

HUNDREDS OF DEAD CLOG THE MORGUE

TOTAL FATALITIES IN CHICAGO FIRE ESTIMATED AT FROM 500 TO 700.

MANY AWAIT IDENTIFICATION

Maddened Mourners Besiege Undertaking Establishments, Seeking Lost Ones Among Dead.

Chicago, Dec. 31.—Today brought with it only the legacy of yesterday's monumental calamity and the prediction that the list of fatalities in the Iroquois fire will run over 600 when information is complete.

The latest statement of dead at the various morgues is 364, and it is stated at the various hospitals and hotels to which the injured were removed that of the 157 people injured probably one-third cannot live.

The missing was estimated at 314, but it is expected that many of them would be accounted for, or probably a large majority of them.

City Is Stunned.

It is no extravagance of language to say the city is stunned by the overwhelming tragedy which was enacted when the theater which housed "Mr. Bluebeard" became a chamber of horrors, indeed. There is the deepest of woe in hundreds of houses today, deep sorrow in a thousand others and a pity beyond the potency of words to convey in all.

The first streak of day-light which shone on the snow-covered streets found the morgues still the sorrow-haunted center of many a searcher. There were husbands looking for their wives; wives searching for husbands, frenzied parents seeking their children, so many of whom lost their lives and in some instances widowed children still dazed from the horror of their experiences groped distressfully about in search of father or mother.

Livery Drivers Acquiesce.

Possibly nothing could better typify the depth of sympathy which is felt for those who suffered directly by the calamity than the action of the striking livery drivers.

By a vote which was without a dissenting voice, it was decided to establish a truce of 10 days.

President Albert Young, of the union, following the meeting issued the following decree which was distributed broadcast:

"Owing to the great disaster to the public caused by the fire at the Iroquois theater, I do hereby declare a truce in the present strike of undertakers and livery drivers for 10 days, and do further request that every man now on strike report at once to their respective places of employment and do everything in his power to assist his employer in caring for the wants of the public. Wages to have no consideration."

"ALBERT YOUNG."

In return the employers issued a call to their striking employes to return to work "irrespective of any previous affiliations with any and all organizations" and promising to protect them in all contingencies which may arise in future.

Lines of Mourners.

All night long the crowds came and went around the morgues where the bodies of the victims of the disaster lay. There were the heads of families, brothers, sisters and men and women looking for those from outside cities who had been their guests. For hours they passed up and down before the long rows of the dead, searching for the faces of their missing.

Sorrow reigned in the residence of Dr. Frank W. Gonsalus, the noted divine. William McLaughlin, a nephew of Mrs. Gonsalus, was one of those severely burned. He was taken to the Presbyterian hospital, where the attending physicians entertained no hope for his recovery.

Mr. McLaughlin's home is in Buenos Ayres. He is a sophomore in the Ohio Wesleyan at Delaware, Ohio, and was spending his holiday vacation at the Gonsalus home.

All night long search was kept up for Mary Dorothy Gartz, 12 years old, and Barbara Gartz, 4 years old, who attended the theater with their aunt, Mrs. Adelaide Hoptfeld.

Today their bodies have not been found and there seems to be no doubt that the children have perished. They are the daughters of A. F. Gartz and the niece of R. T. Crane, millionaire manufacturer of this city.

Mrs. Hoptfeld was taken from the theater severely burned about the head and shoulders. The children are believed to have been caught in the crush coming down from the balcony and to have been trampled to death on the staircase leading to the main floor.

Walter Zeisler, 17-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Sigmund Zeisler, is among the missing. He is a nephew of Fanny Bloomfield Zeisler, the famous pianist.

AUDIENCE FLED IN A MAD PANIC

LOSS OF LIFE MIGHT EASILY HAVE BEEN AVOIDED, SAYS MANAGER.

