

# OVER 500 FIRE VICTIMS

## Men, Women and Children Burned and Suffocated in Chicago Fire.

### PANIC IS CAUSED BY FLAMES IN THE SCENERY.

#### Many of the Victims Overcome By Gas Which Filled The Auditorium—Others Were Trampled to Death—Scenes of Indescribable Distress Attend the Great Catastrophe.

Chicago (Special).—Chicago is stunned by the worst theatre catastrophe in the history of the country. Five hundred and thirty-six men, women and children, according to the count of the police and 362 according to the estimates of the Chicago newspapers, met death by fire, smoke and panic at the matinee performance of "Mr. Bluebird" at the beautiful new Iroquois Theatre. Most of the dead are women and children.

In addition to the dead, 55 persons are missing; 86 of the dead have been identified.

Scores were burned, while hundreds were suffocated by smoke and gas and crushed into pulp by one another while struggling to escape the impending doom. Still other hundreds are lying between life and death, with limbs broken and burned, at their homes and in hospitals.

Groups mingling with those who were risking their lives in the cause of humanity robbed the bodies right and left. Two men were caught with their pockets bulging with pocketbooks. The articles were taken from them by the police and they were allowed to go. The police themselves gathered up valuable furs, pocketbooks and many articles of value, which were taken to the station.

There was little attempt on the part of the police to keep any track of the property taken and men were seen going along the streets robbing the bodies that were lying on the sidewalks under the very eyes of the officers.

From pit to dome the house was packed. Mothers and their little ones had laughed themselves hoarse at the antics of "Eddie" Foy, the chief comedian of the piece. It was in the middle of the play, and the chorus, smiling and frolicsome, had just concluded singing a moonlight song.

"There is the moon now" cried a little chap in the front row as a curl of smoke and a tiny bit of flame shot out from the wings to the right of the stage.

The children clapped their hands in glee. Mothers laughed a bit and the whole audience was in a fine humor. But the flame reached out and caught a piece of inflammable scenery that hung over the center of the stage.

Instantly there was a large ribbon of flame. A calcium light on a stand six feet above the level of the stage had exploded and in a moment everything back of the footlights was a broad wave of fire that lighted the hall illuminated house with weird effects.

"Eddie" Foy stood out from the panic-stricken group on the stage to assure the audience that there was no danger. By his orders the great asbestos curtain was let down, but it caught on one side and failed to work fully. In another instant smoke burst out from the top arch of the stage and from under the bottom of the curtain.

Before a man or woman in the seats could arise the whole roof of the auditorium was in a blaze. The gas tanks exploded in the flies on the east side of the theatre, and black, choking fumes beat down in a cloud of death from every wall.

Fear, uncontrollable and terrible, reigned. Men and women fought like wild beasts, filled only with the desire for self-protection. Babies slipped from their mother's uplifted arms and in an instant their lives were crushed underfoot. Girls threw themselves from the balconies and lay crushed and dying until suffocation ended their misery.

Many in the orchestra seats, with easier access to the doors, gradually made their way to safety, but most of them threw aside wraps, pocketbooks, hats—everything that seemed to burden them—in their rush for life and the open air.

But in the balcony and the gallery the demon of destruction wrought his frightful work at will. The flames and smoke gathering on these upper floors caught the people before they realized the full extent of the danger. It seemed incredible that the little rush of fire could lap the walls so quickly and reach after them like a stroke of lightning.

Then when the full meaning of the disaster came to frightened ones they fought and battled with one another for safety, battled like stampeded animals.

#### Coal for Japan's Ships.

Norfolk, Va. (Special).—The British steamship Knight Errant is loading 11,500 tons of coal here for the Japanese Government to be delivered at Yokohama. It is the same kind of coal as that used by the United States warships and there is no secret of the destination of the coal and of the inference that it is hurried because of the prospect of war between Japan and Russia. The Knight Errant is expected to leave here this week on her two months' voyage.

