

ATTEMPT TO BURN THE CITY.

Discovery of a Vast Rebel Conspiracy.

Twelve Hotels Fired by Turpentine and Phosphorus.

SHARPER ATTEMPTS ON THE SHIPPING.

Prompt Frustration of the Scheme.

GRAT PANIC AT BARNUM'S MUSEUM.

Excitement at Nible's and the Winter Garden.

Full Development of the Plot.

ARREST OF FOUR OF THE PRINCIPALS.

One of Morgan's Guerillas Implicated.

HIS ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT.

Vigorous Orders of Major General Dix.

The Perpetrators to be Tried by Court Martial and Hanged Immediately.

Rewards Offered for the Arrest of the Guilty.

OPERATIONS OF THE DETECTIVES.

THE LATEST PARTICULARS.

The details published in yesterday's Herald respecting what turns out to be a vast and fanatical plot to burn down our great Empire City give rise to the most profound excitement among all classes of our citizens. There was no man, no evidence of ridiculous fright or the wild apprehension that might naturally be expected to result from the discovery of a conspiracy, which, if successful, would have been accompanied by such unparelleled horrors. Our people look the affair very collectedly, taking all things into consideration; but they did not lose sight of the fact that they had escaped, as by a miracle, from a dreadful calamity, which might have left half the city in ashes and consigned thousands of innocent persons—men, women and children—to the most horrible of deaths. Viewing it in this light, our citizens may be said to have repeated the Thanksgiving festival yesterday, for in every quarter there to be heard the words of congratulation and gratitude to God for his non-stoppable interposition in our behalf. The city of New York has undoubtedly had a most wonderful escape, and the result shows how easily the best laid plans may be frustrated, and how difficult it is to burn down a great metropolis like New York, where the Police and Fire departments are managed so energetically. A few minutes after the discovery of the plot Chief Engineer Decker and Superintendent Kennedy had caused notice to be served on the proprietors of all the hotels in the city to be on their guard, and owing to this timely warning, no doubt, is attributable in a large degree to the failure in general and in detail of the incendiary conspiracy.

There is no longer any room for doubt as to the authors of the conspiracy. The developments already made indicate beyond a question that some of the minions of the war traitor, J. P. Davis, are at the bottom of it, if, indeed, it is not a plan that has received the sanction and approval of the rebel President or some of his principal supporters. The police have made arrests of some suspicious parties, and their antecedents are of such a character that the Fire Marshal, detectives and other authorities are satisfied the plan is of recent design and execution. It would be imprudent to publish all we know on the subject as yet, and we therefore refrain from giving a great many facts connected with the plot, which would be read with interest by the public. In due time the detectives will undoubtedly succeed in capturing most of the guilty parties concerned, and then our readers will be furnished with the fullest particulars.

A WELL KNOWN SKEWER HOTEL ENGENDERED. If anything was needed to point to the authors of the deed with unerring certainty, it is to be found in the fact that one of our hotels, somewhat notorious for the guests it usually shelters, seems to have been unvisited by the incendiaries. The hotel, which was the headquarters of George N. Saunders, and the principal rebel refugees of the South and their sympathizing friends in the North, was passed over by the phosporic illuminators. It is well to remember also that we have long been threatened with the confiscation of our principal Northern cities by the Southern chivalry. Fracy on the seas and robbers on the land are their favorite methods of procedure. Bank robberies and conflagrations are the latest in order.

The whole war on their side has been marked with unparelled cruelty. The massacre of the wounded at Fort Fisher, the poisoning of wells and food, the infamous treatment of our prisoners, the assassination of non-combatants and the malignant spirit which has displayed itself toward the loyal people of the North are no doubt remembered by the recording angel and will be brought against them in Heaven's chancery. The desperate effort on Friday may be justly attributed to the fanatical principles of this same chivalry. The essence of war in violence, we admit, yet even that is subject to certain restrictions common to all civilized nations. It is one thing to battle or to march to be violent, but to burn down hotels, where war does not exist, is quite another affair. The atrocities which would have destroyed all our principal hotels and one by fire, and caused the death of their harmless occupants, deserve no pity, and should they be detected, as we have no doubt they will be, should be hung up in as brief a space as possible and as soon as the law will permit.

With the evidence of this extensive conspiracy in our midst, there can no longer exist a doubt that the United

States authorities were kept in a vigilant case when, just preceding the election, they warned the Mayors of all our principal cities to be on the alert against an extensive plot of incendiaries. The result would seem to fully justify the alarm then created, and even the apparently harsh measures recommended and adopted. The attempt to burn down this city by one common means, and at about the same hour, and on the same night, is evidently a part of the conspiracy then partially discovered.

