

# THE MYSTERY.

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I have determined never to be governed by the frivolous rules of formality, but by principle, suggested by conscience, and guided by the light of reason. I love advice, I'll seek counsel, but do not eat dictation.

We omit much matter this week, to give to our distant readers the account of the great and destructive fire which has laid the most valuable part of our city in ruins.

Several communications have come to hand, and some remittance, all of which will be duly acknowledged in our next.



## Pittsburg in Ruins!!!

We are called upon as one of the retailers of events to present to our readers abroad the lamentable and distressing account of the destruction of one-third or at least a fourth of the enterprising and populous city of Pittsburg by fire! Yes, one fourth of the city of Pittsburg, now lay in a destructive mass of ruins, and no one

has been made in Pittsburg unless they could witness the destructive scene as it now presents itself!

We just escaped the calamity by removing on Saturday before the fire from our former residence in 3d St., to where we now reside in Hand street.

The fire broke out in a frame building corner of Second and Ferry sts., about half past 12 o'clock P. M. on Thursday last the 10th inst., and we venture to say that in the history of fires, there never was the same extent of space of buildings burnt in the same length of time. The great New York fire of '35, was four days burning a space of fifty acres, and six hundred and eighty houses, and although the buildings destroyed in that memorable event, were generally larger than these of ours, yet, it was but the short space of five hours, until fifty-six or sixty acres of the city were vacated, and we may venture to say, fifteen hundred houses tumbled to the ground!

The fire, as though impelled by the hand of the Destroying Angel rolled on from building to building, with the light of a fiery flying serpent, consuming every house with the angry fury of a Vulcan, speeding its way with awful and terrific progress, threatening the whole city, inhabitants and

all, and only ceased its mad career in the line of the river, because there was nothing more for it to destroy, having swept every thing in its way for one mile and a quarter!

Never did any event appear more like Judgment Day. People running, some screaming, others hallowing, warning the people to fly for their lives, carts, drays, furniture wagons, omnibuses, horses, and all and every kind of vehicle, crowded the streets to an excess which made it difficult for each to escape, and threatened destruction to all! May we never again witness such a scene, until the last great conflagration of this terrestrial globe!

Below, we subjoin the more particular description from the Gazette of Saturday, and a partial list of the sufferers from the Chronicle of Monday last, with some additions of our own.

## THE GREAT FIRE.

The effect of this Disaster on the Business and Prosperity of Pittsburg

We have carefully inquired of many of our clearest headed business men, those most thoroughly conversant with the resources of the city, as to the probable effect of this disaster upon its prosperity, and coupled with our own knowledge of the strength of the merchants who were burnt out, the position of their circumstances, &c., we are fully convinced that though the commercial prospects of the city are terribly shaken, yet it is not totally prostrated, and in due time will rise above it all. Our large Manufactories are untouched—the only mills of any importance which are burnt being the Globe Factory, which is the small

Bakewell & Pears Glass works. Various other small establishments were destroyed but it is with great satisfaction we announce that the great leading branches are comparatively untouched, and that business, so far as they are concerned, will go on as usual.

As for our wholesale merchants in the Grocery, Queensware, and Dry Goods branches who were burnt, some number of them will commence forthwith.—Some are wholly ruined, many much crippled, but we believe the majority can go on as usual, and yesterday they were busy getting places of business and offices.

It is with heartfelt pleasure we observe the fortitude with which they bear their losses. There is no repining—no despair—no sullenness; but a calm, determined spirit which must carry them up again. The effect will be to set us back for a moment but we never had more confidence in the strength and spirit of our merchants to overcome it all in time. It must not be supposed that all the business portions of the city are consumed. Most of the Dry Goods Jobbers are untouched so of the Hardware merchants, and a number of the heavy houses are out of the limits of the burnt district. And it fortunately happens, too, that a large amount of groceries from the East, for the city, had not arrived. We repeat therefore that though the city is terribly shaken it is neither ruined nor totally prostrated.

### The appearances of things.

Yesterday morning we walked around the burnt District. The appearances of things is awful—nothing but an immense forest of walls, and chimneys is visible, and desolate heaps of brick and mortar. The fierce fire licked every combustible clear up. Nothing that would burn escaped. The Wharf was covered with

Merchandise of every description, furniture, &c., and many piles which were rolled out as it was thought beyond the reaches of the flames, were consumed—Piles of burnt and partially consumed Coffee, Sugar, Nails, Iron, Cotton, Paper, Ink &c. &c., were scattered along it. On the Monongahela Bridge, nothing remains but a long line of burnt timber across the river, between the naked piers, all over the hills, piles of furniture, bedding, &c., are scattered. Along the streets the only valuable things visible were seen which the Merchants took the precaution to haul out of their stores, and it was imprudent foresight, inasmuch as many of them proved of very little use.—Among the ruins, crowds of people from other parts of the city and the country were wandering and gazing upon the scene for ourselves, we, more than once were lost, and had to look around for some wellknown land-mark to fix the locality.