#### Monetary Standard for Mexico.

Mexico City (Special).—A plan for reforming the currency has been prepared by the fifth subcommittee of the National Monetary Commission. The committee advises that in order to obtain stability or fixity of international exchange the government should be advised by a monetary commission to adopt a monetary system based on the gold standard. The committee does not recommend the immediate adoption of the gold standard, but rather creating a system similar to that which the United States government has put in operation in the Philippines.

with the smoke curling about them, everything plunged in absolute darkness, not even a friendly lantern to show them the way out of this dance of death.

The theatre, with its classic outlines, beautiful plush hangings, the arched windows, with their stained glass, and the stately pillars became a morgue in five minutes after the first little flame made its way along the stage.

Women who had managed by strength or terror to get into the aisles found their awful ending in a mingled doom of smoke and fire and tearing of limbs in the aisles and in the open space back of the seats. Dozens of others, swept, carried, dragged or thrown out to the stairways and even beyond them to the landings in actual sight of the daylight that streamed through the big front doors in sight of the throngs outside, with fire wagons and the smoking horses, died in great masses to and 12 feet high, limbs mingled fearfully together, clothing burned off and faces caught in their last agonies all turned toward the doors they could not reach.

From windows at the north and west end of the building they streamed, blinded by the smoke and crazed beyond any possibility of helping themselves farther or of taking advantage of the aid extended to them from the upper floors of the buildings facing the theatre.

Ladders, planks, ropes, poles, everything that could possibly serve to assist these poor creatures in their battle for life were rigged and turned into bridges, but few got across alive. Rapidly one blackened corpse after another was passed along until every building on the north and west side was filled with them.

Barely five minutes after the first alarm was turned in firemen were struggling into the theatre, making their way in some miraculous manner, though the maddened mob was pouring out of the auditorium, doing what little they could not only to check the fire, which was fast turning the whole interior shell into a cauldron, but to rescue the frantic hundreds in the upper balconies by ladders stretched from the main floor.

A few—30 at most—were rescued in this way, and when the firemen after controlling the flames abandoned their lengths of hose to go with the gathering police and make their way to the horrors that waited for them on the upper stairways and in the balcony seats. Here was no more struggling, no more frantic haste. Hundreds with homes in every part of the city still showing at their windows Christmas wreaths, still filled with the decorations of the holiday season, lay beyond all thought of worldly things in silent heaps of death.

And still outside the main entrance to the building many passersby attracted by the presence of the fire engines had no knowledge of the fearful disaster inside. Tens of thousands passed and repassed within a block without knowing it. Hundreds of police officers stationed in the roadway were asking one another if there had been any among the audience badly hurt.

But when from the inside began to stream a procession of firemen carrying between them the charred bodies of those who had died, the whole audience was happy in the enjoyment of an afternoon's pleasure the scene without changed as if by magic. From every business street of the city men whose wives and families had gone to the matinee, came with white faces and eyes blinded with tears to the theatre and screamed like maniacs the names of those they were seeking. Many of them found their loved ones safe but still half crazed in surrounding stores and hotels. Others discovered, them among the dead by some particle of dress, a half-charred hair ribbon, a shoe or a locket.

Eyewitnesses of the Iroquois fire declare that no words can begin to describe the pandemonium that occurred nor the frenzy of the men and women. Among the hundreds of persons who rushed to the rescue when the call of fire was heard on the streets was Bishop Samuel Fallows, who happened to be passing the theatre without fear or hesitation he made his way through the darkness that was intensified by the volume of smoke which filled the auditorium to the top gallery and assisted in carrying out the victims.

"God forbid that I ever again see such a heartrending sight!" said the Bishop later. "I have been in wars and upon the bloody field of battle, but in all my experience I have never seen anything half so gruesome as the sight that met my eyes, when, with the aid of a tiny lantern, I was finally able to penetrate the inky blackness of that balcony."

There was a pile of twisted and bleeding bodies to feet high, with blackened faces and remnants of charred clothing clinging to them. Some were alive and moaning in their agony. Others, and by far the greater number, were dead. I assisted in carrying many of the injured down and ministered to them the best I could."

