BURNING OF BARNUM'S

Destruction of the Circus Building, Grace Chapel and the Adjoining Edifices in Fourteenth Street.

Wholesale Roasting of Wild Animals.

A Corrugated Iron Cage in Flames.

Another Fireproof Building Burns Like Tinder.

The Church and Circus in a Common Ruin.

DANGERS OF THE FIREMEN.

The Lawrence Mansion Destroyed.

An Old Landmark of Forty Years Gone.

Narrow Escape of the Academy of Music.

A Scene of Devastation in Fourteenth Street.

LOSS OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS.

Shortly after four o'clock yesterday morning fire was discovered on the ground floor of the Hippotheatron building in Fourteenth street, known of late as Barnum's Museum. There are several accounts of the manner in which the fire was first seen, but there is no doubt that the first who discovered it was George Nelson, the night watchman, whose duty it was to patrol the building at night. He was walking past the immense cage in which the four giraffes were confined and noticed smoke. He soon found that it was coming up through the chinks of a trapdoor directly beside the cage. His first impulse was to rush to the water buckets, which stood full near by, and was assisted by several other men who were

IN THE BUILDING

at the time. It was very soon seen that water in such small quantities was insufficient to quench whatever fire there was, and Nelson ran to the street to give the alarm, while the others threw water on the floor where the smoke was ascending every moment in denser masses. The alarm was speedily given and in a few moments several engines came rushing to the spot. Yet these few moments sufficed to make a serious calamity of what had at first been supposed a matter of hardly any consequence. The speed of the fire was such that the men who were present have difficulty in believing so short a time had elapsed between the first breaking out and that when they were obliged to rush from the building before the growing flames.

BELOW THE SPOT

at which the smoke had been noticed ascending was a large furnace of a new patent, and an inch or two from the flues which proceeded from this were woodwork attachments. The fire, as usual, had been kept alive in the large furnace, and, being allowed to burn at will, had heated the flues to such an extent that they had gradually carbonized the adjacent woodwork until it caught fire. It was, no doubt, when this had happened that the watchman first noticed the smoke. But beneath the flooring the entire theatre was nothing but a mass of board and wood, which when once set on fire there was hardly any means of stopping; for when the engines got in readiness to play upon the building the flames had already consumed the floor of the theatre and were shooting up on all sides of the building. Then a curious phenomenon took place. The walls of the building are of thin corrugated iron, which from the fierce fire at their base heated rapidly, and, instead of opposing

A RESISTANCE TO THE FLAMES,

only helped them to spread with greater rapidity, and, acting like the sides of a stove, engendered an insupportable heat, which made all efforts by the firemen to enter the building perfectly futile.

In the meantime some ninety or a hundred animals were caged in the building, and they already snuffed the smoke and showed signs of apprehension. As the noise of the fire and the heat grew gradually their excitement increased. The bears and the tigers showed most fear; but it was a fear in which rage was strongly developed. Evidently understanding the position of things, they lashed their flanks with fury and sprung with terrific force against the sides of their cages, as if in an endeavor to break them open. Unfortunately, the cages had been constructed for the express purpose of avoiding such a possibility and the efforts of the wild brutes were impotent. The elephants were peculiar in their manner of taking things. There were two full-grown female elephants and one baby elephant. The mother and the cub drew up closely together, while the old one put her trunk around the young one's body and every now and then snuffed the air.

THE THIRD ELEPHANT

grew more excited, and turned about as if seeking a way out of the building. Finally it lay down on its knees. This was when the building had not succumbed to the flames. Several men rushed in to see what might be saved, and made an opening in the cages where the elephants were confined. The mother and little one were led out together, and obeyed the keepers with docility, though the old elephant still wound its trunk closely around the body of the baby. It was not so with the third elephant, however. This one, which had been imported from Europe only a few days since, continued to lay obstinately on the ground, and, though every means were employed, even to burning, it would not stir an inch from the place, and after futile attempts to make it move it was abandoned. It was already too late to save the giraffes, the most valuable animal property in the Museum. The fire had already interposed between the keepers and these beasts and they could not be reached in any manner.

THE CAMELS

were ten in number. They also showed signs of the greatest uneasiness as the fire increased and gave vent to low moans, as if suffering morally more than physically. There was yet a chance to save these and the keepers rushed for them. But they, like the elephant, were lying down on their knees, as they are so familiarly represented in pictures of the desert, with the exception of one, which seemed to be all excitement and unable to maintain the quiet philosophical attitude of the last. This one a keeper seized by its bridle and led out of the building, while the others could not be made to stir an inch and also were left as they were found. The two polar bears were meanwhile in an agony of terror. They had succeeded in getting their arms through the bars and with their immense force were endeavoring to dislodge them, so as to make an opening to get out. But the bars resisted, and though the huge paws worked convulsively to pull them asunder it seemed to be to no purpose. As the fire grew nearer and nearer and