Chicago, Ill., Dec. 31.—Will J. Davis and Harry J. Powers, proprietors of the Iroquois theater, made the following statement at 1:20 this (Thursday morning):

"So far as we have been able to ascertain the cause of causes of the unfortunate accident of the fire in the Iroquois, it appears that one of the scenic draperies was noticed to have ignited from some cause. It was detached before it had reached an appreciable flame and the city fireman, who is detailed and constantly on duty when the theater is opened, noticed it simultaneously with the electrician. The fireman, who was only a few feet away, pulled a tube of kilfire, of which there were many hanging about the stage, and threw the contents upon the blaze, which would have been more than enough, if the kilfire had been effectively used.

DEAD LIE IN LONG GHASTLY ROWS

ARE 139 BODIES IN ONE UNDERTAKING ESTABLISHMENT.

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS.

Chicago, Dec. 31.—At 2 o'clock this morning the men in the various undertaking establishments had managed to arrange the bodies in something like order and the work of identification was greatly facilitated and is expected to move with greater rapidity after daylight, when people will be able to visit the morgues.

At Rolston's place at 22 Adams street 183 bodies were laid upon tables and doors, and when the police, at about 2 o'clock, opened their lines to allow the throng to enter, it required all their strength to stem the pressure that was brought to bear upon them, as hundreds of people, frantic with anxiety in the search for missing ones, strove to be first to enter the gruesome undertaking rooms. Scores of people fainted before they had gone a dozen steps, while men wholly unstrung staggered as they walked down the aisles, and soon had to be assisted from the place by the police.

Long Lines of Dead. The blankets were all removed and the bodies were huddled in long lines on the floors. Thirty deep they lay in furrows, their ghastly forms brought out by the glare of the electric light.

There were dozens of bodies of young women and girls, 18 to 25 years old. Many of them were elegantly dressed and their clothing or some trinket found will be the only guide to those who know them, for their faces have been literally trampled into an unrecognizable mass.

Some of the bodies were stripped entirely of clothing and with distorted limbs and mangled and charred features were seen in all their horror.

In one respect they were alike. The left arm of nearly every victim was held stiff and close to the side while the right hand was outstretched as if warding off peril.

130 in One House. At Jordan's on Madison street the dead numbered 130. They were stretched upon the carpets of the little chapel and on the bare floors of the morgue below.

At Sheldon's on West Madison street 11 dead were taken; at Carrolls, Wells street, 47; at Gavins, North Clark street, 40; at Buffin's on Wabash avenue, 61, and at Perrigo's on State street, 29. Other morgues scattered throughout the city received smaller numbers.

At the county morgue, 19 bodies had been received. Of these 20 men and three little girls were identified. Preparations were made at the morgues for the inquests which will begin this morning. Many days will be spent in the inquiry into the fire and several juries will be impelled in order to expedite matters.

To Sift Disaster's Cause. "We will make every effort to sift this matter to the bottom," said Coroner Traeger last night.

"Some one must be to blame and the fault will be placed where it belongs. At present we can do nothing, but facilitate the work of identification."

MANY ARE SAVED BY THE HEROIC FIREMEN

Chicago, Dec. 31.—About a score of people in the second balcony were saved by firemen, who took them through the roof and carried them down ladders in the rear of the building.

Two bodies locked tightly in each other's arms, young women, apparently about 25 years of age, were found in one end of the orchestra pit. They must have fallen there from the balcony above.

With all its clothing torn from it but a pair of baby shoes, the body of a child about 1 year old was found in a far corner of the second balcony. It had evidently been knocked from its mother's arms and was trampled beyond recognition.

GATHER UP VALUABLES OF DEAD IN BASKETS

While scores were carrying out bodies, others, fortunately few in numbers, searched the aisles and seats for valuables. Two women were found who had provided themselves with baskets and were filling them with the property of the dead.

They were placed under arrest and the theater ushers and stage hands given the work of collecting the valuables on the floor of the theater. During the evening the police arrested over a dozen men accused of being thieves and pickpockets.