OUR SOUTHERN ENEMIES. It will be remembered that Major General Dix issued an order in the latter part of October requiring all the Southern residents in the Department of the East to register their names at General Peck's headquarters before the third day of November. This order has been obeyed only in a very few instances. It is believed that there are not less than twelve or fourteen thousand Southern refugees resident in this city; but of that large number only a part have thought proper to obey General Dix's order by registering their names, and the disregard of the rest is looked upon as a very suspicious circumstance. All that was required of them was to come forward and show their loyalty; and having refused to do so, they can hardly consider themselves deeply wronged when they learn that the authorities view them as suspicious characters, unfriendly to the government and likely to join in any wild scheme for its overthrow. It may be that many of them are honest and harmless, only desiring to live in quiet and peace, but the fact that they have not complied with Gen. Dix's order leaves no room for discrimination.

PROMPT ACTION OF GENERAL DIX. In view of the developments yesterday, Major General Dix has issued the following remarkable orders, indicating what sort of punishment the perpetrators will receive, and calling again upon Southern residents to come forward and register themselves:—

GENERAL ORDERS—NO. 92. HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE EAST, NEW YORK, NOV. 26, 1864. A nefarious attempt was made last night to set fire to the principal hotels and other places of public resort in this city. If this attempt had succeeded, it would have resulted in a frightful sacrifice of property and life. The evidences of extensive combination, and other facts disclosed to-day, show it to have been the work of rebel emissaries and agents. All such persons engaged in secret acts of hostility here can only be regarded as spies, subject to martial law, and to the penalty of death. If they are detected, they will be immediately brought before a court martial or military commission, and, if convicted, they will be executed without the delay of a single day.

By command of Major General DIX. D. T. VAN BRUNN, Colonel and Assistant Adjutant General.

GENERAL ORDERS—NO. 93. HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE EAST, NEW YORK CITY, NOV. 26, 1864. The Major General commanding renews the notice given by General Orders No. 80 to all persons from the insurgent States to register their names at the headquarters of Major General John J. Peck, second in command in the Department, at No. 37 Broecker street, within twenty-four hours after their arrival in this city. If any such person fails to comply with this requirement he will be regarded as a spy and treated accordingly.

By command of Major General DIX. D. T. VAN BRUNN, Colonel and Assistant Adjutant General.

THE MOBS OPERANDI. The plan of firing the hotels suggests the theory that someone well versed in chemistry must have been engaged in it. In all the hotels the materials used seem to have been turpentine and phosphorus. The phosphorus was in solution, placed in glass vials of six or eight ounces capacity. These vials were sealed with plaster of Paris to prevent the air from coming in contact with their contents. It is unnecessary to explain that, at ordinary temperatures, when exposed, phosphorus undergoes combustion. These bottles were found in the rooms of the hotels, generally on the upper floors, unsealed, and the beds were saturated with turpentine, which some people suppose contained phosphorus in solution, but which probably was not the case, the intention being that the beds and clothes should readily catch the flame created by the ignition of the phosphorus. When we contemplate the completeness of all these preparations it seems truly wonderful how they could have proved so unsuccessful in every instance. In all the rooms black leather valises were found containing bottles of phosphorus and turpentine. The carpet on the floors, the sheeting, curtains, beds, towels and all other available articles were spattered with the inflammable material.

At the Fifth Avenue Hotel a set of cartridges soaked in turpentine was discovered. These were intended undoubtedly to explode and scatter the same in every direction.

THE FIRE MARSHAL'S THEORY. The theory of Fire Marshal Baker is that between twenty-five and one hundred persons were implicated in the plot, and that it was to have been consummated on Thanksgiving Day, with a view to creating the greater consternation. Mr. Baker is led to this view by the fact that certain writings have been found in some of the black valises seized, in which there is mention of a meeting to be to have taken place on the afternoon of Thanksgiving Day. This meeting was to occur in the Metropolitan Hotel. Whether it ever came off or not is unknown as yet.

But this Mr. Baker considers certain: that the arrangements were to commence the night of Thanksgiving day, and that the operation was postponed for some undisclosed reason; also that the idea in selecting such a day was to create the impression in the South that the deed was the work of a party in the North who are indignant at the election of Mr. Lincoln and determined to resist his authority.

