

TERRIBLE CONFLAGRATION.

The North River Oil Company's Building Burned---Seven Thousand Barrels of Oil Consumed--A Quantity of Lumber also Burned-- Scenes and Incidents.

[From to-day's New York Tribune.] At about 6 o'clock last evening a fire in some manner originated in the northwest corner of the extensive building of the North River Oil Warehousing Company, located on Twelfth avenue, between Twenty-first and Twenty-second streets.

The fire in the office, and the first intimation he had of the fire was an explosion that shattered the windows of the office and threw him on the floor, springing to his feet he dashed into the building and made his way into the street, so completely confounded by the shock that he could scarcely give an alarm.

The building in which the fire originated is 200 feet square, fronting on Twelfth avenue, one story in height, and was filled with 7,000 barrels of crude petroleum. On a branch track of the building, were four cars. Three of them were loaded with 50-barrel tanks, and filled with oil. Three of these had been dashing about the building, and the fourth car had been loaded with barrels, but the greater portion of those had been removed into the building.

As many as supposed, the fire ran through the inflammable mass with a roar and fury perfectly appalling. Soon the flames burst through the roof, and in an inconceivably short space of time the entire mass was on fire. Immense volumes of black smoke rolled upward, while the flames illuminated the entire city, the spars of the shipping in the river and the large buildings in the vicinity being brought out into bold relief, while the constant explosion of oil barrels caused considerable consternation among the crowds who had congregated in the vicinity attracted by the general exhibition.

While the fire was at its height, one of the tanks, for the reason mentioned above, exploded with a terrific report, scattering the burning oil in every direction, and causing those sudden puffs that occasionally seize a crowd, the mass of lookers on rushed from the vicinity, down an embankment near by, in their flight being hurled into the water under a mass of liquid mud, and tramping on the unfortunate in their flight. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured.

The appearance of some of these victims, was, however, so ludicrous in the extreme, covered as they were with mud from head to foot, and they were hailed with shouts of derisive laughter by their more fortunate companions. The fire department, under Chief Engineer Kingsland, were upon the ground with their powerful steamers some after the outbreak of the fire, but their efforts to extinguish the flames were soon found to be futile, and attention was turned to the adjoining lumber yards, which were in imminent danger. The burning oil ran from the building into the street, and borne upon the water which ran down the gutters, was carried aloft to a block before the material which fed the fire was cut out. It seemed almost less to attempt to extinguish this novel species of firework, and so it was allowed to burn at will.

For two hours the fire raged furiously, and at the expiration of that time, having burned out the material which gave it life, died away, nothing remaining of the immense building but a mass of crumbling walls and a mass of glowing embers, interspersed with a network of hoops.

Of the petroleum in the building 6,000 barrels belonged to George H. Brown, and was valued at about \$60,000. The building was as we have already stated, one story in height, and 200 feet square. It was also owned by D. Brown & Sons, who had insured under the name of the "North River Oil Warehousing Co." and was erected by them a few months since at a cost of about \$12,000. It was supposed to be fire-proof, but nothing apparently could withstand the intense heat to which the building was subjected. Certain it is that scarcely one barrel of oil was saved upon another. The remaining 1,000 barrels of petroleum was owned by Josiah Macy & Sons, and was valued at about \$10,000. Whether insured or not could not be ascertained. The books and papers of Brown & Sons, in the office of the building, were of course consumed, nothing whatever being saved. They have a set of books at their branch office in Maiden lane, but could not be procured last night, and therefore it was impossible to ascertain the entire amount of insurance, or the names of the companies. The amount of loss, however, stated that it was small, not approaching the amount of loss.

The cars burned were owned by the Hudson River Railroad, and were valued at the aggregate at about \$4,000. Probably insured.

In the rear of the oil warehouse, and fronting on Eleventh street, was a large lumber yard, planing mill and packing box manufactory of MacLure Bros. The building were saved, but a large quantity of lumber adjoining the oil warehouse was burned. The loss of MacLure Bros. is estimated by them at \$10,000, insured in 31 company. They could not reach their papers in the confusion that prevailed at the time, and it was therefore impossible to ascertain the names of the companies or the amounts in each.