THE FLAMES GREW HOTTER

and hotter, even those animals which had shown the least concern began to manifest the strongest symptoms of fear. The monkeys, particularly, which had quietly sat on their haunches looking on, in evident surprise at the scene around them, began to hop about, chattering and jabbering and pulling at the bars of their cages every moment. The great ostriches stretched their small wings and half ran, half flew round their large dens. The llama, yak and elan trembled convulsively in all their members and looked piteously at the efforts the keepers were still making to rescue them. Singularly, and very unfortunately, none of the men had any keys of the cages, else there is no doubt that a large number of the animals would have been saved. As it was the keepers seized weights and hammers and endeavored to smash open the strong gates which held the animals in. But it was to no purpose, and the animals were kept still closely confined, and were evidently doomed to roast alive in their cages. But at length it grew too hot for the keepers, and when the flames rose up from the floor and darted out spitefully from little crannies in the side of the building and curled around posts and pillars, and all saw

THERE WAS NO HOPE

for Barnum's Museum, then, as if the caged animals had become conscious of this at the same moment, where there had been nothing but the roaring of the flames a moment before there was suddenly set up a vast, thrilling, tremendous scream of terror, as if from ten thousand human throats. The great roaring of the lions, the deep growling of the tigers, the sharp, spiteful snarling of the leopards; the bellowing of the elephant, the chattering of the monkeys, the screaming of the deer and giraffes, the grunting of the hogs, and the thousand other sounds which animals possess to give vent to their rage or despair, all united in one great chorus, in which no one sound, however loud, could be distinguished. It was not so terrible, however, as it was sad to know that, helpless as they were, this was the last cry of the dying brutes. One could still hear every now and then the mighty efforts of the caged beasts as they still, in an agony of terror, threw themselves against their cages in a last effort to break them open and escape into the free air. But

THE FIREMEN

are now playing with multitudinous hose, coming from a dozen engines, upon the doomed building. The first alarm had been repeated and two and three had been given one after another, causing engines and hose carts to come on from other districts. These were stationed all along Fourteenth street, from Third to Fourth avenue, and up and down Fourth, and also for some distance up Irving place. The people who might not have been disturbed by the fire were quickly awakened by the puffing and blowing of the engines and the shouts of the firemen, as they rushed hither and thither in frantic efforts to do their duty. And as the fire progressed the people, attracted by the wonderful scene, left their beds, dressed and clustered around the burning building. The night was bitterly cold, the thermometer being close upon zero, and still they stood still and passed comments upon the fire as it proceeded.

It was a long time before the flames which were raging within made their appearance outside the building. There was a glare above and around, but it proceeded from the roof and the windows on each side of the building. As the flames grew higher and higher the noise and

THE SCREAMS WITHIN

grew fainter and fainter, until they ceased altogether. It is said that the roar of the lion, brave to the last, was still heard when all others had ceased, and it became a fact that all the animals, with the exception of three, had been roasted alive.

It was a fortunate circumstance that all the valuable horses belonging to the circus proper were saved. They were not stabled in the circus and museum, but three blocks away, in Eleventh street. Each night, when they had done their service for the day, they are taken away and stabled. In this manner not one of the horses was lost, though the animals which did suffer were far more valuable than the horses.

One moment later and the flames hitherto kept within burst forth from the top of the building, and shortly after the roof, or what there was of it, fell in with a crash. At this moment the report was started in the crowd that one of

THE LIONS HAD ESCAPED,

and on the moment there was a general rush of the people looking on to the two ends of the street. It was a general stampede with but one object—to get as far from the burning building as possible. It was said that the police had started the report, with the intention of getting the masses of the crowd away, so as to draw a cordon more widely around the burning structure. Many seemed to be of this opinion a few moments later, and came back to obtain the same favorable positions as before. But this was impossible. The police had already established a line about two hundred feet from the building, and prevented any but those privileged from going through. Yet in spite of all and the cold also the crowd would not move away, and every few moments there was another rush and an attempt to break the cordon of the police; but they held firm.

About an hour and a half after the first alarm the fire was everywhere around the building and was burning fiercely in spite of the numerous huge streams of water which were being poured upon it. Indeed the water seemed not to have the slightest effect upon the flames and only seemed to feed them more fiercely. This was due to no small extent to the manner in which the corrugated iron which composed the building had been heated. In some places

IT WAS RED HOT,

and the water which dropped upon it in huge masses only sputtered and fell without the slightest effect. This continued for some time, but at length it was perceptible that some effect was being made. But it was too late. Already the flames had caught on each side of the thin structure. But it had not done burning yet. It was as combustible as a tinder box, yet had so much of inflammable material in its enclosure that the flames, unsubdued, still went lapping around every new piece of woodwork or material, and left only burned ashes behind it. Two hours after the fire had first broken out not a vestige of what had been the New York Circus or Barnum's Museum remained, except a pile of smoking and smouldering embers. Not even a vestige of the walls remained. All was as

FLAT AS A PANCAKE,

and all that noted the former existence of the place was an occasional little mound whereon the flames were playing about like will-o'the-wisps in city cemeteries, and disappearing every moment as some jet of water was thrown upon them.

