When the storm passed off and the waters went down, the flooded region of Pennsylvania was in a most wretched condition. Twenty of the sixty-six counties in the state had been flooded. In each lives had been lost, millions of dollars of property destroyed, hundreds of people stripped of homes and earthly possessions, whole villages devastated, and the health of a million inhabitants seriously threatened. From the mouth of the Susquehanna to the sources of the West Branch and the Juniata, and from the mouth of every large tributary of these rivers to the mountains was an unbroken succession of ruined and injured towns. In some the reservoirs had been swept away and the water supply cut off. In many half the wells and cisterns were filled with foul water from the river. The streets of all were littered with wreckage and coated deep with slime deposited by the flood and containing all sorts of putrefying substances. Over the floors and walls of houses and stores was the same slime. The cellars were brim full of water. In the streets were carcasses of dead animals, and the contents of grocery stores and butcher stalls, offal from the stables and cesspools, and vegetables from the markets and farms. What to do in this emergency became, in many towns, a most serious question.
To clothe the houseless and homeless, and feed and lodge them for a time was a matter of no great difficulty. But where were they to get permanent homes? Who was to pay for cleaning the streets, for removing dislodged buildings, for pumping out cellars? Who was to pay for disinfectants? The towns had no money, nor was it likely that in a community where every business man had his lumber carried off or his stock of goods damaged, or his office coated with filth and, perhaps, his home also, much money could be subscribed for public purposes. That help must be had from outside was apparent and, in the form of the necessities of life, was quickly given. The moment the railroads had reopened communication with the east, car loads of flour and hams, goods in cans and goods in barrels began to pour into the river towns. But of money hardly a dollar was given. Compared with the suffering at Johnstown the suffering elsewhere seemed nothing. In the excitement of the moment the serious needs of the towns along the valleys of the Susquehanna and the Juniata were quite overlooked. After waiting patiently a week the people determined to make known their needs, held meetings, appointed committees, and sent out calls through the press. In some the burgess or the mayor made a call on the Governor. In others the appeals were made to the people of the United States.

The mayor of Millhall assured the Governor that outside of Johnstown his town had suffered a greater proportionate loss than any other in the state. Fifty-seven families who lived by daily work had lost all. They were, indeed, fed and housed, but they could not replace their houses, furniture or gardens. "Our town," he wrote, "is full of débris and dead animals. Our bridges are gone. We have no monied men and it is impossible to get these families in good shape and the town cleansed without outside help." Renovo sent up a like appeal. "Ten days have passed," the chief
The Johnstown Flood

The Johnstown Flood

burgess telegraphed to the Governor, “since the disastrous flood swept through three-quarters of Renovo and laid waste the homes of our working people. While much has been said and written of the sufferings of other places, Renovo has been forgotten except in the matter of provisions. We have sufficient clothing and food to relieve the immediate wants of the distressed, but unless aid in the shape of money comes to the people, their condition will become distressing in the extreme. The majority of the homes destroyed represented the lifetime savings of workingmen, and unless outside aid comes there will be suffering and poverty such as has not yet been known. Unaided the people are unable to start anew the building of their destroyed homes and I, in connection with our council, would respectfully ask that assistance be given the people of Renovo who have suffered from the flood.”

James H. Ferguson, chief burgess, said—“I have appointed a committee of citizens with Thomas A. Roberts, superintendent of the P. & E. R. R. as chairman with whom I wish you would confer regarding the matter.”

The committee held a meeting at once and addressed the Governor as follows:

“Sir: The committee appointed by the chief burgess of the borough of Renovo, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, would respectfully present the claims of the citizens of the borough who have suffered great pecuniary loss and damage to their property by reason of the late disastrous floods in the West Branch valley, and ask to be considered in the distribution of the aid so generously contributed by the benevolent and charitable citizens of the state of Pennsylvania, for the relief of those sufferers who have been impoverished and reduced, in many instances, to absolute want. In making this, our application, we wish to be considered with other communities in proportion to the actual losses
sustained by our citizens and are ready to furnish to the committee in charge of the relief fund a detailed statement of the losses suffered by those who are entitled to consideration. If you will kindly designate what manner of procedure it will be necessary for us to adopt to have our claim properly considered you will confer a lasting favor on many distressed citizens of our town."

The distress to which the town was for a time reduced was well illustrated by the appearance of the Renovo Evening News. So completely was every source of supply cut off that paper gave out, and, unable to get more, one issue of the News was printed on thin brown wrapping paper, and another on the back of wall paper.

At Lock Haven the suffering was quite as great and is well described by the newspaper of the town: "On Sunday many people had nothing to eat but bread, others had bread and butter, and but few had anything else except what they could go out and buy. But the groceries, like everything else, had been flooded and it was even hard to procure the necessaries. The city was in a terrible state. The houses were filled with mud from two to six inches deep, and all day Sunday nothing was done but shovel, scrape and wash them out with the dirty water from the streets. The streets themselves are blocked with huge piles of mud and débris of all sorts, and along the pavements paths were shoveled through the mud just as one would shovel it through snow. Houses, gardens, and yards are absolutely ruined,—everything swept away and their places filled and littered with foreign stuff. Out-houses, smoke houses, water closets and everything of that sort were overturned and, if not swept off, were lodged against the rear of dwellings. Wood floated around by the cart load and deposits of sticky mud were poured over every green thing. Business is almost suspended. Merchants,
mechanics, grocers, mills, factories and shops all caught it, and are all in a condition of partial ruin, some completely so."

For days after the water subsided the city had the appearance of a great bazaar, from every window hung carpets and clothing. In the streets were piles of merchants' goods, while, from the roofs of drygoods stores, hung strips of muslin, calico and long lines of stockings.

As soon as the wires were up calls for help were sent by the mayor to the Governor and to Philadelphia. The response was immediate and, before railroad communication had been restored, car loads of provisions, contributed by the Governor, the people of Philadelphia and the officers of the Pennsylvania Railroad, were on the way to Lock Haven. Hardly were they received when a report went abroad that the city needed no more supplies, and the gifts of food and money made to Lock Haven began to fall far behind those sent elsewhere. To correct this false impression a public meeting was held and a committee chosen to frame a circular letter setting forth the state and the needs of the town. This done the mayor read an appeal to the people of the United States, which the meeting ordered to be telegraphed to the Associated Press. "This city," said the mayor, "has been devastated by the recent great flood and immediate assistance is needed; our streets, alleys, and houses are in a fearful condition and money is needed at once to save us from an epidemic. We are receiving generous supplies of provisions but Lock Haven is not the only place to be supplied from here. Many people in the nearby small towns have lost nearly everything they had and are dependent on us for money and provisions. We need disinfectants badly and money with which to hire men and teams from a distance to help clean our streets and cellars. There was not a square inch of land within the corporate limits of the city proper that was not submerged and when the water
subsided there was left a layer of mud and filth which, under the strong sun of to-day, creates a stench that is almost unbearable. The contents of vaults and cesspools are in our cellars and on our main thoroughfares, and nothing will save us from a frightful epidemic unless help comes promptly and generously."