### Incidents of the Fire

Soon after the fire got under headway, and the Globe Factory began to burn, the Third Presbyterian Church was in most imminent danger. The members of that denomination rallied around it, and by cutting away the end of the roof which projected over the wall next the fire, and covered the roof with wet cloths, succeeded in saving it. We saw clearly that the salvation of a dozen squares depended upon whether it caught, its immense steeple would have scattered clouds of fire over a considerable portion of the city which wholly escaped. The American Office was saved by throwing water upon the roof with buckets.

The block of buildings in which our office is located was saved by the efforts of the firemen in keeping the roofs wet, and particularly by a single hose from an Engine on fourth street, which saved the Post Office and so saved the block.

The rapidity with which the fire spread was most remarkable. The whole of South Ward, containing from seven to ten square miles, was consumed in a space of two hours. From the time the fire reached this Ward across Wood street, until it spread to every part of it, covering about sixteen squares, there was scarce an interval of half an hour.

The Monongahela Bridge took fire at the North end, next to Pittsburg, and the flames ran roaring and crackling through with railroad speed, and from the time the fire commenced, until it was prostrate the river, only TEN MINUTES ELAPSED!

The wind shifted at various times and created excessive dread in other parts of the city. All the stores along Market street, in the Diamond, Diamond alley and Fifth street, as well as along Wood were stripped and packed up, and so many of the goods moved as was possible. A gentleman doing business near the head of Liberty street, this side the Canal, tells us he would cheerfully have given \$1,000, at one time, to have had an insurance from an office out of the city, on his stock of \$25,000, although the fire had not then got to Diamond alley. This is only a sample of the universal horror and dread which filled the city. At one time the wind blew due east, then south, then veered bound toward the North.—Such was the critical position of our office and the block in which it is, that, had the wind at one time veered to the North east for one minute, it would have gone.

Messrs. Sibbett & Jones opened their safe in the morning, but every book and paper in it were burnt up, and the gold and silver melted together.

Hardly one safe out of ten, exposed to the fire in the buildings, saved anything in them. We noticed a large number completely destroyed with all their contents.

A number of sick persons were removed, and not few of them ladies, in very delicate situations.

Wm. J. MITCHELL living in Front street, next door to Fenlon's Livery Stable, was coming out of his house past the stable, when a gust of wind blew an enormous flame of fire with such force as to knock him down, burning his face, hands and back very severely.

A fireman had his face burned so raw, the blood run from it.

Mr. MALCOLM LEECH was on the top of his Warehouse looking at the fire, and when coming down, was injured pretty severely by a fall.

The only life lost, that we heard of, was a poor woman in Third street.

Amidst all the distress, there were those around who added to the calamity by stealing. Among others, the Rev. Geo. S. HOLMES had about \$300 stolen, which he had gathered up, by great economy, on a Methodist preacher's salary. He also lost a large number of valuable manuscripts, the labor of twenty years.

To show the rapidity of the fire we may mention that a gentleman of our acquaintance arrived at the American Hotel, about one o'clock, and leaving his trunk, walked out to see the fire, which was then nearly a quarter of a mile off. In a short time he returned and found the hotel in flames. He lost his trunk, with nearly all his clothing and papers, and a considerable sum of money.

One reason of the rapidity with which the fire spread is to be found in extraordinary dryness of the weather for two weeks past. We have not had a shower of rain in that time with one trifling exception. Every particle of wood in the houses of the city, was as dry as under.

Amidst all the horror, distraction and confusion prevailing throughout the city, there was no unmanly fear or vain repinings manifested. The sufferers bore their calamities with manly firmness, and as soon as they had unavailingly tried to save their own property, they put forth their exertions to save their neighbor's. At one time, when it was thought the whole city must go, there was no wildness apparent, merchant of a dignified and rarely beautiful temperance, and given indication of their indomitable energies are not to be doubted.

### The First of West Ward.

The business part of this Ward, is almost entirely destroyed. The destruction in this Ward extends from the corner of Wood and Water streets, up Wood street to Diamond alley, from thence across to Fourth street, at the United States Bank, across Fourth street up to the Mayor's Office across to Third street, and down the South side of Third street to Ferry, down Ferry to Front street, up north side of Front to Market, down east side of Market to Water, and up Water to Wood the place of beginning. In all this vast space, the only buildings left standing are the Third Presbyterian Church, Johnson & Stockton's and the American painting offices, and the warehouse of the Globe Cotton Factory.

### Kensington.

This flourishing adjunct of the city is well nigh annihilated. The course of the fire was extraordinary. The last large building in the city this side of it, was the large new Steel Works of Messrs. JONES & QUIGG, noticed in another place. When the fire reached and dipped down a steep bank into the Canal and consumed the Lock tender's house and then rising it went completely over a number of frame buildings on the opposite bank, including the workshops of Mr. Tomlinson the contractor of the Iron Steam Ship on the stocks. Parry & Scott's Foundry, the Gas Works, Messrs Phillip's Glass House and lighting on the Glass Works of Messrs. Miller & Co. commenced anew with the utmost fury. It took every thing from thence up on that side of the road. About half-way up it crossed the road and made a clean sweep of all between the hill and the river to the utmost