But the fire did not satiate itself with the circus. It had too good a headway on, and was determined upon a rioting time for its Christmas eve.

THE GROTE BUILDING.

Next to the Hippotheatron, on the west side, stood the four story brick front manufactory of Grote & Co., workers in ivory. It was stored with valuable material and musical instruments, the property of C. Kierwarth. The flames penetrated into this establishment early in their career. The material was so inflammable that they leaped along the floors and walls from story to story, almost without impediment from the floodgates that the firemen at once opened upon them. The security of the rest of the block toward Fourth avenue, whereon is the new stone building—the German Savings Bank—was threatened, and the sparks from the tinder-like substance fell far and wide, threatening places distant by several blocks from the immediate scene. In less than an hour the Grote building was gone, only a wreck of the front walls remaining, with a half burned sign and a thick mass of icicles dangling over the blackened doorway.

GRACE CHAPEL.

Adjoining the circus, on the east, stood Grace chapel, or the Protestant Episcopal Free church, a beautiful edifice, in the Gothic style, a branch institution of Grace church, and built in modest imitation of that magnificent temple. Within it was decorated for Christmas. The holly and the mistletoe hung from its arches and clustered about its railing, while the gifts of merry Christmas for the children attached to its Sunday school were lavishly bestowed in the secret places, waiting for the surprise that was to come to-day. On this fair object the greedy flames fixed their fangs, while the circus should have yet been enough to satisfy their hunger. They leaped through the high windows just above the roof of the Hippotheatron, and thence rioted on nave, column, arch, gallery and organ loft. In an hour the roof fell in, leaving only a portion of the front walls standing, presenting a very picturesque ruin with its delicate arches and slender columns, ornamented and draped as it soon was with long icicles. From the church the flames spread to

THE OLD LAWRENCE MANSION,

a landmark of the city that for forty years has been the residence of the old family of Lawrences, of whom Abraham R. Lawrence is one, and which when first built was considered one of the finest country mansions in New York State. It stood so far out of the city limits that its owner felt secure against the encroachments of city business, and certainly could never have foreseen that its proximity to a circus and a church in a crowded part of the town would be the final cause of its destruction. The flames gutted this fine old relic and left only the walls standing. Thence they threatened the carriage factory of Messrs. Miner & Stevens and the valuable buildings on Thirteenth street, but at this point were stayed by the desperate

EFFORTS OF THE FIREMEN,

who, coated with ice and freezing with the cold, fought the flames with a skill and determination to which alone is due New York's exemption from a Chicago disaster. Chief Perley was present, aiding and advising with all his skill and knowledge, but he felt doubtful more than once during the fire of the success of the utmost efforts of his department. In their gallant battle with the flames the firemen ran great risks, and five of them at one time were cut off in the Lawrence Museum by the burning of the staircase, but they were rescued by fire ladders. Most of them had been to fires before during the night and were thoroughly exhausted.

ALL THROUGH THE DAY

an inquisitive crowd thronged about the neighborhood of the fire, from Fourth avenue to Third and along Irving place, looking at the thick-smoking ruins. A strong detail of police was present to keep the people back from a dangerous proximity to the tall front walls of Grace chapel, which rose like a dismantled tower among the burning débris, and from the overhanging signs and cornices of what remained of Grote's ivory factory. Groups of firemen stood upon the yet warm brick and turned streams upon the smoking pile, while icicles two and three feet long depended from every cool spot in the burning ruins. The church, that had so suggestively suffered with the circus, was hardly less a ruin than the latter. The altar, stained windows, pews, chancel and organ loft were levelled by this indiscriminating fire, along with the wild animals, the gay auditorium and the spangled properties of the menagerie. Clown and churchman suffered in common. The chapel and the circus were blent together in their ruin by the impartial leveller.

SUCH THOUGHTS

as these obtruded themselves very generally on the curious crowd, who, despite the intensely cold weather, gathered about the ruins. Some said there was a malign fate following the unfortunate showman, while others thought malign fate could not hurt him. There was general congratulation over the safety of the fine buildings that adorn the immediate neighborhood. Steinway Hall, the Academy, Tammany, all stood apparently untouched, although they had in reality suffered some damage, and were all indebted, perhaps, chiefly to the southerly direction of the wind for not being counted in as "totally destroyed." The disaster was generally conceded to be especially unfortunate, just at this season, when the employés need work most and when the best-paying holidays are at hand. Many of the people in the crowd expressed very hearty sorrow over the loss of the circus, because they were going to take their children there on Christmas. When they read the opinion of the Fire Marshal, rendered a month ago, on the unsafe condition of the building, it is quite probable they will experience a sense of relief that they are debarred from forming part of that dense throng—two-thirds little children—that used to pack it tight as a wedge, from top to bottom, at its Christmas matinées.

BY ELEVEN O'CLOCK

in the morning the tired firemen were relieved and sent home to thaw out, while the idle crowd continued to come and go, meditating, joking or speculating, as suited each, over the suggestive destruction of the old circus, the old country mansion and the graceful church in one common ruin.