The state of the town, alluded to by the mayor, was fully described by the committee. In a statement to the public they announced that "the whole business portion of the city was overflowed and almost the entire city in some way was injured." Not a property holder had escaped. One had lost fences; another boardwalks; another shade or fruit trees; another his furniture; another his house. Scores of laboring men had lost their all, and to make their lot harder could find no work. The boom had been stripped of its logs. The sawmills had nothing to saw. The factories were too badly damaged to go on, and the hands were left in idleness. Worse still were the piles of sand, mud and drift of every kind that lay upon the streets and open lots and the filthy water that filled every cellar, and stood in pools in every gully. "This," said the committee, "is the worst feature of our calamity, and one from which all, rich and poor, are suffering and will suffer. The danger of an epidemic from this source is imminent unless general, systematic, prompt and effective sanitary measures are resorted to for the relief of the public. Without such relief the threatened trouble must be incomparably greater than the direct work of the flood. To secure the prompt relief needed, will require a great amount of labor, extending over about two square miles and the expenditure of a large amount of money. A great many of our people are poor and not able to bear the expense of doing the work, hence we will gladly receive aid." The statement ended by asking for $50,000.

The Governor bade the people of Lock Haven cheer
up, told them that the Commonwealth and the county would not let them suffer, promised supplies at once and asked if they could be wagoned from Williamsport. The mayor assured him they could not, and again declared that, as the bridges were down, the reservoirs broken, the streets full of wreckage and the merchants heavy losers, money was needed quite as much as food.

The history of what went on at Williamsport deserves to be narrated with much detail as a good illustration of the conduct of the people in the flooded towns. Early on Monday, as soon as the water had begun to subside, the mayor sent out a call for a public meeting to take action for the relief of the sufferers. That same afternoon the people assembled in the Academy of Music, organized, and listened to many suggestions as to the best way to proceed. But the sense of the meeting was expressed by one who urged that a committee be chosen to form a careful statement of the condition of the city, the moment the telegraph lines were up, and send it over the country. The people, he said, must stand together. Every man must pull with every other man. Creditors must extend time and furnish the goods needed by merchants to carry on business. Lawyers must agree not to push the claims of creditors bound to have their pound of flesh. When he had finished resolutions were passed, a relief committee chosen to distribute supplies, a subscription opened and $7,000 raised. An appeal was then written,

"To the Public: The city of Williamsport has been sorely stricken by the most severe flood ever known to the state of Pennsylvania. All have suffered great losses. Large numbers of our people are wholly destitute for the necessities of life. Those of our people able so to do are giving all they can, but are unable to furnish the relief needed. We appeal to a generous public, in the name of God, to help us now. Let everything be sent to the Mayor of Williamsport."
The Relief Committee, having selected a school house as headquarters, began work at once, and the next morning hundreds of destitute and hungry people were given scanty supplies of flour and bread. Elsewhere in the city, merchants and shopkeepers dragged out the damaged goods and sold them at auction, or offered them at prices much below cost, or gave bolts of linen and cotton cloth to working people to be washed and dried. Meanwhile the mayor succeeded in communicating with the Governor. "The situation," he telegraphed, "expressed in a few words is this; the boom has been cleared of logs. From the principal yards along the river front the manufactured lumber has been swept away. The houses of the poor people nearest the river have been carried away with all they possess. Thousands of people are homeless and without anything but the clothes upon their backs. Provisions are scarce and most needed. Many of our people are in absolute want of the necessaries of life."

"Although bereft of property themselves our business men have responded nobly for present necessities. At the meeting called Saturday $7,000 in cash was raised. We badly need disinfectants. Dead animals and all kinds of filth are strewn upon our streets and grave fears of an epidemic are entertained. Stocks of goods in stores in the centre of the city are ruined. It is impossible to estimate the loss and damage to different kinds of property. Five million dollars is a low estimate of the loss on lumber alone—other losses larger."

"The surrounding country has suffered just as badly. Booms, bridges and villages have been swept away and the loss of life has been considerable. Judge Cummin is treasurer of the relief fund and will see personally to the distribution of all contributions. Responsible relief committees are now organized in each ward of the city and aid is administered as fast as we get it. Please God, we are not dismayed and rely on his guid-
ance and the generosity of our own state and country to aid us in this dire necessity. One thousand military tents will afford the greatest possible relief to our people, who are now without shelter, and, the lumber having all gone, other temporary shelter cannot be provided soon enough. . . . Send us several large mess tents where we can feed the people in large numbers. . . .”

“Be of good cheer”, said the Governor in reply; “your confidence is not misplaced. God and the country will sustain you. Will reach you with help as soon as the Montgomery bridge can be crossed. I am loading cars here with flour and groceries, notwithstanding the pressure of sorrow-stricken people. Will telegraph Philadelphia at once for provisions and disinfectants. Put your unemployed men to work on removing débris and cleaning your streets. I will furnish means for paying them reasonable wages. . . . May not be able to send you tents, the state has no large tents such as you desire. Better use your market houses and other public buildings . . .”

The committee instantly replied that the churches and the market houses were unfit to occupy, and begged the Governor to apply to the general government for tent and camp equipage. Tents and blankets, however, were found at Harrisburg and Philadelphia; and, with car loads of food, hurried forward. Provisions were sorely needed. The relief committee reported hundreds of cases of destitution. Some were sleeping on board piles and in saw mills. Some had been found on the verge of starvation. Some did not know where to get food, others were ashamed to ask for it. One man was found in bed unable to get up because he had no clothes. A new call was, therefore, made for clothing, beds, blankets, and liberally responded to.

And now the worst was over. Food was abundant. Telegrams announcing gifts of money, car loads of food, cots, mattresses, blankets, boxes of clothing came
in from all parts. The fund subscribed for the relief of the distressed grew larger each day. The courts agreed to stay all proceedings where writs had been issued for the sale of real estate. Creditors sent in receipted bills or gave an extension of time, and to the joy of the whole city the lumbermen determined to bring back the logs. Along the banks of the West Branch, and down the Susquehanna to the Juniata, logs measuring one hundred million feet had been stranded. To sell them where they lay, or, having paid salvage, put them in the river and float them to the nearest mill would have seriously damaged the lumber interests of Williamsport. Mills would have stood idle, thousands of hands would have been deprived of work, and, perhaps, part of the lumber trade diverted. This the Lumber Exchange determined to prevent, and contracted with the Pennsylvania Railroad for the return of all logs between the mouth of the Juniata and Williamsport. The logs below the Juniata and on the shores of Chesapeake Bay, amounting to millions of feet, were sold at auction.

While Philadelphia and the country east of the Susquehanna were thus responding to the call for help from the West Branch valley and the Juniata, the whole world was pouring out contributions for Johnstown.