#### Dreadful Family Tragedy.

Grundy Center, Ia. (Special).—As a result of the suicide of Miss Lizzie Lynch by taking strychnine her sister became hysterical and is lying dead at her home. Their mother is insane as a consequence of the two deaths and her life is despaired of.

#### Crazed By Fire Horror.

Chicago (Special).—Her brain weakened on pondering over the Iroquois fire horror, Mrs. Marie Hopkins seized her two children, threw them violently under a bed, and securing an axe commenced breaking up a stove which stood in the room. The crazed woman's frantic shrieks of "Fire! They're burning—save my children," attracted the attention of policemen, who arrested her and rescued the children. Mrs. Hopkins had suffered no personal loss by the theatre fire.

#### Sparks From The Wires.

The Supreme Court in Manila has confirmed the sentence of death imposed on four natives who butchered three marines in September, 1902. There were great and rapid fluctuations in the cotton market in New York and New Orleans and something akin to a panic on the exchanges. Frank White, colored, was electrocuted in the State prison in Auburn, N. Y., for the murder of George Clark, a farmer of Oswego county. A Pennsylvania limited collided with a freight train at Larwill, Ind. One man was killed and a number more or less seriously injured.

#### ALL CHICAGO THEATRES CLOSED.

Proprietors of Iroquois Theatre Under Arrest—Also a Building Inspector.

Chicago (Special).—Every theater in the City of Chicago is dark and with doors locked. Not one of them will be open to the public until their managers have complied in the fullest manner with every section of the ordinances regulating playhouses.

The total number of dead in the Iroquois Theatre disaster has been definitely established at 887, of which but 12 remain unidentified.

The order compelling the theaters to close was issued by Mayor Harrison after a conference with Corporation Counsel Tolman, who assured the Mayor that ample legal ground existed for his action.

Will J. Davis and Harry Powers, proprietors of the Iroquois Theatre, and Building Commissioner Williams are under arrest, charged with manslaughter. They have been released on \$10,000 bonds, and their hearing is set for January 12. The warrants for their arrest were sworn to by Arthur E. Hull, who lost his wife and three children in the fire. Mr. Hull explained that his action was not inspired by any motive of vengeance, but simply to make it certain that the owners of the theater should not escape any chance of punishment that was rightfully theirs while stage hands and electricians and other employees were compelled to suffer.

It is a noteworthy fact that Building Commissioner Williams, who is now charged with manslaughter in connection with the greatest fire horror the city has ever experienced, owes his appointment to a tragedy of similar nature, but of much less extent, which occurred two years ago.

Mr. Williams' predecessor vacated his office after the burning of the St. Luke's Sanitarium, at Twentieth street and Washington avenue. This was the institution in which a score of men suffering from delirium tremens were burned to death while strapped to their beds. Mr. Williams was selected with the idea that he was the proper man to see that no such catastrophe could happen again.

#### CAUSED BY HEAT FROM FLOODLIGHT.

#### Important Testimony at the Investigation By the Coroner.

Chicago (Special).—Fire Inspector Monroe Fullerton renewed his investigation into the causes of the disaster. Two stage hands were questioned for two hours. Then W. A. Merriam, manager for the George A. Fuller Construction Company, builders of the theater, was called into the office. The company's attorney was with him.

William McMullen, manager of the spot light, which is alleged to have caused the fire in the Iroquois Theatre, testified before the investigation hearing that the spot light had nothing to do with it.

He said the fire was caused by the heat from the floodlight used to "flood" the theater. McMullen said his floodlight was turned out when the fire started. He said he was looking at the floodlight and saw the flimsy border blow directly over the spot light.

The heat from this light, he alleges, caused the fire. The city electrician followed with testimony that the heat from the floodlight was sufficient to cause the fire.

McMullen is considered by the police to be one of the most important witnesses. He was in charge of the spot light which set fire to the scenery and resulted in the large loss of life.

James J. Hamilton, a scenery shifter, explained what seemed to many at the fire to be an explosion.

