The Awful Details of the Chicago Theater Holocaust

APPALLING SCENES DEFY DESCRIPTION

The Story of That Awful Ten Minutes Can Never Be Adequately Told-A Holocaust Horror Unprecedented in History.

BY STANLEY WATERLOO.

New York Sun Special Service.

Chicago, Dec. 31.—Horrors some-times occur, the character of which may not be adequately described. The quality of the English, or any other language, does not suffice for all the of the dead. There were other morgues

dreadful shadings.

Such an awful happening was that saw was because I was fixed there by of yesterday afternoon, when the new an unexpected chance. and beautiful Iroquois theater was destroyed, and hundreds of joyous people -men. women and children-were crushed to death or suffocated, or con-

sumed by fire.

Death Follows a Flash.

There was a flash at the stage's front, scenery in flames, the failure of the falling to its full extent of the fireproof asbestoes curtain, a flerce leap of flame drawn across the face of all the theater by the draft of the sud-denly opened exits, and other such horrors as may not be all related.

For those in the front seats there was no escape, and for those further back the chances scarcely were better. All from parquet to gallery were enveloped in a mad rush toward the exits and were swept with it to escape r to death.

It was a wave backward of human beings, fighting for the blessing of life. What heroism was shown of man for woman or of woman for children will never be known, for the tragedy

was but of minutes.

There was the sweep, the crush, the weak falling and the strong mounting, the inevitable desperate instinct which accompanies the grim law of self-pres-ervation; then the horror of flaming death behind and crushing force be-fore; then the still outreaching flames, and, finally, a mass of piled-up hu-manity, a few of the living above and the dead far deep below.

The details of the awful happenings inside are told elsewhere. They have never exceeded in the awfulness of sudden death in agony in the history Fire Early Extinguished, But Too Late

From the balcony and galleries, where there was no more safety from the flame heat ascending than on the floor below, people hurled themselves downward in their terror. All, or early all, of those in the rear met a fearful death. Firemen, the fire prac-tically extinguished, found they were but pouring water on heaps of human

What scenes were found within the heated vault which had been a theater well. They knew only that they had found the passages to the theater

There was no time for the convenplaced on tables, and later on the floor. At first they came one and one, then by two and two, then by scores.

Horror reigned literally—among no-

licemen and firemen—but was made about the place of death, the wild sightseers were kept back and the work went on—merely the removing of the dead and wounded from one building to another-but what dead and wounded and what moving!

Dividing Living from Dead. The physicians worked on those in whom the breath of life possibly might be preserved. It was a good thing for State. It was found for a time almost who survived that, just to the north of them, lay one of the greatest universities for young physicians, en-thusiastic, earnest and reckless. They themselves saved some of those in theater, and in many cases they did saved the lives of others by their swift and strenuous attendance.

I stood by the doorway and I saw them carried out. I had seen them to the street the bodies of eight to the street within before. I had noted the scene women. inside after the bodies had been ar-

They lay on the tables of the res taurant, the long rows of the dead, all covered decently and silent, but among and around them was no silence. There immediately grasped until a fireman would be a lifting of the impromptu and a newspaper man crawled up the shrouds, and then either a groan or shriek as seekers found their own, until the cries of agony seemed blended. I have looked on many ghastly scenes. I was in the midst of the horrors of the greatest of railroad disasters—that at Chatsworth—and I witnessed the burning of the Southern hotel in St. Louis, but I never had witnessed such a scene as this.

Appalling Rows of Dead.

There was an orderliness to it, all the more ghastly. It had all occurred so suddenly, in the season of the holidays, in a great city. The happy and prosperous had gathered to enjoy themselves, and there, all at once, had gone out the call, "Come, look upon your dead. We have them laid in rows here.

Not less appalling and in a more eadful, the in a more quiet way, was dreadful, the in a more quiet way, was the scene when the scores of dead were removed, some to their homes, but most of them to the morgue for

Policemen and firemen penetrated the gathered guards to carry away

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the dead not yet identified, and these comprised the majority. They came in such vehicles as they could force into service, and out from the extem-

Vehicles Loaded with Bodies.

porized morgue they carried the bodies

What I saw was this: A long row of all sorts of vehicles, seized everywhere by the police and detailed to the theater, the newest and one of they might give it. I saw firemen close the finest in Chicago. They were enjoying themselves to the utmost when drivers and make a semicroscent. There was a great matinee audience carry to the morgue such burden as saw, under the escort of the police-men, the dead brought out to be sent to the morgue or to their homes, as the case might be. I saw the gather-ings of friends of those thought to be

in the theater. I saw a human body, decently covered and lifted and laid gently on the bottom of an express or other wagen. I saw other bodies brought out, with equal care, enshrouded and laid on these same dead bodies. Some of the bodies were those of men and some were of women and some were of little children. When a vehicle was loaded it went away, seeking the morgue.