It will be remembered that at 1 P. M., on the afternoon of May 31, 1889, Mr. Robert Pitcairn, superintendent of the Pittsburgh Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, left Pittsburgh to follow his assistant and party up the valley. At the Sang Hollow station, four miles west of Johnstown, he was stopped by the report of the operator that telegraphic communication with the east was broken, and that everything indicated serious trouble ahead. Determined to push on, he ordered the clear signal to be given and was about to board his car when the wreckage of the flood appeared in sight. For a time he was uncertain what to do. To send word to Pittsburgh on such evidence that Johnstown was
flooded would have been rash. While he waited, however, the evidence changed in character. The débris became more plentiful, the dead, or struggling bodies of men, women and children swept by in scores, and a message, sent by the man in charge of the work train at the stone bridge, came over the mountains to Sang Hollow. This assured Mr. Pitcairn that Johnstown was utterly annihilated. Without another moment’s delay he sent off a dispatch, over his own signature, to the Pittsburgh newspapers telling them of the ruin, and asking them to urge the Mayor to call a citizens’ meeting. This news reached Pittsburgh towards nine in the evening, and before midnight reporters were on their way to Johnstown, but the Mayor, who was sick, did nothing until the next morning. The papers then contained what seemed most sensational accounts. No reporters had gone beyond Nineveh. But there enough was seen and heard to justify the belief that the disaster was appalling. From Greensburg came word that all Johnstown was flooded, that houses were floating about, thousands were drowned and that the survivors had fled to the mountains. From New Florence came a dispatch that 88 persons were counted floating down the river on driftwood. These reports were generally disregarded. But the message of Mr. Pitcairn was accepted as conclusive and, acting on this, the Mayors of Pittsburgh and Allegheny at 10 A. M. called a citizens’ meeting for 1 P. M. in the old City Hall at Pittsburgh. The time was short but every available means,—the telephone, the telegraph, placards, the newspaper bulletins, the firemen and the police were used to spread the news. While it was spreading the people, excited by the newspaper accounts, began to act for themselves. Members of the Chamber of Commerce met and chose a committee, but the news of the Mayor’s proclamation delayed other action.

The tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad run through
one of the chief business streets of Pittsburgh. The authorities of the railroad, assured that, if a train of box cars were run out on this track, the cars would be filled with supplies for the sufferers, sent out the train duly placarded. In a few hours the assurance was more than made good. Merchants of all sorts hastened to contribute, bread, crackers, clothing, shoes, anything that seemed likely to be of use. So little was the condition of Johnstown understood that women came from the market house and placed in the cars baskets filled with meat, vegetables and articles the people of Johnstown could not possibly cook.

At one o'clock, the room in the City Hall being fairly well filled, the meeting was called to order and a Citizens' Relief Committee appointed to take charge of the relief of the sufferers at Johnstown. Even then the desperate condition of the people in the Conemaugh valley was not understood. A motion was made that the committee report on Monday. Happily Mr. Pitcairn was present and, assuring the chairman that instant relief was needed, declared that, if the members of the committee were wise they would act at once. The motion was not carried and the committeemen left the meeting to assemble for business at the Chamber of Commerce. A call was then made for subscriptions of money. All present promptly responded and came crowding to the front of the platform, calling out donations or offering money in every shape,—checks and drafts, bank bills, notes, promises to pay written on small scraps of paper—as the time and place afforded. Mr. William R. Thompson of the banking house of William R. Thompson & Co., who happened to be standing near was asked to act as treasurer, and continued to serve in that capacity to the end. So great was the liberality that for one hour the contributions averaged $1,000 each minute.

While these things were going on at the City Hall the
committee which had just been appointed met in the Chamber of Commerce, chose a chairman and a secretary and named other committees to do special work. One was to gather money; another to receive and ship clothing and food; a third to arrange for transportation by rail and river; a fourth to house the sufferers expected soon to arrive from the Conemaugh valley, and another to go on with supplies to Johnstown. It was past two o'clock when the last of these committees was appointed. But such was the energy with which they worked that at half-past four a train loaded with food and clothes, bearing a relief committee of 75 men, in charge of Mr. James B. Scott, provided with an open order addressed "to all employees" of the Pennsylvania Railroad, set out for Johnstown. With them went 18 picked men of the Pittsburgh police. The distance from Pittsburgh to Johnstown is but 78 miles and in ordinary times is passed over in two and a half hours. But the road was so crowded with freight, delayed by flood, that it was past ten when the relief train stopped at the signal tower at Sang Hollow. There the Conemaugh makes a long bend, and the flood, in passing round this bend, had swept every vestige of the railroad away. Trees, rocks, ballast, all were gone. From the operator in the tower it was learned that this washout was some 400 feet long; that Sang Hollow was four miles from Johnstown; that a work train and locomotive were standing on the track near the stone bridge, and that much of the track between the bridge and the washout was too badly damaged to bear the weight of a locomotive. The crew of the work train had long left their work. But a message from the operator in the tower asking them to move the train as near Sang Hollow as the condition of the track would permit was gladly acceded to. Even when this was done a long stretch remained and over this stretch the provisions were carried by hand. Happily, on the east side of the
washout, were two hand-cars and some lumber. Using the hand-cars as trucks, on which the ends of the boards were placed, a rude platform car was made and the boxes, barrels and packages readily transported to where the work train awaited them. When two car loads of food had thus been transferred, the work train set off for the stone bridge and reached it just before 9 o'clock on Sunday morning. The distribution began at once. While it went on, and all through the night, workmen of the Pennsylvania Railroad labored hard to restore the track to Sang Hollow and at eight in the morning the relief train passed over it and drew up on the bridge.

The scene there beheld was horrible beyond description. Across the north end of the bridge, where the railroad embankment had been, swept a foul and loathsome torrent 800 feet wide. Along the east side of the bridge was the jagged mass of débris, rising twenty feet above the track, crackling and smoking and filling the air with the unmistakable odor of burnt flesh. Beyond this, where Johnstown had once been, was a lake, a great stretch of sandy plain and here and there clusters of partly wrecked houses. About and between these houses was piled, often fifty feet high, every form of wreckage the flood produced, lashed together by hundreds of inches of wire and packed by the water into one inextricable mass.

To understand the situation in which the relief party now found themselves it is necessary to recall the topography of the place. The stone bridge, it will be remembered, crosses the Conemaugh at an angle and crosses the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad from the south side to the north side of the river. At the north end of the bridge the embankment had been cut away and a torrent it was impossible to cross, cut off the relief party from the sufferers of East Conemaugh, Woodvale, Prospect, Millville, Cooperstown and all
points on the north bank of the river. The burning débris and the great lake which covered Johnstown cut them off on the east. At the south end of the bridge was a steep mountain which rose directly from Stony creek. Along its side there was no road and, being heavily wooded, it served to cut them off from easy communication with Kernville, Geistown, Moxham and the sufferers up Stony creek valley.

The committee thus readily saw that some other place must be chosen as a centre of distribution. Leaving some provisions on the bridge, the train was, therefore, sent back, first to Cambria City and then to Morrellville. At Cambria City two supply stations were opened and quantities of food sent off over a mountain road to Kernville and there, with much difficulty, ferried over Stony creek to Johnstown and Moxham. From Morrellville food was sent over the Conemaugh and taken by wagons to Cooperstown, Millville, Prospect, Woodvale and Conemaugh on the north side of the valley.

Desperate as the situation seemed it is safe to assert that the people of the valley were never for an hour in serious danger of starvation. On the hills, all along the line of the flood, were numbers of houses that had not been disturbed and in each of them was food enough for the occupants for at least one day, and, perhaps, some to spare. On the track at the Pennsylvania Railroad warehouse at Millville stood, unharmed by the water, a long train of cars loaded with provisions consigned to merchants in Johnstown, and these, on the morning after the flood, were broken open and their contents used. Early on Sunday morning the attempt to suspend a rope across the river at the stone bridge was successful and by it the boxes and packages left on the bridge were sent over for the use of the refugees on the south side of the river. Later in the day the 18 Pittsburgh police followed by the same means, to guard the sup-
plies from the tramps already pouring into the valley from every quarter. Ten others from Allegheny City did like duty between Morrellville and the bridge.

