the squadron at sea at night?

Second—Why was it deprived of its proper defense of destroyers?

Third—Why was it steaming at slow speed?

Fourth—Why have the admiralty withheld all detailed information of the disaster?

Fifth—Why has no court of inquiry been held on the matter?

Sixth—What guarantee is there that another disaster of the kind may not occur?

**GERMANS WILD SEARCH FOR COPPER SHOWN BY LETTER FROM FRONT**

Paris, Jan. 15.—A letter which the Journal publishes from an officer at the front shows the enormous importance which the Germans attach to copper, incidentally justifying the British measures to prevent its importation, the Journal remarks.

The officer writes: "Prisoners are now devoid of brass buttons and badges and even the points of the famous helmets. The state has ordered them to hand over everything containing copper to the authorities and also to search abandoned houses for similar objects, however trifling. When the helmet is pointless surely the beginning of Germany's end has come."

## Twenty Thousand Dead, Thirty-Five Thousand Injured

**Many Victims of the Earthquake in Italy are Still Buried Alive.**

**RESCUERS TRYING TO DIG THEM OUT**

**Offer By Pope to Mayor of Rome Was Gratefully Accepted.**

Rome, Jan. 15.—Constantly shifting estimates, based on reports that continue to trickle in, now place the death toll from Wednesday's earthquake at 20,000 and the injured at a number in excess of 35,000.

Hundreds, possibly thousands, of victims, are still buried alive, imprisoned in the wreckage of their homes. Rescuers from every walk of life are struggling desperately to dig them out. King Victor Emmanuel, who returned to Rome from Avezzano last night, personally superintended the rescue of a number of such unfortunate cases.

The king reached the capital in his private car, to which were attached three coaches bearing forty wounded. These, like the other hundreds who are slowly reaching Rome, were distributed about the hospitals, regular and extraordinary, in the city.

**Pope's Offer Accepted**

Pope Benedict this morning offered to the mayor of Rome the use of the hospital of Santa Marta, which he visited yesterday. The offer was gratefully accepted and its 300 beds serve as a material relief for the difficult situation. The principal loss of life so far appears to have been in Avezzano, and the town of Sora, 15 miles away. Both these municipalities were destroyed and their populations virtually wiped out. Latest reports place the number of dead in Avezzano at 10,000 and at Sora at 4,000. In at least sixty other towns affected more than 6,000 have been killed. From these towns come the majority of the injured. In Avezzano and Sora almost everyone was killed.

**Water Supply Shut Off.**

The situation in Avezzano is increasingly grave because of the destruction of the aqueduct system and the consequent shutting off of the water supply. Communication is slowly being re-established and two hastily improvised hospitals and one refugee camp have been set up.

Reports from Switzerland show that the earthquake was felt among the Alps and caused destructive avalanches.

As at Messina it will be weeks before the loss of life can be known or the property loss accurately compiled. The work of recovering bodies is proceeding slowly. There has been organized in Rome a private expedition to send out automobiles loaded with relief. Over 300 machines already have left for Avezzano. They carried blankets, medicines food and cordials.

**Wide Area Affected**

Genoa, Via Paris, Jan. 15.—News which has reached here from Como and Chiasso indicates that the earthquake was felt in the Italian valley clear to the Swiss frontier. The telegraph and telephone lines are generally down in that district, but it has been ascertained that no loss of life is reported there. A little news that has come through from the frontiers reported that the Alps trembled under the shock and detached numerous avalanches, as the snow on the summits was very deep.

From Courmayeur, Italy, through telephones, an avalanche was seen falling from Mount Blanc. A party of Italian troops who returned to Aosta report that they felt the shock and saw avalanches fall from Mount Rosa. A message from Innsbruck states that in the Alps near the Italian frontier 27 soldiers were overwhelmed by an avalanche caused by the earthquake and three of the men were seriously hurt.

**Tragic Story of Disaster**

Avezzano, via Rome and London, Jan. 15.—It was not an easy task to go from Aquila to Avezzano, although the distance is only forty miles, as the authorities had requisitioned all means of transportation for relief work. This was especially so of automobiles, but the correspondent was allowed to use one of these on condition that he carry medicine and food. The journey in the middle of the night was quite normal until the crests of the Apennines near Orindoli were reached at about 5,000 feet, where there was

intense cold and snow. From there the road descends in a steep zig zag toward the high plateau of Marsi, and the road was lined with peasants' houses and farm buildings which were nothing but broken and tottering walls. The tragedy began to unfold itself when Celano was reached. There most of the houses had fallen and the remainder of them were in an unsafe condition. The surviving population, wounded, starving and almost frozen, was spread over the country. The automobile was stopped every few minutes by persons who implored assistance, and soon its contents had been distributed among them. Then there were pitiful lamentations from the people who asked to be taken where it was possible to be cared for.

**Beautiful Country Devastated**

From Celano the route to Avezzano lay along the right of a high road. While this was being traversed, a splendid Italian sun having risen, the immensity of the catastrophe spread out before the correspondent. In the plain that was formerly Lake Fucino, the vegetation was withered. On the Apennine mountain all about which formerly were dotted with flourishing towns and villages that hang like eagles' nests, now were heaps of debris. The belfry of the Luco cathedral in Pescina and the municipal building in Trassacco were not to be seen.

The immense masses of ruins in these towns made it seem probable that the disaster was a great one.

**Soldiers Assist Rescue Work**

Sora, Italy, via Paris, Jan. 15.—Numerous detachments of infantrymen, engineers, artillerymen and carabinieri have arrived here to assist in the rescue work and guard property. The houses in the town have not all been destroyed, but most of those still standing threaten collapse. The occupants have been turned out by the authorities because of the dangerous condition of the houses. Up to the present time more than 450 bodies have been taken from the ruins and large numbers of injured persons have also been rescued. The injured are being cared for in booths and tents rigged up outside the town.

Bread and other provisions are being served liberally to the survivors. The military and communal authorities are directing the work of rescue.

**Estimate of Casualties**

Paris, Jan. 15.—The Petit Parisien's Rome correspondent says that the number of earthquake victims exceeds thirty thousand and that this list would have been greater since the earthquake was more violent than that of Messina had it not been for the fact that no large cities were affected. The centre of the disturbance, according to this correspondent, was situated in the dry and ancient Lake Fucino, which was drained in 1875 by Prince Alexander Torton at a cost of about \$3,000,000.

**Suggested Cause of Disaster**

As to the cause of the disaster the Petit Parisien's correspondent quotes an eminent authority as saying:

"The most likely hypothesis is that continuous heavy rains resulted in filtrations which formed great bodies of steam by contact with incandescent matter. This hypothesis seems confirmed by the fact that the spring at San Giuliano has almost double the volume of its flow since yesterday."

**Pope Did Not Leave Vatican**

Rome, Jan. 15.—Some of the newspapers announce that Pope Benedict in visiting the wounded at Santa Marta hospital left the Vatican, thus interrupting the traditional imprisonment of the pope, always adhered to by Popes Pius IX, Leo, and Pius X, after the fall of the temporal power, meaning thus to protest against the occupation of Rome.

In reality the pontiff did not leave the Vatican, but, passing through the apostolic palace inside St. Peter's, he reached the hospital without touching Italian soil. His predecessor did the same thing when he visited the wounded brought to Santa Marta hospital after the earthquake in Messina.

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