MOVEMENTS OF THE INCENDIARIES. The movements of the incendiaries seem to have been arranged very uniformly. At each of the hotels the supposed incendiaries appeared in the character of travellers desiring rooms for a few days. They carried small black leather valises, signed fictitious names on the hotel books, and carried their own baggage to their rooms. In this way at least twelve of our large hotels were invaded by the incendiaries, and exposed to all the dangers of a terrible conflagration. The hotels so far discovered are:—

- 1. Astor House. 2. Belmont Hotel. 3. Howard Hotel. 4. Levee Hotel. 5. Levee Hotel. 6. Metropolitan Hotel. 7. St. Nicholas Hotel. 8. United States Hotel. 9. New England House. 10. Lafarge Hotel. 11. Lafarge Hotel. 12. St. James Hotel.

Some of the suspected parties were quartered at the hotels four or five days. H. L. Haynes, who put up at the Astor House, held a room since the 20th inst.

THE ASTOR HOUSE THE RENDEZVOUS. Haynes was in the habit of receiving frequent visits from mysterious individuals, and from this circumstance it is believed that the Astor House was a sort of rendezvous for all the conspirators. Fires were made in his room very often, according to the rumor, and remarkable conversations seemed to be had there.

AGENTS OF THE HOTEL KEEPERS. The proprietors of the various hotels were, as a matter of course, greatly alarmed by the wicked attempt to destroy their property, and have taken all the measures necessary to protect themselves from future similar attempts. Yesterday a consultation of the proprietors took place, and the following reward was offered:—

THREE THOUSAND DOLLAR REWARD. The undersigned hotel keepers offer the above reward for the arrest and conviction of the persons engaged in the fire on the night of the 25th and 26th inst. and the morning of the 27th inst. as follows:—

- STURTON & CO., Astor House. RICHMOND & BAYL, St. Nicholas Hotel. BIRCHBROOK, DARLING & CO., Fifth Avenue Hotel. R. LEVAND & CO., Metropolitan Hotel. J. ACHENBACH, New England House. JAMES L. HANAM, St. James Hotel.

So far as we have been able to ascertain the Mayor has issued a reward for the capture of the guilty parties. The hotels were under strict watch all day yesterday, and a sufficient force of police kept about them day and night to be ready for any emergency. The

boarders were naturally very nervous, and it is to be presumed did not sleep quite so soundly as last week.

THE CHIEF CONSPIRATOR. It is believed to be a member of Morgan's old command, and one of the prisoners, it is said, who escaped with others of Morgan's men from the penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio. He was captured on the blockade runner Rosen, while trying to make his way into the confederacy to join his command, and was sent to Fort Lafayette. While there he made oath to be a British subject, and a long correspondence ensued between Secretary Seward and Lord Lyons in relation to him, which resulted in his release from Fort Lafayette, about two weeks since. A portion of that time he has been staying at the Lafarge House, and was there, occupying room No. 205 at the time of his arrest. He was examined yesterday afternoon.

OPERATIONS OF THE POLICE. From the moment it was ascertained that the fires were the work of incendiaries, President Acton directed that the whole machinery of the police should be brought into requisition to ferret out the perpetrators. Mr. S. Peranteston Kennedy seconded his efforts so ably that in a brief space of time two parties were under arrest and the officers were upon the scent of others concerned in the plot, and who were making what subsequently proved to be vain endeavors to escape. Orders were sent out to the police of New York, New Jersey and New England, to notify all the hotel keepers within their respective precincts of the modus operandi of the incendiaries, and caution them to be on their guard.

THE DETECTIVE FORCE, under Chief John Young, went to work with the most commendable energy, and have thus far succeeded in discovering the entire plan of organization, the names of the parties concerned, how they obtained the means to carry on the enterprise, and who were the principal instigators and directors of the whole affair.

THE PLAN. The original plan of the marauders was to have simultaneously fired the hotels at the lower and upper parts of the city, and while the Fire Department and the police had their attention distracted to these remote portions of the city, to fire the hotels and other public buildings in the more central points. The next step would have been to have fired the shipping, beginning with the hay barges, which they had the idea could be fired and pushed up alongside the ships and steamers and thus destroy a vast amount of property. During the execution of these schemes three of the more desperate of the gang were to have proceeded to the task of destroying the iron-clads now in the harbor. To this end they had provided themselves with numerous appliances, among which was a large quantity of Greek fire. As nearly as possible, these steps were to be taken together, or at least so close upon each other as to render detection by the police almost impossible.