The sight of the policemen brought for the protection of the supplies led the people of Morrellville and Cambria City to suppose that the officers had come for the protection of the property and lives of the sufferers. The committee declared that protection was impossible; advised the people to assemble at once, take measures to defend themselves and, above all, appoint committees through whom could be distributed food and clothes. The advice was taken and, before night, local committees were at work in Morrellville, in Cambria City, in Minersville, in Kernville and Brownstown. In Johnstown proper, like action had already been taken by the survivors without advice.

There, early on the morning of Saturday, a meeting was held in the Fourth Ward school house, one of the few buildings that escaped destruction. Mr. A. J. Moxham was placed in the chair and committees appointed on finance, on the distribution of supplies, on morgues, on police and on the removal of dead animals and débris. A call was sent out asking representatives from all the valley boroughs to meet in the same place in the afternoon and frame a plan for concerted action, but nothing came of it, and for a few days Mr. Moxham remained in control.

While these things were taking place in Johnstown proper, General D. H. Hastings, Adjutant-General of the state, arrived on the north bank of the river. Happening to be in the neighborhood when the flood occurred, he heard of it at an early hour on Saturday, went with all the speed he could to Johnstown, and before night reached the signal tower of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Millville. From there a dispatch was sent to the Quartermaster-General at Allegheny, assuring him that all communications with the east were gone;
that Johnstown must depend on Pittsburgh for food; that the dead would probably amount to ten thousand, and asking that two thousand coffins be forwarded at once. It was past eight in the evening when the dispatch reached Allegheny. But before nine a meeting was arranged with the coffin manufacturers by telephone; before ten the two thousand were being made and at eight on Sunday morning seven cars laden with coffins were on their way to the valley. Later in the day the Quartermaster-General, with 200 laborers, furnished him by the Pittsburgh Relief Committee, and provided with tools and four days rations, followed, reached Johnstown over the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at midnight and, at daylight on Monday, were at work. The track was cleared, two long platforms erected and before noon four cars filled with provisions were unloaded and the distribution begun. While some of the laborers were engaged in this work others were sent to dig graves, or carry coffins from the railroad to the morgue.

The state of affairs in Johnstown on Monday night was, therefore, most encouraging. A special police force had been sworn in by the sheriff of the county and, armed with baseball bats and designated by tin stars, were guarding the ruins from tramps, relic-hunters and sightseers. Morgues had been established, and parties were sent out by day and by night to search for the dead. The Board of Health were making ready to disinfect the whole valley. Mr. James B. Scott and the Pittsburgh Relief Corps were at Morrellville furnishing supplies to the survivors within their reach. A crude bridge had been swung over the gap between the north end of the stone bridge and Millville. Boats had been brought up from Pittsburgh and a ferry established over the Conemaugh to Johnstown; the track of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had been restored; the Western Union Telegraph Company had furnished
a special wire to the relief corps at Morrellville, and thousands of laborers, in charge of the managers and superintendents of the manufacturing companies near Pittsburgh, had begun to remove the mass of sand and débris that blocked what had once been the streets of Johnstown and Kernville. At Millville was the Adjutant-General. Across the river, which had greatly subsided, were the Quartermaster-General and two hundred laborers cleaning the wreckage from the railroad track, distributing food, digging graves in the cemetery and carrying coffins over the Conemaugh from the Pennsylvania Railroad station to the morgue in Johnstown.

To Mr. Moxham the presence of these laborers seemed unnecessary. There were, he thought, plenty of men in Johnstown to clear away the wreckage and they could not do better than endeavor to forget their sorrows in work. He proposed, therefore, that the Quartermaster-General should leave tools and provisions and withdraw the men. But, with the morrow, came a change of opinion and before sundown a mass meeting of citizens of the valley had completely altered the organization of Saturday. The reopening of communication had made known the immensity of the disaster and the inability of the community to help itself. With houses and bridges, shops and railroads, had gone every vestige of constituted government. The burgess of Conemaugh was drowned. What had become of the burgess of Johnstown no one knew. The chief of police had lost his family. The police force itself had disappeared. In the town remained the tempting wrecks of many shops and two banks in whose vaults were said to be four hundred thousand dollars. Into the valley were coming thousands of workmen, thousands of sightseers and hundreds of cars of food and clothing, consigned to no one in particular, but to the people of Johnstown in general. Deeply impressed with the meaning of all these things
The Johnstown committees had been active and diligent. But elsewhere in the valley like causes had not been at work and the committees had done nothing.

Homeless, houseless, broken in fortune and seeking their dead the people were in no frame of mind to organize and plan. Nor is it to be regretted that they were not. Fourteen separate towns and boroughs had been devastated by the flood and made dependent on the country for relief. Twenty-nine thousand people were to be fed each day. Half as many were to be clothed and housed. Acres of wreckage were to be cleared away. Thousands of human bodies were to be recovered and buried, and thousands of animal carcasses discovered and burned. Great trains of food and lumber, clothing and household furniture, were to be unloaded and the freight fairly and equitably distributed. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were to be cared for and carefully spent. To accomplish a task so stupendous as this required organization of the highest kind; decision on the one hand and prompt obedience on the other; a single head to direct and govern, and a host of assistants with powers well defined and responsible to the chief alone. Had each one of the fourteen little boroughs perfected an organization for itself, nothing but disaster could have resulted. Jealousy, conflict of authority, conflict of local interests, wrangling and disputes would surely have followed, and the supplies and money poured into the valley by the whole world would have done far more harm than good. Happily no such plan was thought of and, on Tuesday, June 4th, a mass meeting of citizens of the valley was held at Johnstown, a "Dictator" chosen and given full power to act in all the flooded region. The man selected to fill the post was Mr. James B. Scott, chairman of the Pittsburgh Relief Corps. The choice was most fortunate. As yet Johnstown was almost wholly dependent on Pittsburgh for food. All food from Pittsburgh came through the relief committee
and, as the relief committee would recognize no one at Johnstown but Mr. Scott, he had been, from the first, what the people now made him in fact, dictator. He assumed the duties at once, changed the name of his office to "Director" and the next day announced the appointment of nineteen committees. The six formed by the Johnstown people three days before were continued. To them were added committees on supplies; on teams; on the removal of general débris; on dangerous buildings; on outside search for dead; on transportation; on information; on employment; on registration of valuables; on time keeping; the sanitary committee; the fire department committee and the committee on public safety.

While the people of the valley were thus manifesting a power of organization most creditable in the face of such a disaster, the newspapers of the country were representing them as in a state of disorder and under mob rule. Robberies, mutilations of the dead, shooting, lynchings and brawls were declared to be of common occurrence. In each case the offender and the sufferer was a Hungarian or, as the reporters delighted to call him, a Slav.

"The way of the transgressor," wrote one correspondent, "in the desolated valley of the Conemaugh is hard indeed. Each hour reveals some new and horrible story of suffering and outrage, and every succeeding hour brings news of swift and merited punishment meted out to the fiends who have dared to desecrate the stiff and mangled corpses in the city of the dead, and torture the already half-crazed victims of the cruelest of modern catastrophes.