"Five minutes after the fire started," said Hamilton, "the big set piece in the shape of a fan used as a finale in the second act fell 40 feet to the stage. The piece was studded with 150 incandescent lamps and weighed several hundred pounds. The noise of its fall and the breaking lamps gave forth the sound of an explosion."

Hamilton said he was in the stagehands' room below the stage when someone came downstairs, saying: "Come upstairs quietly. There's a fire up there."

"When I reached the stage," said Hamilton, "the fire curtain was coming down very slowly. I stepped under it and joined the others in urging the audience to keep quiet. The curtain should have dropped quickly, and I was surprised to see it stick. I stayed on the stage until my clothing was scorched. When I first came up, the orchestra was playing, and the double octet was singing, with sparks falling all around them. Not a musician nor player moved until it was a matter of life and death."

Hamilton denied that it was the custom to have the cables controlling the ventilators above the stage blocked so as to make it impossible to open the ventilators.

#### Ship and 51 Men Missing.

Paris (By Cable).—It is feared that the collier Vienne, of the French Navy, with 51 officers and men, which left Rochefort for Toulon, has been lost. The Minister of Marine has sent warships in search of the missing vessel, now 19 days out, which, though in the track of steamers, has not been reported. It is believed that wreckage cast upon the coast of Spain confirms the apprehensions in regard to the safety of the collier.

#### Another Fire Horror.

Chicago (Special).—Three persons were killed and four others injured in a fire that destroyed the Louvre Hotel, 3611-3623 Lake avenue. Nearly 100 guests were in the hotel at the time the fire broke out, several of whom had retired for the night. With the remembrance of the Iroquois Theatre horror fresh in their minds, everyone in the place became panic-stricken and rushed madly for the streets as soon as it became known that the hotel was on fire.

#### Unique Way to Commit Suicide.

Salt Lake City, Utah (Special).—T. Russell Griffith, a portrait artist, committed suicide in his cell in the county jail. He first tried to sever the arteries in his wrist and that with a key. Failing in this, he picked a quantity of wool from his blankets, with which he plugged up his nostrils, and then he stuffed his handkerchief down his throat and slowly strangled. The other prisoners tried his method, but failed to attract the attention of the jailers.

## ANOTHER INVESTIGATION

#### Treasury Department Experts Are in Charge.

#### THE SAFE IN THE OFFICE SEALED

#### At the Request of Acting Chairman Clements of the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Persistent Rumors That There Have Been Irregularities on the Part of Edward A. Moseley, the Secretary.

Washington, D. C. (Special).—Treasury Department experts instituted an investigation of the accounts of the Interstate Commerce Commission. The action is taken at the instance of Acting Chairman Clements, of the commission, as a result of persistent rumors of irregularities in the drawing of vouchers, etc. When the expert accountants, Nathaniel M. Ambrose and Richard H. Taylor and James L. Chase, the latter of the office of the auditor for the State and other departments, reached the commission they sealed the safe and examined Secretary Edward A. Moseley, H. S. Milstead, the cashier, and other employees. Milstead had not been suspended. Acting Commissioner Clements stated that he did not know that anything was wrong, but that the rumors had become so persistent that they could no longer be ignored and the Treasury Department was, therefore, asked to take charge of the accounts. Mr. Moseley is under \$25,000 bonds as disbursing officer.

It is understood that the rumors include allegations of payments made for service at one place while the payee was engaged elsewhere, and similar irregular methods. The investigation will be thorough, and every phase of the accounting work of the commission will be thoroughly overhauled. The commission has about \$275,000 annually, the bulk of this being for salaries, traveling expenses, etc. The payments are by warrants on the Treasury. H. S. Milstead performs the duties of cashier, but Edward A. Moseley, the secretary of the commission, is in charge of all the accounting work.

Acting Commissioner Clements, who is head of the commission, in the absence of Chairman Knapp in New York city, said that he did not regard the situation as startling, and that he did not believe any wrongful conduct would be found, but that it was the unanimous opinion of the commission that the rumors should be inquired into by experts to ascertain the exact facts.

