

THE CINCINNATI CONFLAGRATION.

Total Destruction of the Opera House.

BURNING OF OTHER EDIFICES.

EXCITING INCIDENTS.

The Losses, Accidents, &c.

[From the Cincinnati Times, of Friday Evening.] One of the greatest calamities our city has lately known is comprised in the disaster which, under the cover of darkness, visited our city last night. Merchants and manufacturers may build and invest their capital, and the destruction of their premises is a sad indeed. Yet, but few men engage in an enterprise involving the outlay of hundreds of thousands of dollars, where the return is an uncertain character, and to a great extent dependent on contingencies which are as changeable as the wind. In the building of the Opera House, we may well believe that Mr. Pike had in view the erection of an ornament to our city, as well as a monument which would endure him to the memory of our people long after he had passed away.

He came to our city from New York about 1843, a stranger, and invested his means first in the wholesale dry goods business, locating himself on Third street, opposite the Opera House. Not finding this commensurate with his energies, he soon after engaged in the distilling business, and from his profits in this trade he accumulated such a result which has made him one of our wealthiest citizens.

From the beginning it seemed with Mr. Pike to be an object to me as one who came to identify himself with the interests of the city, and the result of his efforts in this trade he has accomplished such a result which has made him one of our wealthiest citizens. The building of the great Opera House was such an undertaking as would have been entered upon by the fewest of persons, even of the lived business community. Yet it had long been a darling project of his, and he considered himself fully equal to the task. So it was begun. The immensity of the design was almost a secret to our people, until, at last, like the uncovering of some vast statue, it burst upon their view. The most magnificent institution of the kind in the United States, and perhaps, having its superior in the world.

How far it has ever been made to pay an interest on the original cost—some three hundred and fifty thousand dollars—we are unable to say, we only know that it has always been pointed to by our citizens with pride, that it has always been among the chief objects of interest, and that it is, to our strangers, and that it is, to our citizens, but a mass of blackened walls now remaining to mark where it stood.

Many persons may build large commercial establishments in stone and brick, in the erection of almost palatial dwellings, but it required S. N. Pike to build the Opera House. We have no hesitation in saying that if it was not for him Cincinnati would never have seen such an institution. Even an organized association would never for centuries to come have built it with so much taste, and so apportioned it without regard to care or expense. How far he had succeeded in his anticipations we know not.

We can only say that the Queen City has lost its brightest architectural ornament, that blackness and ashes mark where it stood. In person, Mr. Pike is a delicately-built man, of about forty years of age, and we believe was engaged in business in New York before his arrival at the West. His demeanor is always of the quietest character, strictly unostentatious, and apparently self-indulgent to degrees, and in his dress, in dress always neat, but without display, he would scarcely be recognized, so young and unassuming, as being possessed of those characteristics which are distinguished him since he came into our midst.

During the conflagration last night the equality of Mr. Pike never forsook him. He saw the beautiful fabric he had erected melting away before the terrible elements, but, like a philosopher, he smoked his cigar, apparently as impassioned a spectator as looked upon the scene. The Opera House is not the only evidence of the good taste of Mr. Pike in his adornment of our city. On Fourth street, below Smith, he built a row of elegant residences, of the latest style, the object of admiration to all who pass that way.

Notwithstanding the matter referred to above, the regular business engagements of Mr. Pike never flagged, and he continued to carry away his stock as a parcel of his freight. Up all the Western rivers with the landing of the steamers, out went some of "Pike's Best," or his "Magnolia," and from that time may be said to have made his immense fortune. He has the sympathies of the entire community in his great loss.

rushing in a flood through the roof, in the neighborhood of the chimney-stack. While he was upon the street, for a few minutes some second-floor window of a vacant building was picked up by a wind-whirl.

He viewed the tremendous scene, in which a million of his property was vanishing from the roof of the Burnt House, with more calmness than the majority of the multitude of spectators. Whatever disaster less spirit and an unwearied energy on his part can do, to repair his great loss, will certainly be done.

Mr. Simmonds, acting manager of the Opera House, passed over the stage after the audience had retired, and there were no signs of fire. He had scarcely left the building when he heard a noise like the rushing of a mighty storm, he ran back to the auditorium to find it a whirlwind of flames.

The money and valuable papers contained in the safe are all that were saved out of the immense wreck of the dramatic and operatic temple—a great saving in comparison with this loss to an individual and to the city.