"As the roads to the lands round about are opened tales of almost indescribable horror come to light, and deeds of the vilest nature, perpetrated in the darkness of the night, are brought to light.

"Just as the shadows began to fall upon the earth
last evening a party of thirteen Hungarians were noticed stealthily picking their way along the banks of the Conemaugh toward Sang Hollow. Suspicious of their purpose, several farmers armed themselves and started in pursuit. Soon their most horrible fears were realized. The Hungarians were out for plunder.

"Lying upon the shore they came upon the dead and mangled body of a woman upon whose person there were a number of trinkets and jewelry and two diamond rings. In their eagerness to secure the plunder, the Hungarians got into a squabble, during which one of the number severed the finger upon which were the rings, and started on a run with his fearful prize. The revolting nature of the deed so wrought upon the pursuing farmers, who by this time were close at hand, that they gave immediate chase. Some of the Hungarians showed fight, but, being outnumbered, were compelled to flee for their lives. Nine of the brutes escaped, but four were literally driven into the surging river and to their death. The inhuman monster whose atrocious act has been described was among the number of the involuntary suicides. Another incident of even greater moment has just been brought to notice.

"At half-past eight this morning an old railroader who had walked from Sang Hollow stepped up to a number of men who were congregated on the platform stations at Curranville and said:—'Gentlemen, had I a shotgun with me half an hour ago I would now be a murderer, yet with no fear of ever having to suffer for my crime. Two miles below here I watched three men going along the banks stealing the jewels from the bodies of the dead wives and daughters of men who have been robbed of all they held dear on earth.'

"He had no sooner finished the last sentence than five burly men, with looks of terrible determination written on their faces, were on their way to the scene of plunder, one with a coil of rope over his shoulder and
another with a revolver in his hand. In twenty minutes, so it is stated, they had overtaken two of the wretches, who were then in the act of cutting pieces from the ears and fingers from the hands of the bodies of two dead women.

"With revolver levelled at the scoundrels the leader of the posse shouted, 'Throw up your hands or I'll blow your heads off!' With blanched faces and trembling forms they obeyed the order and begged for mercy. They were searched, and as their pockets were emptied of their ghastly finds the indignation of the crowd intensified, and when a bloody finger of an infant, encircled with two tiny gold rings, was found among the plunder in the leader's pocket, a cry went up, 'Lynch them! Lynch them!' Without a moment's delay ropes were thrown around their necks and they were dangling to the limbs of a tree, in the branches of which an hour before were entangled the bodies of a dead father and son."

Not one of these stories was true. No children's fingers were cut off for gold rings. No bodies were mutilated. No attempt was made to rob the bank. No one was lynched. No one was shot. Yet the stories were firmly believed and, alarmed for the safety of the people, some militia left Pittsburgh without orders and hurried to Johnstown only to be promptly sent back by General Hastings.

It was not long, however, before the militia were called out. The presence of two thousand laborers sent by the Pittsburgh committee to clear away the wreckage; the still greater number employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad; the crowds of sightseers that came swarming from all parts of the country, induced the sheriff of Cambria county to call on General Hastings for military aid. There was, he said, no actual need of troops. The measure was precautionary. Nobody could tell what sort of men might be among these laborers.
The money in the bank vaults; the valuables supposed to be in the débris; the great stores of supplies might form a temptation some of them could not resist. The Fourteenth Regiment of Infantry was accordingly ordered from Pittsburgh and for several weeks did duty in and about the town. They guarded supplies and buildings; they aided the deputy sheriffs in closing every avenue of approach to the town; and kept order in the long lines of men and women waiting at the supply stations for food and clothes.

Since the first train reached the stone bridge from Pittsburgh the system of distributing supplies had changed many times. The distress of the people being so great, food and clothes were at first placed where they could help themselves. A little later a receiving station was opened at Morrellville and supplies sent off by wagons to all the valley towns where, deposited in yards and behind fences, they were distributed more cautiously. As the work progressed regular supply stations were opened, from which no goods could be drawn without an order from the citizens’ committee.

Meantime General Hastings ordered the Quartermaster-General and all the brigade and regimental quartermasters of the National Guard to report at Johnstown for duty. In the care of these men the handling and distributing of supplies were quickly reduced to system. A trestle having been built across the channel at the end of the stone bridge, the supply station at Morrellville was closed and a Post Commissary opened at the Pennsylvania Railroad freight house. Another Post Commissary was opened at a point on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad where plenty of side track made a suitable place for it, and sixteen district commissaries, each in charge of a regimental quartermaster, were scattered over the valley from South Fork to Johnstown.

To the two Post Commissaries came each day long
trains of cars filled with goods, wares and merchandise of every description, and in every condition imaginable. Some were inscribed by the road officials as "This car on time. Going to Johnstown. Must not be delayed;" or "Stations along route fill this car with supplies for Johnstown. Don't delay it." Some were inscribed by the people who sent them, as "Braddock's relief for Johnstown," or "The contributions of Beaver Falls, to Johnstown." On others was this one word—"Johnstown." None gave any indication of its contents. Nor would it have been easy to do so. In their eagerness to help the sufferers, many forgot that they were shipping clothing not to a community of tramps, but to a community reduced in a moment from luxury or comfort to destitution, and never used to such apparel as was sent. Out of more than one bundle came shoes ragged and soleless, garments fit only for the ragman, or so soiled as to be promptly given to the flames.

The moment, therefore, a car arrived at the Post Commissary it was opened, unloaded, the contents carefully examined and arranged, and stored in departments ready to be delivered to any district commissary on call. Each quartermaster was ordered to arrange his storeroom on the same plan, to select the suitable location, to employ the most competent men he could find, and secure the help of a committee of representative men of his district. He was to make a house to house canvass lest any one should suffer rather than ask for food; keep a list of all entitled to and needing relief; see that no one went hungry; be liberal in his dealings, and so train his assistants that the military officers could be withdrawn at an early day and the distribution of supplies left with the local committees. Every night he was to report to the Post Commissary the number of people supplied during the day, the quantity and kind of stock on hand and what and how much would be needed for the morrow. Within eight and forty hours after the
adoption of this system every family in the valley wishing supplies was registered at some district commissary and given a card entitling it to draw relief. On the card were the name of the station, the name of the family and the days of the month, which, as each day’s supply was drawn, were cancelled, or punched out.

From these lists and cards it appears that the greatest number of people supplied at the relief stations in any one day was, in round numbers, thirty thousand, and that for two weeks this number did not lessen materially. Not all, however, were flood sufferers. Many were laborers, both paid and volunteer, who could not obtain food in any other way. As time passed the town began to recover, business began to revive and the numbers fell off till, on July 2nd, but ten thousand names were on the rolls. July 8th there were fifty-eight hundred; July 15th twenty-five hundred. A week later all had been dropped, save widows and orphans, working girls out of employment, the old, the decrepit and the sick. October 5th four hundred and sixty-five persons were drawing supplies. These were, on that day, given food enough for ten days and the last commissary depot in the valley was then closed.