The lumber in the yard of Charles Hoffert, located on the north side of Twenty-second street, was on fire several times, but was extinguished on each occasion. The loss sustained by Mr. H. was quite considerable.

The Fire Department, under Chief-Engineer Kingsland, assisted by Engineers Perry, Bates, Rhodes, and Sully, and others, worked with all the force of men could have done better. It was apparent as soon as they arrived upon the spot that it was useless to attempt to save the oil warehouse, and the attention was therefore turned to the task of saving the adjoining property.

The difficulty of doing this will be the more apparent when we state that in the immediate vicinity are a number of lumber yards, those we have mentioned above being immediately adjoining. That the flames were prevented from spreading further was due entirely to the intelligence of the officers and the indomitable courage and perseverance of the men under their command.

The Department was ably seconded on the river front by the steam tug John Fuller, which has lately been chartered by the Metropolitan Fire Commission, and provided with two powerful pumps, capable of throwing 2,000 gallons per minute. The Harbor Police boat, under the command of Capt. Hart, had two powerful streams upon the fire.

was visible to mark the spot which had so lately been the scene of so much excitement. The fire is supposed to have originated in some manner from the explosion of gas. For several days past the smell of gas throughout the building has been very apparent, and particularly so during the cloudy, oppressive weather of the past two days.

Exactly how the explosion occurred, whether from spontaneous combustion, or from a lamp in the hands of some careless person, cannot at present be determined.

A Large Expedition Sailed for Liberia. The splendid clipper-ship Golconda, purchased lately at Boston for the use of the American Colonization Society, went to sea from Charleston, S. C., on the 25th of November, with a hundred emigrants on board, destined to their home in Liberia. They are a frigate company of people, well supplied with everything necessary to render industry and economy sources of comfort and plenty. They consist of families including mechanics and farmers, most of them better class of freedmen, of whom 194 were from Mason, Georgia, 187 from Newberry, S. C., 144 from Knoxville, Tennessee, 52 from Charleston, S. C., and 43 from Columbia, S. C. Of these 206 are to settle at Simon, 181 at Carysburg, 155 at Cape Mount and 58 at Cape Palmas.

A large portion of the emigrants are professors of religion, of whom it is known that 70 are Methodists, 59 are Baptists, 13 are Presbyterians, and 2 are Episcopalians. Among them is a regularly organized church, the Mason Baptist Church of Lincoln county, Liberia, consisting of pastor, 2 deacons and 26 members.

A high degree of intelligence is shown in that 77 can read, 20 can both read and write, and 20 had the advantages of a collegiate education.

The trades or callings are represented by 78 farmers, 33 laborers, 15 carpenters, 13 mechanics, 9 blacksmiths, 4 wheelwrights, 3 coopers, 3 millers, 2 cooks, 1 iron-moulder, 1 silversmith, 1 gunmaker, 1 waterman, 1 gunsmith, 1 engineer, 1 goldsmith, 1 dentist, and 1 photographer.

The Golconda has five cabin passengers, viz: Rev. John S. S. Minister Resident and Consul General of the Government of the United States to Liberia; Miss Julia De W. Gregg, of Columbia, S. C., and Mr. William Evans, to join the mission of the Episcopal Church at Cape Palmas; Dr. Isaac Snow, returning to his home at Simon; Rev. H. W. Erskine, who was taken to Africa in early life by his parents, from Knoxvile, Tennessee, and has been on a visit for the first time to his friends and relatives in this country. He was educated in Liberia, entered the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, and is now Attorney General of the Republic. He was with him an aged sister and her husband, with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

The Golconda is expected to make the voyage out in about thirty days, and to return in time to commence another trip on the 1st of May next. The Colonization Society have already received applications from several hundred of the people of color for passage and settlement in that rising State next spring. We trust that this great scheme of Christian benevolence may be enabled promptly to meet the urgent demands pouring in upon it. The amount of good these people may do their race and the Republic, is beyond calculation. The benefits they may receive in the Christian Republic of that continent are certainly attractive.