Failure of the Curtain.

The failure of the asbestos drop curtain was the cause of the terrible loss of life. Had it worked, or had it been lowered, the flames would have been confined to the stage. explanation. Some say it was low-ered. Others say that it failed to work entirely. And still others claim that it reached within six or seven feet of the stage, and that the frantic efforts of the stage hands to drag it down failed. In the excitement it must have been forgotten entirely.

Battle Against Death. The frantic rush to safety drove every idea out of the mind of all within the theater and on the stage ex-cept that of personal safety. In the mad dash it was every one for himself. The torn, bleeding, bruised and blackened corpses bore silent testimony to the terrible conflict that must have been waged for a few minutes

within the playhouse.

The construction of the theater is such that the space between the balcony and gallery seats and the stage is less than fifty feet. With the film-sy scenery of "Mr. Bluebeard" in flames, the draft from the stage to the many exits drew a solid sheet of very few of the firemen or policemen the fire on the fleeing spectators. To those in the front rows death was absolutely certain. As the exits became ly. Some of them cried and some who solutely certain. As the case will did not cry could not talk of anything choked and the unfortunate victims choked and the unfortunate victims and twelve deep, were piled up ten and twelve deep they formed an impregnable wall. clogged in front, and upstairs and With the flames lapping them from down, by bodies. choking the doorways, they were

THE WORK OF RESCUE

Well Systematized and Began Promptly-Rows of Bodies. Chicago, Dec. 31.—Every available policeman within call of the department was hurried to the spot and the men placed in lines at the end of the block allowing nobody to enter Randolph street from either Dearborn or

impossible to hold back the frenzied crowd that pressed forward.

A large number succeeded in break ing thru the lines and entering the the burning theater. They heroic work in rescuing the injured and carrying out the dead. Among these was former Alderman William H. Thompson, who, unaided, carried The first newspaper men carried out

many of the dead and injured. The building was so full of smoke when the firemen first arrived that the full extent of the catastrophe was not stairway leading to the balcony holding handkerchiefs over their mouths to avoid suffocation. As they reached the doorway, the fireman whose vision was better trained, selzed his companion by the arm, and exclaimed:

"Good God, Man! Don't Walk

The dead were stretched in a pile reaching from the head of the stair-way at least eight feet from the door back to a point about five feet in rear of the door.

This mass of dead bodies in the cenof the doorway reached to within o feet of the top of the passageway. All of the corpses at this point were women and children.

The two men tried vainly to get thru he door. All the lights in the theater ere out and the only illumination came thru the cloud of smoke that nung between the interior of the theater and the street.

Chief Musham, of the fire depart-nent, at once called upon all of his men to bandon work on the fire and and come at once to the rescue.

Orr & Lockett Hardware company two doors east of the theater, placed its entire stock of lanterns at the serv-ice of the department. Over 200 lights quickly were carried into the building and the work of rescue was commenced.

For over an hour there were two streams of men passing in and out of the doorway, the one carrying bodies, the other composed of men returning to get more. They were car-ried into Thompson's restaurant, which adjoins the theater on the east. When the firemen reached the balcony they found bodies standing upright, wedged between chairs like so many sticks. Some of them were burned to a crisp, others were suffo-cated, and some in their frenzy had leaped over the balcony rail into the

auditorium and were incinerated. After the first alarm when the excitement was at its height two explosions of gas tanks occurred, hurling fragments thru the roof. It was then

the flames broke out at the roof Altho all the patrol wagons and every ambulance owned by the city were pressed into service, they we utterly inadequate to carry away the dead, and in a short time there was a line of corpses fifty feet long, piled two and three high on the sidewalk in days, Thursdays and Saturdays. If

front of the theater. The merchants in the vicinity rose to the emergency in splendid fashion. literature on California, call at 600 Marshall Field & Co., Mandel Bros., Nicollet avenue, Minneapolis, or ad-Schlesinger & Mayer, Carson, Pirie, dress T. W. Teasdale, General Passen-Scott & Co., and other large dry goods ger Agent, St. Paul, Minn.

stores sent wagon loads of blankets, rolls of linen and packages of cotton to be used in binding up the wounds of the injured and to cover the dead. The drug stores furnished their stock to anybody that asked for it.

Dividing Dead and Injured. Doctors and trained nurses by the an hour, and every wounded person carried from the building received

prompt medical aid.