Just how great was the quantity of merchandise brought into the valley can not now be accurately known. No complete record could be kept by the railroads. But, from such records as are obtainable, it appears that the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad moved four hundred and eight car loads, and the Pennsylvania upwards of one thousand. Supposing each car to have carried the usual load of twelve thousand pounds, the total weight of the supplies transported free by the two roads would be, in round numbers, seventeen million pounds.

Quite as important as food and clothes was good health and the care of this, most fortunately, had been promptly taken in charge by the State Board of Health.
On Friday, the first day of the flood, and on Saturday, the Board had been holding a Sanitary Convention at Pittsburgh. To the vague rumors of Saturday but little heed was given. But, when the fuller account of the disaster came and was read in the newspapers of Sunday, a meeting of the Board was held at once. The exposure of the immense numbers of bodies of animals and human beings destroyed in the flood, the unusual conditions of those who had escaped the flood, the pollution of the river from which so many towns drew their water supply, raised the gravest fears for the safety of the public health not only in the Conemaugh valley but in Pittsburgh and Allegheny, and even down the Ohio. All the money the Board possessed was, therefore, voted to the work of sanitary relief, and the secretary and a member dispatched to the flooded region. Their first stop was at Nineveh, some nine miles below Johnstown, where, on Sunday night, 162 bodies were lying on the river bank awaiting identification. Just over the river were some thirty more. Arrangements having been made for the speedy burial of them and orders sent off to the sheriffs of the counties of Westmoreland and Allegheny, Indiana and Cambria for each to summon a posse and patrol the river, break up all piles of drift and exhume and bury all bodies, they went on, early on Monday, to Johnstown. There they notified General Hastings of their arrival, crossed the Conemaugh, informed Mr. Moxham that they would assume control of all sanitary work and urged him to telegraph to Pittsburgh for copperas and chloride of lime. Fortunately the Woodvale Chemical Works had not been swept away and all the copperas there to be found was given the Board by the chemist in charge. To get it, however, was no easy matter, for horses, wagons, roads and bridges were involved in one common ruin. Nor could it, when obtained, be readily used, for it must first be dissolved in water and then sprinkled, and not
a utensil of any kind was to be had for such purposes. At the end of two days most of these difficulties were overcome. With the aid of the physicians who came in numbers to Johnstown, and of detachments of sanitary police from Pittsburgh and Allegheny, a most efficient sanitary corps was organized. Carcasses of dead animals were cremated. If they could not be burned they were disinfected. Houses were cleaned. The people were taught the use of disinfectants and the whole valley, from South Fork to Nineveh, divided into twelve sanitary districts. Over each was an inspector who directed the removal of dangerous matter, saw to it that notices were posted telling the people where disinfectants could be obtained without cost, and, when necessary, showed them how to cleanse cellars, yards and outhouses. Dreading the effects of the pollution of the water of the Kiskiminitas and the Ohio, gangs of wreckers were sent from Pittsburgh up the river to Johnstown and down the river to the state line to tear apart or burn all heaps of débris, reclaim bodies, and destroy putrefying matter. This, however, was but a small part of the work to be done. Acres of débris still remained at the bridge. Under it, entirely out of sight, flowed the river growing every day more foul and contaminative. To burn it as it stood, covered with mud and slime and soaked with rain, seemed hopeless. To remove it speedily was impossible, for neither the money nor the men were available. Dr. Benjamin Lee, by virtue of authority vested in him as executive officer of the Board of Health, having made a personal inspection of the valley, declared the drift at the bridge and the consequent condition of the waters of the Conemaugh and Kiskiminetas rivers a nuisance, dangerous to public health, asserted that the local authorities were unable to abate it, and called on the Governor to remove it. Of this the Governor heartily approved. But the removal would cost money and to draw money from the State Treasury
without an act of the Legislature was out of his power. Let him then, it was said, assemble the Legislature. To this it was answered that to assemble the Legislature would require three weeks and would cause an additional outlay of money. The members, it was answered, would serve without pay and, to prove this assertion, a series of questions was addressed to each member by a prominent newspaper. The replies showed that a majority, both of the Senate and the House, approved of an extra session, were ready to vote money to clean the valley and to serve without compensation. But the Governor had set his face against the scheme, and began to cast about him for a better plan. He believed, as everyone believed, that the money contributed by the people at home and abroad should go to relieve the sufferers and not to remove the débris. He believed that the state should provide the funds and formed this plan for getting the money without assembling the Legislature. The State Treasurer should pay out whatever was needed up to one million of dollars, and the Legislature when it met in regular session should be asked to make this expenditure legal. Should the Legislature refuse to make it legal the money would have to be refunded by the Treasurer and, to protect him, a bond was to be given, signed by two hundred citizens, each liable for five thousand dollars. Such a bond was actually drawn and signed by upwards of one hundred names, when the Governor abandoned the scheme and borrowed the money from a bank. A hasty visit of inspection was then paid to Johnstown, a conference held with the relief committees on the ground and the twelfth of June fixed as the day whereon the state should assume control.

This determination reached, preparations were at once begun for the transfer of authority. The work of cleaning the valley was put in charge of General Hastings as the representative of the state. The deputy
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sheriffs were discharged; the men employed by the relief committees were paid off and discharged and, as the wages they had been receiving were two dollars a day, while the wages offered by the state were one dollar and fifty cents per day, great numbers quit the valley and went back to Pittsburgh. When the 12th came Governor Beaver at Harrisburg issued a proclamation declaring the drift in the Conemaugh valley a public nuisance and commanding that the men and means necessary to abate it should be employed. Mr. James B. Scott ceased to be "Director"; General Hastings assumed control and called upon the business men of Johnstown to meet him that day in the freight house of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The purpose of the conference, he told them, was to determine what should be done for the future of Johnstown. The state had ordered him to clear the streets and remove the drift at the stone bridge. Whether he would or would not be commanded to go further and clear out the cellars he did not know. The streets, however, would be opened at once, and, if the merchants wished to resume business and would let him know what was needed, he would endeavor to procure it. Were lumber wanted, they should have enough to put up at least temporary places of business. He was most anxious to have the old state of affairs return, and to see once more the local government resumed. The deputy sheriffs had been discharged. The soldiers, it was true, were retained. But they were retained for the sole purpose of protecting property from sightseers and vandals. No martial law, no military law was in force. Before the merchants separated a resolution was passed declaring that each one of them would do his best to restore business to the condition in which it was before the flood.

The same issue of the newspapers which made known to the public that the valley was to be cleaned at the
expense of the state, also announced that the Governor would appoint a commission to disburse the money that had been or might be placed in his hands.