Destruction on Fourth Street. Among the fortunate, on Monday, the firm of W. B. Clapp & Co., Jewelers. Yesterday they moved their stock from the old building No. 81 Fourth street, into the second-story of Sprague's building, and had the insurance policy transferred. Their old headquarters were totally destroyed.

On the upper side of Fourth street, S. Wilson, Clock Manufacturer had his stock damaged, by fire and water, to the extent of \$2,000, but the loss is fully covered by insurance.

The roof of C. W. Deland's extensive dry goods establishment was slightly damaged by fire and the stock injured by water, but the insurance on the establishment covers all loss.

The Buckeye Billiard Saloon in the second-story of Pike's Opera House was totally destroyed. Loss \$10,000. Partly insured.

Niblett & Atkinson, 51 West Fourth, lost all amounting to \$18,000. Insured for \$10,000.

R. W. Carroll & Co., the well-known book publishers, suffered heavily. Little of the stock was saved. Loss amounting to \$25,000, on which there was an insurance of \$19,000.

A. C. Peters & Co., music dealers, are heavy losers. Their stock of music and musical instruments was consumed, and they prevent they are unable to estimate the damage. Among the articles lost were the plates for printing sheet music, which Mr. Peters had been gathering for the past forty years. We may here mention that this firm will immediately resume business, having moved their office to the establishment of W. C. Peters, on Fourth street.

F. P. Haldy, boot and shoe dealer, has a stock on hand valued at \$5,000, the greatest part of which is injured by water. Insured for \$1,000, which fully covers all loss.

A. J. Clark's gent's furnishing establishment was damaged by water, less slightly, but on account of the absence of Mr. Clark, who is now East, we can give no estimate of his loss or insurance.

S. N. Holmes & Co., wall paper dealers, occupied the building next to the Opera House, on the east, well known as "Independence Hall," and formerly occupied by No. 3, volunteer fire company. This building was well cleaned out by the flames. Messrs. Holmes' stock was valued at \$10,000, on which there was an insurance of \$25,000.

In the second story of this building was the piano room of D. H. Baldwin. The stock on hand consisted of twenty-two pianos, one of which only was saved. Mr. Baldwin can at present give no idea of his loss, but thinks the insurance on his stock will nearly cover the entire loss.

Adjoining this building in the rear, were a number of shops occupied by artisans of different kinds, all of whom to a great extent were slightly damaged.

flooring and crushing weight of brick, is in broken condition as to render it utterly useless hereafter. The Enquirer office is insured for \$38,000, and had on hand \$30,000 worth of printed matter and printing materials, of which \$15,000 worth belonged to Jacob H. Schickel's. Forty copies of sundry bills were yesterday delivered to Lipman's Circus Company.

The Enquirer building was owned by the publishers Messrs. Johnson & Melnon, though not the ground upon which it stood, the lease expiring some two years hence. Many of the printers and attaches of the office only saved their lives by precipitate flight from the house—some of them leaving their shoes and other wearing apparel behind.

Johnson and Hart, Wood Engravers. Who have been carrying on their business on the second floor of the Enquirer building, were happily and completely rescued, which we are now unable to estimate. That Ben. D. Jones, journeyman, estimates his individual loss in tools, ready work, and stock in process, at \$200. For this comparatively heavy loss, he bears with becoming nonchalance.

The office, on the same floor, of Johnston & Hart, metal pattern and stamping machine makers, was crushed, except by leaders from without—but, strange to say, escaped all damage, except by water. The fire, which broke out in the morning, escaped with no greater loss to the ground, by general confusion and rough handling.

Further east on Baker street were sundry houses engaged in gambling and drinking, which were all destroyed. The damage, however, is not estimated. The owners are the only real sufferers by the destruction.

The old African Church, adjoining the publishing house of W. B. Smith Co., corner of Baker and Walnut streets, lately occupied by the Adams's Express as a stable, was destroyed.

Both the carpenter shops and the blacksmith shop, adjoining the old church, were owned by Mr. Moore, who carried on the business of carpenter and blacksmith. Two carpenter shops; we could not ascertain the name of the tenant of the other. The blacksmith shop was worth something like \$10,000. The carpenter shop was worth \$8,000, and the blacksmith shop was worth \$10,000.