THE LOSSES OF THE MUSEUM—THE ANIMALS.

On entering, on the right of the building, the animals were presented to view.

First cage contained two lions, valued at $10,000.

Second cage contained two Bengal tigers of the value of $15,000.

Third cage contained a leopard, valued at $2,000.

Fourth cage contained Rocky Mountain sheep, valued at $200.

Fifth cage contained an Albino deer, valued at $500.

Sixth cage contained an African wart hog, valued at $250.

Seventh cage contained a llama, valued at $250.

Eighth cage contained a lak, valued at $400.

Ninth cage contained an elan, valued at $200.

Tenth cage contained an ostrich, valued at $1,500.

Eleventh cage contained five snakes, valued at $100.

Twelfth cage contained four giraffes, valued at $20,000 each, or $80,000 in all.

Thirteenth cage contained a happy family, of which it is impossible to state the value.

Fourteenth cage contained a large Asiastic monkey, valued at $400.

Two small cages were under these, containing, one a porcupine and the other a badger.

Fifteenth cage contained a fine specimen of the "lion slayer" monkey, valued at $500.

On the left of the entrance as one went in the

First cage contained two sea lions, valued at $1,000.

Second cage contained two Polar bears, valued at $2,000.

Third cage contained a horned horse, valued at $500.

Fourth cage contained four horned deer, valued at $600.

Fifth cage contained two seals, valued at $100.

A little further on was a large ostrich in a cage, valued at $2,000, three elephants in another cage, valued at $50,000, and ten camels, valued at $2,000, only one of which was saved.

Besides the living animals there were one Polar bear and one black leopard stuffed, a large quantity of statuary, wax figures, mechanical singing birds, flute players, organ players, mechanical monkeys and other musical automatons, making, in all, some thirty groups, valued at from $2,000 to $8,000 each. In addition to these there were the apparatus of the Bohemian glass blowers, a large number of oil paintings, ten large exaggerating mirrors and many other articles of curiosities, &c.

All the performers lost their wardrobes, without exception—the Albino Family losing articles valued at $1,000, and Admiral Jet and Family losing all their paraphernalia. Charley White's trained dogs were also burned to death. They were very valuable animals. The Giant lost his wardrobe, and all the dresses which had been made for "Blue Beard" were also lost; and all the performers (some one hundred and thirty in number) have lost all their wardrobes.

A reporter of the HERALD called on Mr. Hurd yesterday, who said he could not give a list of insurances, as all the insurance policies were in the safe of the establishment, which lies at present at the bottom of the ruins. Mr. Hurd is Barnum's manager while he himself is away in New Orleans with another portion of his company.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT OF LOSSES.

Circus building—P. T. Barnum. Stock and building, $300,000; insurance, $80,000.

114 East Fourteenth street—Four story warehouse, F. Grote. Building and stock, $300,000; insurance, $140,000.

134 East Fourteenth street—Mrs. Lawrence. Loss $12,000.

SKETCH OF BARNUM'S BUILDING.

The building lately occupied by P. T. Barnum as a menagerie was built during the war by James E. Cooke, an English equestrian, and was first named the New York Hippotheatron. It failed to pay, however, and after a couple of seasons was sold to some billiard men, who made it an exhibition hall for match games. It then passed through various hands and suffered various misfortunes until taken by Mr. L. B. Lent, who named it the New York Circus, and gave a regular equestrian performance there during the winter months. In these hands it continued for several years, and finally, during the past summer, was bought by Mr. P. T. Barnum, who transformed it into a menagerie and circus, also exhibiting numerous curiosities. It had only been open some four weeks under its present management when the fire occurred. On Monday evening, a few hours before the fire, the fairy spectacle of "Blue Beard" had been produced for the first time.

A BENEFIT PROPOSED.

Several circus and theatrical gentlemen were yesterday at Fourteenth street and Fourth avenue, and resolved to take measures to give a benefit to the employés of the late Barnum's Museum. Already several prominent actors and actresses have volunteered. More definite action will be taken to-day.

The Fire Marshal's Investigation.

Robert Tilson testified—I live at No. 340 East Twenty-sixth street and am engineer and gasman at Barnum's Museum; I have no certificate or license as engineer; I have been employed there about five or six weeks; I applied for a license last week; we use Baker, Smith & Company's heaters; they are low pressure and carry three to five pounds of steam; the inspector said that he did not think it necessary to have an engineer for one of their heaters; Baker & Smith's men did the steam fitting; we had no fire in the place except under this Baker & Smith's boiler; I was on duty from eight A. M. until eleven P. M.; I always shut off the gas at three meters before leaving the building at night; one meter, supplying the burners in the menagerie, was kept on, and two or three lights were kept burning all night; I banked my fire always before leaving; the top of the boiler was covered with several layers of brick, and the distance between the top of the brick and the floor beams above is eighteen inches; I should think the size of the boiler room was about nine feet by fifteen feet, and the boiler took up a space of about five feet by five and a half feet, including the brick, the only wood being the floor and beams above; I left last night about eleven o'clock; I left