The accounts of the disaster which appeared in the newspapers of Saturday morning, as has been said, were meagre and far from correct. That a great flood was raging in the mountains of Pennsylvania; that a dam had broken on the South Fork; that Johnstown was submerged and, perhaps, a thousand persons drowned was all that was known. But this little, coupled with the appeals for help issued by the mayors of Pittsburgh and Allegheny, was quite enough, and at other places measures of relief began instantly. The Governor of Ohio, in a proclamation, called upon the mayors of every city in the state to gather contributions and sent forward the Adjutant-General with a supply of tents. The mayor of Philadelphia summoned the Citizens’ Permanent Relief Committee to meet on Monday, but so gloomy were the reports that came in on Saturday morning that he asked the committee to meet that night. Meantime notices signed by the mayor, the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the president of the Cambria Iron Company were posted about the city. In these notices the people were called on to send shoes, clothes, tea, sugar, coffee, flour, potatoes, ham, bacon and canned goods to the Pennsylvania freight station and money to the office of Drexel & Company. From the Relief Committee, when it met that night, came another appeal. On Sunday collections were taken up in the churches, and wagons sent about the streets to gather clothing, bedding and supplies. The express companies gave notice that they would carry all goods for Johnstown free. The physicians met and drew up a list of names of doctors pledged to start at a moment’s notice. The officers of the Red Cross Society met and issued a call for clothing and food, medicines, splints, bandages, whisky, laudanum and aromatic spir-
its of ammonia, as well as nurses and physicians. At six in the morning a long train of box cars filled with supplies, and bearing a surgeon and volunteer staff, went out on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad for Johnstown. On Monday the whole population of Philadelphia began to contribute. Hardly a church but had before its door a placard declaring it a depot for the receipt of Johnstown supplies. The express offices and the police stations, the rooms of societies and charitable organizations, the schools, the railroad stations about the city, the cellars of some of the great shops were filled with packages. All day long vehicles of every sort—trucks, patrol wagons, carts, vans, express wagons—went from street to street gathering whatever the people would give. At the Mayor's office, at Drexel & Company's bank, the Public Ledger office and the national banks more than $150,000 were subscribed.

Elsewhere the same energy was shown. The Governor of Iowa called on "every organization in the state, every church, every school, every lodge, every public and private corporation" to take up collections at once. The Governor of Illinois did the same. The Legislature of Connecticut voted $25,000. The Legislature of Massachusetts sent resolutions of sympathy, for it was beyond the constitutional power of the General Court to appropriate money for such purposes. At New York the Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trade, the various exchanges all made contributions in money or in kind. The mayor summoned 100 well known business men to meet at his office, in the afternoon. There they formed a Citizens' Relief Committee, issued an address to the people and met daily for a fortnight. At Jersey City, at Elizabeth, at Hoboken, at Poughkeepsie, at Albany, at Buffalo, at Chicago, at Denver like action on the part of the mayors was followed by like results. All over the coast, in the chief cities of the South, all over New England money, food and clothing were freely con-
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tributed. From Minneapolis came flour; from Cleveland came twenty-eight car loads of lumber; from California came wine to be sold for the benefit of the sufferers. Cincinnati sent twenty thousand hams. The territory of New Mexico sent something. Crossing the Atlantic, the news of the disaster aroused the sympathy even of foreigners. From Belfast and Cork, Clonmel and Dublin, Sligo and Kilkenny came money and letters. The Parliament of South Australia, the Governor of Norfolk Island, New South Wales, the Council of Toronto sent expressions of sorrow. At London, at Paris, at Dresden, subscriptions were opened at the consulates or the legations. In time the people of sixteen foreign nations joined the list of subscribers.

The appeal of Governor Beaver to the people of the whole country was not made till the 3rd of June. Some of the causes of this delay are mentioned in the proclamation itself. But there were others of which the proclamation made no mention whatever. The Legislature of Pennsylvania rose on the 9th of May leaving in the hands of the Governor some three hundred bills for examination. The President had appointed him one of the board of visitors to the Naval Academy and he was due at Annapolis on the 1st of June. Desiring to visit the Academy and, wishing to leave no unfinished work behind him, Governor Beaver settled down to the consideration of the three hundred bills, determined that all should have received executive action before the last day of May. When that day came all were disposed of, save the general revenue bill, which was held over till June 1st. Busy with the items of this he did not read the morning newspapers, did not even see the meagre accounts of the flood they contained, and set off in the afternoon for Annapolis without knowing that anything unusual had taken place. When about to start for the train a telegram from the president of the Cambria Iron Company asking for tents was put in his
hands. At a loss to know the reason for this call Governor Beaver sent no answer till Baltimore was reached, where an evening newspaper gave him the first information he had received of the flood at Johnstown. Even this information was so general, so meagre, so far from representing the true state of affairs, that he passed on to Annapolis. There an attempt was made to telegraph for information. But the office was shut and remained closed during the following morning, which was Sunday. After church, stopping to speak with the minister, he was told that the morning newspapers gave the loss of life at six thousand. Appalled at such a statement another attempt was made to find the operator and telegraph to the mayor of Johnstown, to the superintendent of the Cambria Iron Company or to Harrisburg for information. When, late in the afternoon, the use of a wire was secured, a dispatch sent to Harrisburg and an answer received, the Governor, leaving his trunk unpacked, hurried to the station and asked for a special train. Travel between Washington and Baltimore was stopped by the floods, but, pushing on to Odenton he there secured an engine and car, reached Baltimore safely, caught a train just starting for York, spent the night in the telegraph office at York and, at four in the morning, set off on a wrecking train for Harrisburg. From there, later in the day, he issued a call for help. He had, he said, delayed making any appeal to the people of the United States for aid till possessed of reliable information. This had come from the flooded region and it now appeared that the newspaper reports of losses of lives and destruction of property had not been exaggerated. The valley of the Conemaugh had been swept from end to end. Even conservative estimates put the loss of life at 5000, and the loss of property at $25,000,000. Whole towns had been destroyed, and those least able to bear it had lost all. The most pressing need for food had been supplied. But
shoes and clothes of all sorts, for men, women and children were still wanted. Money, too, was required to remove the wreckage, bury the dead and care for the widows and orphans. Nor was the Conemaugh valley alone in this suffering. Reports from other places in the state included those along the West Branch of the Susquehanna and places from which no definite information had come, there had been great loss of life and destruction of property. The responses to the needs of these people had been most liberal. The President, Governors of states, mayors of cities, corporations and individuals had contributed substantial aid. From North and South, from East and West, from England had come generous contributions. But there was no likelihood of their proving too great—every penny would be needed.

The outcome of these appeals was the collection of a vast sum of money, gathered in all manner of ways and sent through all manner of channels to four main centres of distribution. Much, indeed, was distributed by newspapers, by local committees, by charitable and social organizations. The mayor of St. Louis in person distributed $5000 in Johnstown; the New York Mail and Express collected and sent $49,000; the New York World $17,000; the Red Cross Association $39,000, while a long list of Masonic orders, Knights of Pythias, Knights of Honor, Knights of the Golden Eagle and Knights of the Mystic Chain, Patriotic Sons of America, Sons of Veterans, Odd Fellows, the Loyal Legion and the Grand Army of the Republic sent sums which made up $260,000 more. But the great bulk of the money came in time into the hands of the Pittsburgh Relief Committee, the New York Committee, the Philadelphia Committee and Governor Beaver, for the Governor had in his proclamation mentioned William R. Thompson, treasurer of the Pittsburgh Committee, Drexel & Company, with whom the Philadelphia Committee banked,
and Jacob C. Bomberger of Harrisburg as fit depositories for the contributions. To disburse a trust fund, however small, is no easy matter. But to undertake to disburse a charity fund of a million dollars in such wise as to satisfy both giver and receiver is a responsibility no one prudent man would assume. When, therefore, the money began to pour into Harrisburg, Governor Beaver declined to disburse it on his own responsibility and determined to appoint a commission made up of men well known in the community. Yet another reason for the appointment of such a commission was the need of unity of action. As matters then stood committees at Philadelphia, at Pittsburgh, at Johnstown, at Williamsport, at Chicago, at a dozen other places were acting, each independent of the others. Should this go on confusion would surely follow, and injustice surely be done, for dishonest sufferers, having received aid of one committee, would seek and probably receive more aid of a second and third. That these things might not happen the Governor determined to form the commission so far as possible of members of local committees already acting. That men living hundreds of miles from the scene of the flood could accept such a position was not to be expected. The choice was, therefore, limited to the state of Pennsylvania and ten men selected. These were Governor Beaver, James B. Scott, Reuben Miller and S. S. Marvin of the Pittsburgh Committee; Edwin H. Fitler, Thomas Dolan, John Y. Huber, Robert C. Ogden and Francis B. Reeves of the Philadelphia Committee, and Judge H. H. Cummin of the Williamsport Committee as a representative of the flooded region east of the mountains. Understanding that a representative of the people of Johnstown was to be on the commission, the business men held a meeting, chose Mr. John Fulton, and the Governor promptly appointed him. Mr. Fulton resigned and the men of Johnstown then chose Mr. John P. Linton and again telegraphed the Governor.
Mr. Linton was thereupon appointed, but he too resigned and, after offering the place in turn to James McWilliam and W. H. Rose, all attempts to fill the vacancy were abandoned.