#### JAPANESE WARSHIPS ORDERED TO KOREA.

#### Unconfirmed Rumors That Seizure of the Port of Ma San Pho Is Contemplated.

Tokio (By Cable).—A powerful squadron, consisting of six armored cruisers and Admiral Kamimura, is expected to leave Sascho for Ma San Pho, Korea, Sascho is a Japanese port, 25 miles to the west of Nagasaki.

The report is current that the squadron will seize the port of Ma San Pho, Korea, and that its departure has been fixed for January 4.

In well-informed circles, however, it is doubted that Japan would seize Ma San Pho or any Korean port, except to forestall Russia in the event of the latter showing evidences of any intention to take a step or in the event of the negotiations between the two countries finally ending in failure.

Great activity prevails and the force of workmen has been increased at the Osaka arsenal. The holidays of the arsenal operatives have been curtailed in order to hurry up the work in hand.

#### On A Coral Reef.

Pensacola, Fla. (Special).—The Norwegian steamer Hydria, from Belize, brought to this port the captain and five members of the crew of the American schooner Richard A. Bingham, of Pensacola. The Bingham went on the coral reef 20 miles from Belize at midnight December 18, and was a total wreck. The crew launched one of the lifeboats, which was crushed in the waves. Later they succeeded in launching the other boat, and after spending the night on the water, tossed by the waves, they reached Belize, from which place they were brought here. The schooner had a cargo of mahogany from Belize for Pensacola. She was owned here and was launched about 8 months ago.

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The president approved the sentence of dismissal and imprisonment imposed on Second Lieutenant Paul B. M. MacLane, of the Thirteenth Cavalry, convicted of embezzlement.

The comptroller of the Currency has directed the closing of the First National Bank of Storm Lake, Ia.

President and Mrs. Roosevelt inaugurated the official social season in the nation's capital with a brilliant reception at the White House.

The President and his Cabinet discussed the Panama situation at length. On account of the illness of Secretary Hay the negotiations with General Reyes, the Colombian commissioner, will be conducted by Secretary Root.

The year book of the Carnegie Institution makes announcements of the work and plans laid out for scientific research throughout the world.

Minister Lyon, of Liberia, reports the massacre of J. G. Tate, a missionary, and 18 of his following by Doo tribesmen.

Preparations have been made to hurry Governor Taft across the Continent immediately upon his arrival at San Francisco and put him in his position as secretary of war by the first of February.

Col. Robert L. Meade, of the Marine Corps, was placed on the retired list two years in advance of the date to which he might have served on the active list.

The comptroller of the Currency appointed R. L. Van Zandt, of Fort Worth, Tex., receiver of the Farmers National Bank of Henrietta, Tex.

## THE KEY STATE

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Mr. Hughes was born of American parents in the Argentine Republic and entered the consular service in February, 1898, as Consul at Sneeberg. He was appointed Consul at Coburg in May, 1898, and Consul-General at the same place in April, 1901.

The State Department also announces the appointment of Prof. John Todd Hill to be Consul-General at Greytown, Nicaragua.

#### Awaiting Smoot's Reply.

Senator Julius C. Burrows, of Michigan, who is chairman of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, which is conducting the investigation of the charges against Senator Lee D. Smoot, of Utah, said that the committee probably will meet Saturday, January 9, for the continuation of its inquiry.

Before going to Salt Lake City Mr. Smoot said he probably will deny some of the charges and admit others, but nothing regarding his course has been decided since the adjournment of Congress for the holidays. He expressed his denial shall be such as to challenge the authenticity of the information upon which the accusations are based, it is the opinion of some of the members of the committee that the authors of the charges will be given an opportunity to prove them, and in that event there probably would be a quite general investigation into the present day practices of the Mormon Church with reference both to marriage and politics.

#### Army Lieutenant Disgraced.

The President has approved the proceedings, findings and sentence of the court-martial in the case of Second Lieutenant Paul B. MacLane, Thirteenth Cavalry. Lieutenant MacLane was tried at Manila on the charge of embezzling about \$700 of subsistence funds while serving as commissary of the Maranao River expedition. He was convicted and sentenced to be dismissed and to be imprisoned for a period of one year. The portion of the sentence providing for imprisonment probably will be executed at the Baidad Prison, Manila. Lieutenant MacLane is a native of Pennsylvania.