Two of the down town theaters closed their doors as a result of the fire. These were the Illinois and Powers, which were owned by the proprietors of the ill-fated Iroquois.

All other theaters remained open as usual, and there was no perceptible falling off in the attendance.

Manager Davis Collapses.

Will J. Davis, one of the proprietors of the Illinois, collapsed last night under the worry and distress occasioned by the disaster.

After the fire he and Mr. Powers made their headquarters in the woman's dressing rooms, where they were besieged by people who were frantically seeking information of their relatives.

The climax came with Mr. Davis when he was approached by George C. Sanborn, a prominent business man, who said:

"I had 12 children in two boxes; they are missing. Are they in there?"

"My God, that's what kills a man," said Mr. Davis, as he turned away and the next instant would have fallen to the floor. He was assisted to a carriage and driven home. Later it was ascertained that Mr. Sanborn's son, Harold, 19 years old, had taken the entire party in safety from the theater.

Morgues Besieged.

All night long stricken people besieged the morgues where the dead had been carried awaiting identification. Hundreds of men waited in long lines for hours, to finally demand admittance. For every person who was allowed to enter the death rooms a score were carried away.

Mourners Riotous.

After waiting for several hours in front of Jerome and company's establishment in Madison street, the crowd of mourners, consisting of over 1,000 persons, became impatient, and it took the united efforts of

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CRITICISE BUILDING AND APPARATUS

Chicago, Dec. 31.—Among many of the theatrical men employed in the other Chicago theaters the responsibility for the fire was ascribed today to the careless placing of an electric arc light apparatus too close to one of the hanging borders of the scenery. The electrician of a leading Chicago theater expressed great surprise on hearing that this was considered a possible cause of the fire.

"There never would have been any fire," he said, "if proper care had been exercised in handling the lights. The electric plant of the theater was installed, as I happen to know from personal observation, in accordance with every modern requirement for safety. The plant was not to blame. If the facts I have given are correct the whole blame rests on the person who placed, or who was operating a light so close to the curtain."

The failure of the expected fire protection is attributed by insurance men to trouble with the asbestos curtain.

Always a Danger Point. The stage is always recognized as the danger point in the theater and the desire is to have it cut off from the auditorium as nearly as possible. The insurance men declare that at the curtain at the Iroquois never had worked perfectly and the mechanism had not been repaired.

E. K. Wetmore of the insurance firm which placed the Iroquois theater declared today that the loss would not exceed \$20,000. He also asserted that the spread of the flames to the auditorium was due to the failure of the asbestos curtain to work properly.

Early last summer a prominent trade journal of Chicago criticized the construction of the Iroquois theater because it lacked a shaft or flue at the back of the stage for carrying the flames and smoke upward and away from the auditorium in the event of fire. Such shafts were built in Madison Square Garden and the Metropolitan Opera house in New York, and a similar provision is made at the Chicago Auditorium.

Fireproofing Criticized. The method of fireproofing the balcony and gallery was also declared by this magazine to be defective because metal lath was used in what is known as exposed construction, where heat would easily affect it. In modern fireproof buildings this lath is buried in concrete. It was the bucking out of this metal lath and iron rods giving the impression that the galleries themselves were falling that is believed by some contractors to have been partly responsible for the panic. There was no criticism of the strength of the gallery and balcony arches, which were built in the usual manner.

Firemen Needed in Theaters. Chief Musham, of the fire department, when asked today what would best prevent a repetition of the horror, said:

"I don't know that I can answer that question until investigation has been made as to the cause of this fire. On the whole, I think it would be a good thing for the department to have uniformed men prepared to act, stationed in every theater through every performance. I understand that New York has them and that they are paid by the management of the theaters."

They had a man in the Iroquois, who was an ex-member of the Chicago fire department. He should have known what to do. It seems to me that there is nothing in the world, at least nothing that I can think of at the present moment, that can save lives when 1,000 persons try to pass through one doorway at one time. It was the rushing, the crowding and the trampling that was responsible for the majority of the deaths that have occurred. Anybody that views the dead in the morgue can tell that at a glance."