EVERYTHING IN THE USUAL CONDITION;

the boiler supplied steam to heat the entire building; I left fire enough to keep up steam all night; the watchmen used to put on coal about six in the morning to keep the steam up until I came; I was present when Officer Mooney examined the place and pronounced it unsafe; he spoke particularly of the pipe building from the boiler and on the floor above the boiler room, and about twelve feet from the boiler; this pipe was two and a half inches in diameter and was laid along the side of the stanchion beams; it touched it for a distance of eight or ten inches; this beam has since been

CUT AWAY

so that the space between it and the pipe was three and one half inches; and a piece of two and one-half-inch pipe was placed between the steam pipe and the beam open at both ends so as to allow the air to pass through; this was done by the direction of an insurance surveyor; we never had steam on in these pipes which touched the upholstery and ran under the rests; it was warm enough then when the gas was lighted; the seats in the dress circle where the pipe came from the top floor down and passed through the seats were all cut away from an open space of from two and one-half to three inches; where the pipes touched the beams in the gallery we cut out wood work behind them and put on iron hooks to

SUPPORT THE PIPES;

and put a piece of tin on the beam; there was not a place in the building to my knowledge where the pipes were nearer than an inch and three-quarters from the woodwork; there is a watchman on duty in the building at night; his name is Nelson; I have known him for two years; he has been with Barnum's company for three years; they consider him a very careful and trustworthy man; there were other men in the building at night; I don't know how many stayed there to take care of the animals; there were thirty or forty buckets of water standing on top of the cage, and three hydrant attachments in the place with such hose attached, I think about twenty fee to inch hydrant; there were no other facilities for extinguishing fire; I have talked with some of the persons who were in the building at the time of the fire; they say it

STARTED IN THE BACK PART

of the building; they couldn't tell exactly where, because the place was so full of smoke; the boiler was located in the back part of the building; we use no oil in the building to my knowledge; the gasfitting was done by a man named James Watson, corner of Crosby and Grand streets; it was about seven o'clock this morning when I talked with the men who were in the place at the time of the fire; I have not seen them since; don't know where they are.

TESTIMONY OF ALPHONSO COBANKS.

Alphonso L. Cobanks stated—I am watchman for Frederick K. Grete, 114 East Fourteenth street; I smelled fire and smoke while going through the building; it smelt like straw burning; this was about a quarter past three o'clock; I was then on the main floor, near Fourteenth street; I searched the entire building, including my stable, to see if there was any fire there, and finally

SAW SMOKE

coming into the shop through a window on the east side, just above the roof of the Museum; this window was quite a distance above the floor, and was reached by a ladder; I ascended the ladder and through the crack in the iron shutter I saw fire coming up through the roof of the Museum in the vicinity of where the heating apparatus was located; I then went to the front door and cried "Fire;" an officer came there at once from the direction of Fourth avenue, and another came down Irving place; I am sure that I gave

THE FIRST ALARM;

I saw none of the employés of the Museum; the doors were all fastened and the officers broke them open; there were at least ten men sleeping in the building at the time; I saw the fire through the window shutter; I heard the animals uttering fearful yells, and I thought I heard the voices of men also

TESTIMONY OF ANDREW ENLSON.

I lodge at the corner of Fifteenth street and Third avenue; I am night watchman at Barnum's Museum; I have been in Barnum's employ since he started this last time, a year ago last Spring; I go on duty from six to six and a half P. M. and remain until about eight A. M.; I take entire charge of the place after the show is over; all the lights are extinguished except two or three, which are kept burning low in the animal department; there were eight persons who slept in the building, six white men and two negroes; they slept in blankets, some upon the floor and some upon the stage where the curiosities were kept; the boiler room is at the rear part of the building and is reached by a step ladder; I think I am in there as often as once every fifteen minutes during the night to see that the fire is all right, the pressure of steam right, and the place all safe from fire; I carry a lantern in making my rounds; was in the boiler room within ten minutes of the time I discovered the smoke coming from it and everything was safe then; I did not smell anything burning then; at the time I discovered the smoke I was within ten feet of the trapdoor opening into the boiler room and was going towards it; smoke was issuing from cracks in the floor over the boiler room a little to the right of the ladder as you pass down, and also coming up to the trapdoor, which I always left open; I ran down into the boiler room and found fire burning under the floor boards and beams above the boiler and a little distance in front of it; there was but a little blaze when I went down; the fire seemed to be running along the beams and cracks of the flooring; the smoke was pretty thick, and I could not stay; I was afraid of being suffocated; I found a pail of water there, which I threw on the fire and then came up stairs and gave the alarm to the men; they came to my assistance at once, and began to throw water on the fire; after throwing three pails of water on the fire I saw the flames were spreading, and ran out of the building and gave the alarm; I put a couple of shovels of coal on the fire about twenty minutes before I discovered the smoke; I had been cautioned frequently about fire, and told to keep a good lookout in the boiler room and elsewhere; we had three or four gallon buckets of water standing about on top of the cages for use in case of fire; there were no other facilities for that purpose; I cannot account for the fire; no smoking is allowed in the place, and none of the men but myself go into the boiler room; the walls and floor of the boiler room are of brick; the beams and flooring overhead are unprotected.