#### Patents Granted This Year.

The last issue of patents for the calendar year 1903 was granted by the Patent Office Wednesday. The patents granted in the United States to date number 748,566; those for 1903, 31,699; trademarks, 2186; labels, 990, an increase of 223 over the previous year; prints, 270, an increase of 312 over 1902. The total number of certificates of registration of trademarks, labels and prints was 3449, an increase of 312 over the previous year.

#### Good Price for Standing Timber.

Commissioner Richards, of the General Land Office, received detailed information concerning the sale of the timber on the Chippewa Indian reservation, in Minnesota. The bids ran as high as \$12 per 1000 for white pine lumber in the tree and \$10 for Norway pine. The aggregate of the bids on the Land Office estimate of timber was \$1,250,000. The timber on one section of 640 acres brought \$105,000.

#### Preparing to House Troops.

All the supply departments of the Army have made arrangements for the transportation of troops and supplies from New York and San Francisco to the Isthmus in case such a movement is determined upon. Plans have also been considered for the construction of large storehouses and temporary barracks on Panama territory, and it is estimated that \$300,000 may be required for such construction.

#### The Friar Lands Loan.

Announcement is made that bids for the new Philippine friars' lands loan of \$7,200,000 will be received up to 3 P. M. January 11, and allotments will be made February 1, 1904.

#### In the Departments.

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Farmers in Schuylkill and Carbon counties and the upper end of Berks admit that a tacit trust was formed some time ago to control the turkey and chicken markets, and that prices were set by agreement. It also develops that the turkey scarcity in this section was a myth and that almost as many were sold for the holidays as in any previous year. The impression that turkeys were scarce gave the farmers a chance to dispose of chickens at high prices also, many being sold at from 12 to 15 cents a pound, while the price should have been from 10 to 12 cents. Each farmer was allowed to sell but a certain number each week. The prices charged here have caused much indignation, and a curbstone market is being talked of.

Stanley Pollock, a railroad engineer at Wilkes-Barre, Pa., began proceedings at the county court to recover \$50 he says he gave the girl who was to be his bride and who changed her mind. She is Miss Sophia Shupinski, of Ashley, and they were to have been married on November 4. Previous to that time Pollock says he had given her \$50 to buy a wedding dress and had bought furniture for a house. A few days before the date of the wedding, he alleges, she threw him over. Now he wants his money back.

"The State closed the year on a sound financial basis and with a nice sum in the general fund," said Cashier Pearce, of the State Treasury. "We close the last day of December with \$8,272,070.51, a larger sum for general purposes than held by any other State in the Union," he continued, "and during the month we paid out \$1,618,266.82. The collections during the year were the greatest in the State's history, aggregating over \$21,000,000."

The congregation of the old Memorial Church at Mt. Ville met and selected a pastor by lot by drawing the names from Bibles, as is the custom in the denomination. There were nine candidates and the one selected was Peter Ebersole, a tenant farmer for Deputy Auditor General Sam Matt Fidy.

Eroner Scheirer held an inquest into the death of Mrs. Agnes Minerva Leiby, of Allentown, whose death the police regarded as mysterious. The bottom was knocked out of the foul play theory by the testimony given, and the jury rendered a verdict that death was due to cerebral hemorrhage due to a fall and weakness aggravated by her physical condition. After the verdict was rendered Coroner Scheirer ordered the release of ex-Policeman William J. Kunkle, Mrs. William Clader, with whom Mrs. Leiby lived, and Frank Tobias, Mrs. Clader's brother, who were detained as witnesses. It was clearly proved that the cuts on the woman's face were the result of falls she had made when she attempted to get up from the bed being too weak to get up.

W. Duer, of the Baltimore & O. Co., is in charge of the new building of the Pennsylvania State Normal School at Harrisburg. The building is a masterpiece of architecture and is being too weak to get up.

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