The Flood Relief Commission was appointed on June 12th, and began work immediately. As a clear understanding of the condition of the people to be aided by the fund was necessary to a just distribution of the fund, it was decided that the commission in a body should visit the flooded region. With this in view Mayor Fitler, Robert C. Ogden, Francis B. Reeves and John Y. Huber left Philadelphia on the evening of June 7th for the West Branch of the Susquehanna. No part of the expense of this trip came out of the money entrusted to the commission. The Pullman Car Company furnished a dining car and a sleeper without cost. The Pennsylvania Railroad supplied free transportation, while the members bore all other charges themselves.

The route lay westward to Harrisburg, thence northward up the Susquehanna to Sunbury, where the West Branch was reached and the flooded regions entered. Passing up the Branch the commission stopped first at Milton and then at Muncy Station. Word of their coming had been sent before. But, as no member of the local committees appeared at either town the commissioners understood that no aid was wanted and went on to Williamsport. There Judge Cummin joined them and, escorted by the mayor and many of the chief merchants, began an examination of the place. They saw the wrecked mills, the ruined stores, the damaged goods, the overturned houses lying in the streets, the abandoned farms, the yards strewn with lumber smeared with mud, and the water marks high up in piles that had not been thrown down; they were told that eight thousand people were then being fed and clothed by the committee, and saw hundreds living in tents at “Camp Brandon” and “Camp Russell.”
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The inspection over, the commissioners, with Judge Cummin, pushed on further west. At Jersey Shore a stop was made, but here again no local committee was on hand and the journey was resumed. At Wayne Governor Beaver and two members of the Lock Haven committee boarded the train and went on with them to Lock Haven. Guided by the committee they rode through the streets seeing on every hand evidences of the damage done by the flood. Along the river banks were logs and broken lumber, uprooted stumps of trees. Along each side of the streets were long piles of mud, for the people had been ordered to clean their cellars and throw the mud into the streets. Some of the houses had been moved off their foundations. All showed by mud streaks or brass plates the height to which the water had risen about them. Everywhere the commissioners saw people cleaning their yards and cellars, mending their furniture, or making their houses habitable again and were told that $800,000 would not cover the loss. So much were they impressed by what they saw that, on returning to the car, a telegram was sent to Philadelphia ordering flour and hams, rice and sugar, coffee, tea, mackerel, beans, onions and canned tomatoes to be sent to Lock Haven at once. Some of these provisions were for Salona, Mackeyville and Millhall. A hasty visit was next made to Renovo where the westward journey ended. Coming back to Lock Haven the commissioners pushed southward up the valley of Bald Eagle Creek, visited Millhall and Bellefonte and, striking the Pennsylvania main line at Tyrone, reached Altoona by ten at night. There General Hastings was waiting and, accompanied by him and by Robert Pitcairn, they once more started westward, met James B. Scott, S. S. Marvin and Reuben Miller at Cresson and stopped for the night at South Fork. Early the next morning their train drew up on the stone bridge at Johnstown.
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The forenoon was spent in a careful inspection of the town. In the afternoon a committee of citizens appeared to state the needs of Johnstown. Mr. A. J. Moxham spoke for them. He declared that the pressing want of the people was homes; that portable wooden houses, with suitable furniture, were to be had at a low cost; that fifteen hundred would be none too many; and that he had already arranged a plan of distribution.

When the committee left, the commissioners proceeded to organize and hold their first meeting. Governor Beaver was made president, a temporary secretary was appointed, and work began in earnest. The Governor then stated that the relief fund at their disposal, was in round numbers, $700,000; that he had authority to draw on New York City for $50,000 more and on the state of Connecticut for $15,000, and that word had come from numbers of towns that they were ready to contribute, if necessary. Some had said to him: "We do not doubt the money is wanted, but, as the newspapers are daily asserting that more money and supplies have been sent in than are needed, we wish your personal assurance that they are wrong." This, in every case, he had given. The outburst of popular sympathy, ought, he felt, to be made the most of while it lasted. Only by such a course could enough be secured to meet the necessities of the future. In the course of the long discussion which followed the remarks of the Governor eight resolutions were voted. Five were concerned with the transaction of business. Another authorized the purchase of five hundred portable houses and proper furniture for the people of Johnstown. The seventh declared the sense of the commissioners to be that all the funds on hand and all likely to be donated would be needed. The eighth accepted the offer of the Councils of Johnstown of two public squares for the erection of buildings to be used as shops and distributed by lot, and bade General Hastings contract for the buildings.
This done, the Pittsburgh members of the commission left; and the others started eastward to visit the flooded region along the Juniata. The night was spent at Huntingdon. Next day an inspection was made of Lewistown, of Patterson and of Newport, in each of which considerable damage had been done. Newport was the last town visited. Once more in their car the five commissioners held an informal meeting. They were the only ones who had seen the flooded region east of the mountains. They were, therefore, the only ones who could with propriety suggest measures of relief for that region. Judging from what they had seen money was more needed than supplies; they desired that, if the Pittsburgh members agreed, the Governor distribute $94,000 at once. Fifty were to go to Williamsport; twenty to Lock Haven; five to Renovo; three each to Mifflintown, Lewistown and Newport, while ten thousand were set apart for contingencies in other places. A few hours later the commissioners were again at Philadelphia.

A week passed before they met again. During this time James B. Kremer of Carlisle was made permanent secretary, and J. C. Bomberger of Harrisburg, treasurer. Clerks had been detached from the various departments of the state at Harrisburg, in order that the work might be done as cheaply as possible, and the Supreme Court room at the Capitol assigned as an office for the commission. In the court room, therefore, the second formal meeting was held on June 27th. The appointment of a secretary, and the suggestions of gifts of money to the towns along the West Branch and the Juniata were approved; the three banking houses named in the Governor's proclamation were made depositories and Judge Cummin asked to go to Johnstown and remain there as the representative of the commission. But the question, the discussion of which took up most of the time was—On what basis shall the Flood Relief Fund be distributed?