TESTIMONY OF ARNOLD WURSTER.

I am connected with Barnum's museum and menagerie; slept in the building and worked at the properties; went to bed between twelve and one o'clock this morning; was waked up by some one hallooing; when I got up I could hear voices, and I saw that the place was full of smoke; I was on the Third avenue side, and tried to get over to the giraffe's cage, on the other side, but could not on account of the smoke, and I was afraid of the floor burning under me, so I tried to save what animals I could on my side of the house; I cut five camels loose, got out one camel, and an elephant followed me out; don't know how the fire occurred; I swept out the lower part of the dressing rooms; was careful not to let any waste paper get around the steam pipes; all the managing men of the concern have repeatedly cautioned me to be careful about fire.

The investigation will be continued to-day.

OTHER FIRES.

In Duane Street.

A fire broke out at four o'clock yesterday morning in the five story brown stone building 197 Duane street, owned by Mr. Knox. Damage to building, $1,000; insured for $10,000. The fire started on the first floor, occupied by J. Sperling, dealer in clothing. Damage, $20,000. Insured for $27,000—in the Reliance, $4,500; London Assurance Corporation, $2,500; Liverpool, London and Globe, $5,000; Queen's, $5,000; Adriatic, $2,500; Phœnix, $5,000; Mechanics and Traders', $2,500. Fire Marshal McSpedon will hold an investigation to-day.

In Ninth Avenue.

A fire broke out yesterday morning at one o'clock in the two story frame building No. 234 Ninth avenue, occupied by Mary Cosgrove as a grocery store, that caused a damage to the building of $3,000; insured for $2,000 in the St. Nicholas. Damage to stock, $1,000; insured for $3,000, in the National, Greenwich and Safeguard Companies. The fire occurred on the first floor, and Fire Marshal McSpedon will hold an investigation in the cause to-day.

In East Forty-eighth Street.

A fire occurred in the four story brick building No. 8 East Forty-eighth street, at half-past two o'clock yesterday morning, that caused a damage of $300. The basement was occupied by Eldridge Gerry, and the fire took place there.

Alleged Incendiary Fires in Paterson.

Mr. William Collier, proprietor of Collier's Rolling Mill, in Paterson, was yesterday afternoon released on $12,500 bail, Messrs. Samuel Smith and Joseph Todd going his security. Fifteen thousand dollars was at first set down as the amount of bail required, but Judge Bedle yesterday afternoon reduced it to the figure mentioned. It will be remembered he was arrested on suspicion of setting the place on fire himself.

The furniture store of Henry L. Muhs, 96 Broadway, was discovered on fire about three o'clock yesterday morning, but was extinguished before over one hundred dollars' damage had been done. Covered by insurance in the Continental. The proprietor was arrested on suspicion of being the incendiary, but a rigid investigation failing to substantiate the charge, he was subsequently released.

AN ALLEGED INCENDIARY ARRESTED.

On the 5th of July, 1869, the match factory of John Locher, 427 West Fifty-second street, was burned down under circumstances which led to the belief that it had been set fire to by an incendiary. Suspicion pointed strong to one Adolph Kibel, who, immediately after the fire, hastily took his departure for parts unknown to the authorities. A few days ago, however, he again made his appearance in this city, and as soon as his whereabouts became known Fire Marshal McSpedon directed his arrest, which was effected yesterday afternoon by Officer Katchel, of the Twenty-second precinct. The prisoner was taken to the Central office where he will be held to await examination.

EXTRACT FROM FIRE MARSHAL M'SPEDON'S REPORT FOR MONTH OF NOVEMBER, 1872.

We have also commenced a thorough examination of all the various places of amusement in the city, and the only place thus far found to be in a dangerous condition, as regards fire, is Barnum's Museum and Menagerie on Fourteenth street. An examination of this place was made on the 24th November; the danger was pointed out and orders given to make it safe. On the 30th November the premises were re-examined and found to be in the same condition as before, and the manager expressed his belief that the place was safe. Orders were again issued to make the necessary alterations, in its present condition I deem it unsafe for the public and dangerous to the surrounding property.

THE KINGS COUNTY LEVY.

ALBANY, N. Y., Dec. 24, 1872.

The Board of Supervisors of Kings county having refused to levy the $3,500,000 deficiency tax for the current year, Comptroller Hopkins made application to the Court for a peremptory mandamus compelling them to make such levy; and the case was argued before Judge Tappan. A despatch received to-day by the Attorney General states that Judge Tappan has rendered his decision sustaining the opinion of the Comptroller, and directing a peremptory mandamus to issue.