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New York Theatrical Managers to Devote Proceeds to Cause.

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Al Hayman, Maurice Klaw and Abram Erlanger, the leading members of the theatrical syndicate, who own large interests in the Iroquois theater, sat in their offices in the New Amsterdam theater until after midnight eagerly awaiting the telegrams from their Chicago representatives. Klaw & Erlanger own "Mr. Bluebeard." Their representative says it cost \$65,000 to produce it there. About 240 people were with the production on the road tour.

The present "Mr. Bluebeard" began its tour at Pittsburg, September 28.

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Will Never Allow Wood to Be Used in a Theater Building Again.

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Mr. Marshall was overwhelmed by the news of the disaster. "I'll never allow another theater to be built with a stick of wood in it," he declared, reading bulletins handed to him. "The Iroquois was built along the very latest lines and was provided with 27 double fire exits, but wood was used and wooden stairways were employed."

"A fireproof building will not be erected as long as wood is used. In the theater there are so many articles of inflammable material that when the fire once gets headway, it spreads in the most alarming manner."

NOT FAULT OF THE BUILDING

Architect Says Every Precaution Man Could Devise Was Taken.

Chicago, Dec. 31.—W. A. Merriam, western manager of the George H. Fuller company, the concern which erected the Iroquois theater, when seen last night, made the following statement concerning the construction of the building:

"The theater was built with safety as the first object. The building ordinance were adhered to in every detail and more than that there were additional safeguards thrown about it until I do not hesitate to say that there was no theater building in the country that is freer from danger."

"The exits were numerous, and all the work which our company performed was absolutely fireproof. After making a very critical examination of the building since the fire I find the structure as erected still stands intact."

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CORONER BELIEVES CURTAIN CAUSED IT

SAYS IF DROP HAD WORKED, FIRE WOULD NOT HAVE SPREAD.

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS.

Chicago, Dec. 31.—Coroner Treager has made a complete inspection of the theater. He says:

"If the asbestos curtain had been working I believe the fire might have been prevented from spreading into the audience chamber. An iron railing which separated each row of seats from the adjoining tier prevented many from reaching places of safety. This circumstance, combined with the steep incline, made it difficult for so large an audience to escape without great delay.

Modern and Fireproof. "This is a modern fire-proof theater, furnished with all the appliances and equipment that are supposed to prevent just such a catastrophe as has now occurred.

"The plush on the seats of the first balcony was charred, but still visible. This does not look to me as though every body could have gotten out of the theater alive when you take into account the speed with which the flames had spread.

"My inspection showed that the seats on the main floor were burned but little, the balcony had evidently shielded to a large extent the seats in the parquet.

"The path of the flames was evident. The stage and ceiling was blistered and blackened. There was practically no damage to furniture on the first floor. The booth boxes on the second tier were destroyed by fire, while those on the first floor were burned only in spots, probably by burning fragments from above."

DISTRACTED FATHER IS RUSHING ON TO SCENE

Charters Special Switch Engine After Hearing of Disaster by Telephone.

Clinton, Ind., Dec. 31.—W. E. Dec of Chicago, a tile manufacturer, with a factory at Mecca, Ind., 10 miles from here, heard of the Chicago theater disaster by telephone last night. The list of the missing contained the names of two members of his family.

He instantly started for Chicago, 145 miles away. Jumping into a buggy, he drove at top speed to Clinton, where he chartered a switch engine and dashed on to Hanville, Ill., 50 miles away. A special train had been ordered by telegraph, which was waiting for him, and at midnight he started for Chicago. He expected to reach there at 3 o'clock this morning.

The list of missing contains the names of Edward and Louise Dec.

MOST DISASTROUS FIRE IN HISTORY OF STAGE