At half-past eleven we were witnessing the performances at the Varieties, when the report of the explosion was heard, and as several of the audience looked up at the windows, the light was seen so plainly they imagined the fire was close by, and made a rush for the door, at the same time calling fire. The cry was soon taken up by the house, and all made a rush for the exit, and what followed we can scarcely tell, as the breath was near being crushed out of us by the jam, but, fortunately, we succeeded in getting out, and hurrying to Fourth and Vine streets, discovered that the Opera House was all in flames in the rear, and the back walls blown out and across the street from the force of the explosion; the cause of which was variously stated.

Some said it was caused from the patent apparatus for making gas, that it exploded while some one was experimenting with it. Others said it was caused by the explosion of the burners in the rear of the building; the pipe leaked, and the flames running up it caused it to burst. But again, statements were given, and with the exception of one of the gas pipes leaked, and on taking a light into the room an explosion ensued, blowing out the rear of the building and setting on fire a number of valuable things, valued at \$3,000, on which there was no insurance.

The fine Commercial College of Bryant, Stratton & DeLan, in the lot between the building, lost all, amounting to about \$3,000. No insurance.

Harpel, printer, had a fine job printing establishment in the Opera building, and was well supplied with presses and printing material of great value, amounting to \$8,000. All lost. No insurance.

The business office of the National Union was in the second story of Pike's, and all the appurtenances connected with it were consumed. We did not learn the loss, but there was no insurance.

In connection with the loss of the National Union business room we may mention that W. P. Brannon had some very valuable paintings hanging in his office, which were totally destroyed; as was also the fine medalion made by Louis H. Reed.

The loss of J. W. Langley & Co. amounts to or about \$3,000, on which there was an insurance of \$3,000.

William Lee, boot and shoe dealer on Vine street, lost slightly by moving his stock, but the amount is trifling.

as he was in the act of crossing it, the side walls of the Enquirer building fell out, par of which landed on the roof of the paint shop, and crushed it in instantly. The man came down with it, and landed without any injury. He made a hasty exit into the street.

The kind of the explosion, a lot of fireworks were carried from the store room of Pike's on to the roof of the Post Office. A stack of trunks, baggage, etc., was piled up on the pavement on Vine street, taken from the building near by that were thought in danger. A fist-grip occurred in Baker street between two pugnaquous characters, and was settled by two policemen taking the gentlemen off. We saw some of our friends who were working in the Enquirer office at the time the fire broke out, outdoors and looking on, some without their full suits of clothing. Some of the stores did well by getting out their own hose and playing on the walls and roof of their building.

Pickers of water were brought into requisition on the building occupied as a gambling house, on Third street; times were desperate, and that was the biggest game of chance that has yet been played there. The crowd were very eager on the house-tops, and we heard of a young man having a narrow escape with his life. In his eagerness to see an engine running on the street, he stepped partly over the edge of the cornice in the dark, and smothered under the ruins. The one injured by the falling of the cornice was taken to Landy's gallery, and from there to Messrs. Suire & Eckstein's drug store, and six wounds were there dressed by Dr. Muscroft.

Soon after the fire began, the cornice of the Opera Building gave way, and it was reported two men were crushed under it, as a general tumult and confusion prevailed, but subsequent information proved the report a canard. Another man is believed to have been crushed from the cornice, and injured by the falling of the cornice was taken to Landy's gallery, and from there to Messrs. Suire & Eckstein's drug store, and six wounds were there dressed by Dr. Muscroft.

He was delicious, but gave his name as Jack Wilson, and his residence on north side George street, between Central avenue and John. His right foot was severely mutilated, and his recovery is considered doubtful, as he is also injured internally.

John M. Brogan had a leg fractured near the hip, and it is considered he is in danger of not recovering.

Mr. Charles Bright was struck by a part of the wall and had his skull fractured badly.

Many tell of different narrow escapes, but further than the above we can say yet learn of no additional casualties.

The following gives about as correct an estimate of the losses in the aggregate, as the present state of affairs, here arrived at:

Table listing various losses and insurance amounts, including Opera House, Globe, National, Lafayette, Citizens, etc.

Total, Messrs. Evans & Lindsay, insurance agents, furnish us with the following list of the companies which lost by the fire, and the amount lost by each:

Table listing insurance companies and their respective losses, including Home Companies, Globe, National, Lafayette, etc.

The estimated loss as will be seen from figures given above is \$1,700,000. On this, so far as is known at present, there is only an insurance of \$207,000, making the total loss \$1,493,000.

While watching the destruction of his beautiful edifice, on Thursday night, Mr. Pike had his pocket picked of a wallet which contained \$150. This can truly be said as adding insult to injury.

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