A number of doctors waited at the entrance with stethescopes in hand, and as soon as a body which looked as tho it might possess life was carried out, it was at once examined, and if dead it was placed on the pile lying on the sidewalk. The others were at once placed in ambulances and whirled away to hospitals or to the offices of physicians in the immediate neighbor-

. It was found necessary, in order to convey the bodies rapidly to the morgue and to the various undertaking establishments, to impress trucks into service, and in these, upon costly blankets furnished by the dry goods stores and covered with the same terial, the dead were hauled away, like so much cordwood.

Doctors and Nurses in Droves. It was a cause of wonder to many ments for medical attention.

"I telephoned to all the physicians in the down-town district," he said, 'and then to hospitals, nurses' associations and schools for persons to assist in the care of the injured. Employes telephoned to all the princi-pal office buildings and told the operators at the switchboard to noti-fy every physician in the building while others telephoned to the nurses. There were over 100 physicians whom I personally knew at the fire, and probaly 150 nurses. There has never been, as far as I have been aware, a call for so many physicians in Chicago at any one time since the great fire. Within a few minutes there fire. Within a few minutes physi-Why the asbestos curtain was not cians three and five miles from the lowered there seems to be no rational down-town district were offering their

Chartered a Switch Engine. Clinton, Ind., Dec. 31.-W. E. Dee Chicago, a tile manufacturer, with factory at Mecca, Ind., ten miles from Herald, heard of the Chicago theater disaster by telephone last evening. The list of missing contained the names of two members of his family. He instantly started for Chicago, 135 miles way. Jumping into a buggy he drove at top speed to Clinton, where he char-tered a switch engine and dashed on to Danville, Ill., fifty miles away. A special train had been ordered by telegraph which was waiting for him, and at midnight he started for Chiago. He expected to reach there at o'clock this morning. The list of nissing contains the names of Edward and Louise Dee.

NEW YORK THEATERS UNSAFE Commissioner Sturgis Says

Courts Don't Uphold Laws. New York, Dec. 31 .- Fire Commissioner Sturgis, when told of the Chi- ticlpated in the rescue. cago horror, said last night that there were really no fireproof theaters in said he. New York; that in their construction the building laws had been openly defied, and that the regulations of the fire department, when actually enforced, had met with public disapproval, the contentions of the theater managers being sustained in the

modern and fireproof theaters, I think there is none where an awful accident might not occur. When with the consent of the courts, as was the case in a recent notable performance, a thousand persons are allowed to stand, and when the building laws are openly violated, as they were during the former administra-tion, so long are the lives of our wives, daughters and others dear to

us placed in deadly peril. "Under the former administration theaters were constructed with little or no regard for the building laws. Aisles have been made much narrower than the law requires. The present building code contains a final lause which prevents reform in the matter of old playhouses. The end clause says: "In the interest of those owning theaters, the provisions of this code shall not apply to theaters built

revious to this action "Upon taking office, I inspected many of the theaters and found ex-tinguishers that had never been test-ed and the hose in the auditoriums Chicago's terrible accident should be a warning to New nothing but themselves."

KILFYRE FAILS TO WORK

Proprietors of Theater Make Statement in Regard to Tragedy.

Chicago, Dec. 31.-Two of the downtown theaters last night closed their doors to patrons as a result of the fire. These were the Illinois and Powers theaters, which are 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 Will J. Davis, one of the proprietor

of the Iroquois, collapsed under the worry and distress occasioned by the catastrophe. After the fire he and Mr. Powers made their headquarters they were constantly besieged by per sons who were frantically seeking for information of their relatives. The two proprietors made the fol-lowing statement at 1:30 a. m. to-

"So far as we have been able to ascertain the cause or causes of the most unfortunate accident of the fire in the Iroquois, it appears that on of the scenic draperies was noticed to have ignited from some cause. It was detected 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 at the same time as the electrician. The fireman, who was only a few feet away, immediately pulled a tube of kilfyre, of which there were many hung about the stage, and threw the contents upon the blaze, which would have been more than enough, if the kilfyre had been effective, to have extinguished the flame at once, but for cause inherent in the tube of kilfyre, it had no effect. man and electrician then ordered down the asbestos curtain and the fireman threw the contents of another

tube of kilfyre upon the blaze, with no better result."

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WITNESSES SAY NEARLY ALL MIGHT HAVE BEEN SAVED.

Wild Rush of People in Balconies to Scenes In and About Theater.

Chicago, Dec. 31.—Witnesses of the fire said that nearly, if not quite all the persons killed might have been saved if the audience had not become panic-stricken. The greater number of those killed in the balconies were crushed in the jam caused by the mad rush for the stairs.