WHO WERE TO ACCOMPLISH IT. In carrying out this plan it was not thought prudent to trust the affair in the hands of Southern men who had been long enough in this city to get a touch of Unionism. Importations were made direct from Richmond, Petersburg and Canada in men sworn to accomplish the dreadful work. The detectives became aware that a new class of men were arriving from the South and the provinces, but could not get any hints as to their designs. So long as ten days ago they were aware that some plot was afoot, but could not succeed in arriving at it. They learned, however, that the time fixed upon for the performance of a certain piece of work was about the 4th of December.

A PREMATURE MOVEMENT. It will be seen by this that the movement was a premature one, and that the force detailed to do the work had not yet arrived. The result of the fire was that the parties feared the whole matter would be discovered, and that the entire design would be frustrated, hence the bungling manner in which the affair was carried out.

THE POINTS TO BE GAINED. In the awful consternation that was expected to have ensued among the citizens, and that, as they thought, would have paralyzed them, it was believed that the entire city would have been given over to the thief and the plunderer; that the looting thieves, who ever stand ready to take advantage of all public as well as private distress, would have fallen upon public and private houses, and that scenes of plunder, rapine and murder would have ensued such as the metropolis has never yet witnessed. By these means it was supposed that the first city in the Union would be laid in a heap of smouldering ruins, her resources destroyed, and her people flying from the spoils of the plunderer and the red hand of the assassin. The premature development of the plan; the numerical inadequacy of the parties who were to have executed the deed, and the vigilance and energy of the police and the Fire Department, were the happy combinations that saved the city from swift destruction.

THE ARRESTS. Thus far four of the principal parties concerned have been arrested, and with them so much of the means that had been provided to carry on the work as had not yet been expended. The money was in gold, and was found in the safe of the Treasurer of the organization, who is now under arrest. The work is all going on, and by the time this paragraph is read it is probable that a majority of the parties concerned will be in custody.

ADDITIONAL REWARDS. In addition to the reward offered by the hotel keepers, it is stated that the insurance companies are to have a meeting to narrow to take some measure in offering some additional reward. The matter will also be brought up in the Common Council on Monday, and a resolution introduced authorizing the payment of a handsome reward for the arrest and conviction of any of the parties concerned. It is thought the rewards if the aggregate will not be less than ten thousand dollars.

THE OPERATIONS AT THE HOTELS. Below we give the fullest and latest details respecting the affair, together with a complete description of the operations of the incendiaries at the hotels.

Astor House. The great excitement created among the hotel keepers, and the precaution given by the police on the above night, led the proprietors of the Astor House to be somewhat on their guard. Accordingly, about two o'clock A. M., Saturday, a strict watch was kept on each floor of the hotel. Some half a dozen pails of water were also placed at the head of each flight of stairs, and towards morning Mr. Statton seemed to congratulate himself over his lucky escape from the disasters that had attended the St. Nicholas, Metropolitan and other hotels. About eight o'clock Detective Derry, stationed at the hotel, and in whose charge the guard had been placed, gave orders that each room be searched, and the bed and bedding examined, in order to see if any combustible material could be found. John Spring, watchman in the top floor of the hotel, proceeded to the several rooms in his immediate charge, and on opening No. 204, fronting on Vesey street, discovered the room enveloped in flames. At the same time a dense volume of smoke poured out into the hall, which soon raised an alarm of fire throughout the hotel. The prompt efforts of a number of workmen in the building was the means of the fire being speedily extinguished; when, upon examination, the fire was found to have been burning nearly all night. In the centre of the floor the beams were found to be burned through, and most of the floor burned to a cinder. Nearly every article of furniture was more or less destroyed. The mattresses had been cut open, and thoroughly saturated with turpentine, and then placed upon top of the beds and the match applied. The reason for the fire not coming higher discovered was owing to the fact, no doubt, that most of the smoke escaped up the chimney. It was, however, smouldered during the entire night, which no doubt, preserved it from burning out and being the building. The fire burned through to the floor below, which, together with water, used to extinguish it, did considerable damage. Three bottles containing turpentine, none of which had been used, were found in the room, a few articles of these found at the other hotels. Several bottles had also been used in the room and in saturating the beds, and the bed and bedding examined, in order to see if any combustible material could be found. John Spring, watchman in the top floor of the hotel, proceeded to the several rooms in his immediate charge, and on opening No. 204, fronting on Vesey street, discovered the room enveloped in flames. At the same time a dense volume of smoke poured out into the hall, which soon raised an alarm of fire throughout the hotel. The prompt efforts of a number of workmen in the building was the means of the fire being speedily extinguished; when, upon examination, the fire was found to have been burning nearly all night. 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