A missionary to Africa recently wrote to the African Repository as follows, respecting the capacity and prospects of the Liberian Republic: "I found myself in the midst of the several denominations, among those who acted toward me as an old friend and acquaintance. Just returning home, whose fraternal and Christian intercourse was of the most pleasant character. Under the auspices and aid of the several denominations of this country, education receives a good share of attention and patronage.

The climate of Africa is the foe to the white man. The experiment has as been repeatedly made, to the discomfiture, as if by the finger of Providence to point out the error by which the enlightened land may be lifted from the gulf of darkness and despair. Africa is emphatically the home of the black man. There the millions of this country will finally rest, upon a soil which will bear back to their own race, when they came, the civilization and religion which have blessed them here, and will bless and elevate millions of their progeny yet unborn.

THE CROPS IN ALABAMA AND LOUISIANA. The Washington correspondent of the Boston Post writes as follows: "A well-known capitalist of New York city, who has been absent from the South for a period of about eight years, has just returned, on his way back to the North. He puts me in possession of a large number of tabular statistics relative to the crops in Alabama and Louisiana, by which it is shown that the cotton yield of this year is less than one-fifth the product of 1865, when the last average crop was produced. About fifty exports of the Federal army, having undertaken the cultivation of cotton, lost all the way from fifty to two hundred thousand bushels of cotton by the failure of the crops. Drought and protracted rains in turn have so nearly resulted in ruining the prospects of even a moderately successful yield that the freedmen will render the catastrophe certain by relaxing in great measure the exertions necessary to save any considerable remnant. During November many of the negroes quit picking at this critical season, and are demanding the immediate ratification of labor contracts for next year before they will resume the harvest. They desire terms which will involve the payment of cash wages, instead of the former arrangement, looking to a division of the crops between planter and field-hand."

AN ENGLISH SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION. The *Mémorial de la Loire* says: "Vichy is at this moment the rendezvous place of an English scientific expedition, which has been studying the geological formations of the volcanic mountains of the Cevennes, Pay-de-Dôme and Farez. Amongst the members are some representatives of the English academy, and several ladies of the highest distinction for whom the science of the different lands of the globe has irresistible attractions. The laboratory of M. Tozard, the able chemist to the Emperor, is the centre of the analytical studies on the numerous minerals collected by this learned body."

Secretary Seward's Last Dispatch to the French Court.

A dispatch from Paris, dated Tuesday evening, says: It has been ascertained that Secretary Seward's despatch of Monday to the American Minister at this Court, related chiefly to the withdrawal of the French troops from Mexico and the expression of the hope that France would carry out its promise with reference thereto.

The despatch is understood, also alluded to the departure of Gen. Sherman for Mexico, and gave the reasons why he was sent thither. Although the despatch was of unusual length, it was nevertheless couched in a conciliatory, though dignified spirit.

THE FRENCH SENATE.—It has been remarked that nearly every profession but that of medicine has a representative in the French Senate. This anomaly has struck the Emperor, it would appear, as the *Evénement* announces that his physician, Dr. Cassan, is to be promoted to a seat at the Luxembourg.

POSTOFFICE ORDERS.—The Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce has resolved to memorialize the Postmaster General in favor of a reform in the mode of stamping postoffice orders, of which a committee had reported that it would prove advantageous to the postoffice and beneficial to the public.

MARRIED. GARDNER-JOHNSTON.—In Washington city, this instance by Rev. B. Freeman, Charles Gardner, of Philadelphia, and Elizabeth, daughter of the late Commodore Z. F. Johnston, U. S. N. On the 23rd inst., Hon. Jacob Fry, in the 6th year of his age.

DECEASED. FOWLER.—On the 29th inst., John Fowler, son of John and Elizabeth Fowler, in his 32d year. He was a native of New York, and was respectfully invited to attend the funeral from the residence of his parents, near Richmond, Tuesday, 3rd inst., at 10 o'clock, from the residence of his mother, at Cedar Hill. On the 23rd inst., Hon. Jacob Fry, in the 6th year of his age.

RELIGIOUS NOTICES. BAPTIST CHURCH.—The new chapel of the Second Baptist Church, situated on the corner of Germantown and Chestnut streets, will be dedicated on Tuesday, 4th inst., at 10 o'clock, and in the evening at 8 o'clock. The public is cordially invited to attend.

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