PENNSYLVANIA COAL REGIONS.

POTTSVILLE, Pa., Dec. 24, 1872.

The reported suspension of mining operations in this region is without foundation. The Workingmen's Benevolent Association have submitted a proposition to the Anthracite Board of Trade, made December 11, for the present basis of $2 50 at Port Carbon, sliding up and down indefinitely. The result of the voting in the various districts will not be known until Saturday next, but as far as ascertained they have voted against the proposition of the operators. There are no immediate apprehensions of a general strike, because those operators who want to work the mines will continue to pay the present basis for several weeks, until a new basis is settled. The collieries in the Schuylkill region are generally working. There may be a stoppage of a week or two, which is generally the case at this season of the year, for repairs.

CONFLAGRATION IN CENTRE STREET

Supposed Burning of Four Women.

THE LOSS $400,000.

Exciting Scenes and Incidents in the Vicinity of the Fire.

TROUBLE IN THE TOMBS

Another Glaring Case of Negligence and Shirking of Duty.

At twenty-five minutes past five o'clock last evening a fire broke out on the third floor of the six story brick building Nos. 81, 83 and 85 Centre street that caused a damage of about $375,000. The building stood in the centre of the block bounded by Centre, Leonard, Worth and Elm streets, and was known as the Claxton Building. It had formerly been a colored church, and was one of the most dangerous structures in the locality. The fire was first discovered by Mr. Hopkins, foreman for the firm of Anderson, Archer & Co., bookbinders, who occupied the fourth, fifth and sixth floors. He noticed the flames dashing through the front windows, and immediately warned all the people in the building of the accident. A rush was made for the staircase, but this was cut off, and the only means of deliverance left was by the fire escapes on the rear and at the north side. The first floor being vacant

THE FLAMES

had plenty of room to play, and in an incredibly short space of time the whole front of the building seemed enveloped in a mass of flame. The material in the house being of a very inflammable nature the flames were abundantly fed, and gathered strength in a short time very unusual in conflagrations in large buildings. The heat was so intense at one time across the several streets in the vicinity of the burning house that great fear was entertained for many of the fine buildings close at hand. The ground upon which the burned property stood belongs to the Ludlow estate, and the building itself is owned by Mr. Craighead. The ground floor fronting on Centre street was fitted up for stores, but they were fortunately vacant. The first floor was also vacant. On the second floor the New York Newspaper Association had their establishment. They suffered a loss of about $20,000, and were insured for $15,000. The third floor was occupied by Dunn, Barlow & Co., who sustained

A LOSS OF $60,000,

insured for more than that amount. The fourth, fifth and sixth floors were occupied by Anderson, Archer & Co., bookbinders, who sustained a loss of $30,000. Insured. This firm employed about sixty women and the same number of men, all of whom were caught in the building by the fire. From there the fire spread to No. 87 Centre street, a two story brick building, occupied by James Gallagher, brass gong and bell manufacturer, whose stock was damaged to the extent of $2,000. The building was injured to the extent of $1,500. No. 89 Centre street, a two story brick, occupied in the basement by William Bohn, lager beer saloon; damage, $500. The first floor was held by George Middleton as a wine room. His loss will amount to $2,000. The second floor, occupied by Messrs. Howe & Hummell, lawyers, was injured to the extent of $3,500. Damage to building, $1,800. No. 79 Centre street—a two story brick, forming an L with the junction of Worth street, occupied by E. B. Cunion—was damaged to the extent of $2,000 and the stock $1,500. No. 77 Centre street, occupied by H. Williams as

A LAGER BEER

saloon, was damaged to the amount of $3,000, on stock $1,000. The two and a half story brick building 130 Leonard street, occupied by G. L. Albrick as a grocery store, was injured to the extent of $800, stock $300. Tenement house 132 Leonard street was damaged to the extent of $1,000 by water, and several persons in the house lost personal property. No. 127 Worth street, occupied by Maher & Miller as a planing mill, was damaged to the extent of $4,000 on the upper floor and $2,000 to building. Mr. E. Price lost a quantity of valuable law books that he valued at about three thousand dollars. The cause of the fire is supposed to be an explosion of kerosene. Some of the men in the employ of Dunn & Barlow had used it to clean the rollers and in some way the stuff ignited in their hands. These same men had been cautioned against using kerosene several times, but notwithstanding that they again resorted to it.

Yesterday when the walls of the building fell the fire followed them, and the entire vicinity of the building soon became a mass of seething flame.

WHEN THE FIRE FIRST BROKE OUT

one of the most exciting and thrilling incidents ever witnessed at a similar scene in New York was presented to the surrounding crowd. On the fourth floor of the building, occupied by Anderson & Archer, bookbinders, there were about sixty girls employed as folders and sewers. The time at which they were accustomed to quit work was half-past five, and it wanted but a few moments to that time yesterday when the fire broke out. The girls, as it was Christmas, were eagerly longing for the half hour to strike, when suddenly some of the printers from the rooms below rushed up to the girls' apartment with the intelligence that the building was on fire. A scene of wild confusion immediately ensued. The only mode of egress from the upper floors was by means of a narrow stairway and

A DEFECTIVE FIRE ESCAPE,

and to these two points an indiscriminate rush was made when the alarm was first given. In the direction of the stairway, with such terrible rapidity had the fire spread, a dense smoke was beginning to rise, and the panic was further incurred by the supposition that the connection by way of the stairs was cut off. The girls, in the wild terror of the moment, lost all control of themselves, and their screams could be heard for blocks away. Some ran to the windows of the rooms in which they worked and some to the doors, and in the hurry they knocked and trampled each other down. The few men who worked on the same floor and the two upper ones were almost as much frightened as the girls, and completely lost their presence of mind. The excitement on the street was intense. Sixty human lives were imperilled and their salvation was depending almost entirely on their own efforts. There were

BRAVE MEN AND TRUE

in the crowd, firemen and policemen, who were willing to risk every danger if they could be of service; but until those who were within had made some effort those without could render little or no assistance.

Some of the girls, more courageous than the others, determined to try the stairway, and as the communication with the lower part of the building was fortunately not cut off, they succeeded, after penetrating through the smoke, in reaching the street. In the meantime higher and higher leaped the flames. Stone and iron offered but a feeble resistance to the dread element, and in a few minutes after the girls were first alarmed by the cry of "Fire!" it had reached almost to their rooms. As stated before, the fire-escape was defective, and it was not without extreme difficulty that the apparatus was got in working order. At length it was attached to the window and a number of girls rushed on to it. William Dean, a policeman of the Sixth precinct, mounted to the top and rendered valuable assistance to the girls, and by this agency a number of the girls were rescued. George Middleton, who occupies a saloon on the corner of Centre and Worth streets, and Detective Dolan also exerted themselves, and did good and valuable work. What rendered the task of

RESCUING THE GIRLS

so difficult was the fact that the escapes were provided with no ladders, and had it not been for the exertions of Captain Kennedy and his men, who hurried themselves in providing ladders, the task would have been a more difficult one. As the girls one by one were taken out the multitude cheered, and when they reached the pavement they were tenderly cared for, and those who were injured were taken to the station house. In their hurry the girls had neglected to secure their effects, and most of them lost their gloves, muffs and their better wearing apparel, which they were in the custom of changing for rougher suits each morning before they commenced to work. Severe as was this loss to them they did not grumble, and were extremely thankful that they had escaped with their lives. One girl, Emma Francis, of Jersey City, a pretty, brown-haired, brown-eyed girl, who worked in the room, had got on to the fire escape and was nearly down to the ground when, fearing the escape was about to give way,

SHE DROPPED TO THE GROUND

and sprained her ankle, but not severely. She was taken to the station house, and in a short time was well enough to go home with her father to Jersey City. Mary Hopkins, a young girl of nineteen, living on First avenue, also fell from the fire-escape, and was wounded in the cheek. She was taken home. The girls told their story to the HERALD reporter in the station afterwards, and they were as cheerful as could be expected under the circumstances.

It is greatly feared that some of the girls are missing, as there were two or three who had not been heard from up to eight o'clock. One girl named Mary Donovan was for a time reported killed, but she turned up afterward all right, to the great joy of her relatives, who were anxiously searching for her. Jennie Stuart is yet missing, and at a late hour last evening her brother and sister, who could not succeed in finding no trace of her, run about frantic in the station house. An old man, who worked on the same floor with the girls, told the reporter that he had grave fears that at least three of them had perished, as he considered it impossible that all could have escaped in the panic and terror that succeeded the alarm. Had the fire escapes been good all would have been well, but

THEIR WANT OF LADDERS

and loose construction might, and probably has, caused serious loss of life. The spectators breathed more freely when the imminent danger in which the poor girls were in was averted, and sincere admiration was expressed for the heroism and daring with which the policemen and firemen acted.

Scarcely had the employés of the establishment been rescued when another striking incident took place. Standing on the top of the brick building occupied by George Middleton and Howe & Hummel were five firemen, who had a stream of water in operation upon the wall on the Worth street side of the burning building. It soon became apparent that they could not be of much service, but they bravely held until suddenly the wall fell with a terrific crash, sending up a million of blazing sparks and enveloping everything around in a dense smoke. A cry of terror went up from the spectators.

"The firemen are lost!" "They are lost!" shouted every one. They were not lost, however. The middle part of the wall slowly commenced to give way first, and the firemen, perceiving this, had time to get down from the roof in time to save themselves. The wall fell upon the offices of Howe & Hummel and Edward Price, and completely

DEMOLISHED THE ROOF,

the bricks falling through to the apartment in which so many secrets have been unfolded.

The excitement in the tenement houses in Elm and Leonard streets was intense, and the occupants, who were all, of course, of the poorer class, made all efforts in their power to remove their effects. They succeeded in getting some of the miserable traps into the streets, but the greater portion had to be abandoned to the fury of the flames