William A. Brady, the well-known New York theatrical manager, who was in the audience at the time the fire started, said: "I was standing near the door when,

around the theater building how so looking up, I saw that the calcium many physicians and so many trained light apparatus was out of order. Some nurses could arrive on the spot within so short a time. Dr. Herman Spalding, senior official in the city health department, at the time the fire broke out, made all the arrangewhole balcony seemed to be in flames. Every one down stairs rushed for the doors, and as far as I know no one in that part of the house was killed. was upstairs where the smoke blown by the strong draft that came in thru the skylights that hundreds perished before they realized what

had happened.
"Such a panic as followed the first cry of fire I have never seen. The stairways and exits became jammed with fighting humanity in a moment, and the shrieks and moans of the poor

people cut off from all escape was the most awful thing imaginable. "With two companions I tried to reach the balcony, but we were driven back by the smoke, and were unable to accomplish anything until the fire-men had extinguished the flames. Hun-dreds of persons joined the rescuers, and from one of the entrances to the balcony we removed 150 bodies by actual count. They were jammed and tual count. They were jammed and twisted together in all shapes. Many of the women and children had been stripped almost naked in their mad efforts to escape from that living tomb. If the audience had not become panicstricken I am sure not more than fifty persons would have been killed or injured, as all the bodies I helped to persons who had been killed in the horrible jam."

Alexander H. Revell, whose little daughter Margaret, with a little friend, went in charge of a maid to see the performance, five minutes after the fire started heard of it in his store. He called a carriage and drove madly to the burning theater. By the greatest good fortune one of the first persons he encountered was the hysterical maid, who informed him that the two children had been saved without injury. Mr. Revell then hastened into the theater and par-

"I worked in the upper balconies," aid he. "The sight of those poor women and their little children, with clenched firsts, raised as if trying to beat their way to safety and stricken

the hospital, said that many of the deaths were caused by falling from the balcony steps in the efforts of the crowd to reach the exit.

"The first evidence of the fire," he said, "was a thin column of smoke which floated from the stage. was followed by a sheet of flame which mounted to the ceiling and en veloped the hangings about the front of the stage. The people in the parquet started for the door in an orderly manner. The people on the stage, the ushers and a number of speciators arose to their feet and shouted for order, and did everything in their power to prevent a panic. body ran for the doors. I was knocked have lost their minds. Men sprang to the stairs apparently regardless of the women and children who were going down at the time. Many women and children were knocked down in this way who might have been saved had they not been pushed to one side by men, who thought of

William H. Eever, an usher in the first balcony, said:
"My balcony was crowded and there vere a number of people standing

when the fire broke out. It all came so suddenly that I barely had time to open the fire exits before the auditorium was in flames. I tried to quiet the crowd, but it was no use. women screamed and the men fought to get to the doors, trampling on women and children. If they had been quiet everybody could have got out of my balcony."

Women Saved by Plank Bridge. George H. Elliott, secretary of the ogden Gas company, was in a building directly opposite from the thea-ter, across the alley. He noticed smoke and went down to ascertain its When he reached the street the alley, and Elliott immediately some of them attempted to leap into rushed for a ladder in an effort to the orchestra pit, which would in all

able to devise was to hurrledly lash some planks together and throw them across to the affrighted women on the platforms, with instructions to place the end firmly on the iron framework.

Before this could be done a fear-ful loss of time ensued, the women were being pushed every instant into the alley, and by the time the bridge was constructed but few remained to take advantage of it. However, about two dozen, it is believed by Mr. Elliott, made their way across this nar-

"God forbid that I ever again see such a heartrending sight," said the bishop. "I have been in war and on the bloody field of battle, but in all my experience I never have seen anything half so gruesome as the sight that met my eyes when, with the aid of a tiny lantern, I finally was able to penetrate the darkness of that halcony. There was a pile of twisted and bleeding bodies ten feet high,

carrying out the injured and in keep- ered or placed under control, but then

"I have never witnessed such a scene in all my life," said Sheriff Barrett. "On all sides were heaps of mangled and charred humanity. We carried out so many injured and dead that at last we were unable to keep count of them. Crazed men fought to "I have never witnessed such a rett. "On all sides were heaps of man-gled and charred humanity. We car-ried out so many injured and dead that at last we were unable to keep count of them. Crazed men fought to get within the corridors, thinking to find their loved ones among the nile find their loved ones among the pile of corpses that filled every available Vild Rush of People in Balconies to the Stairs Is Responsible for Greater Number of Fatalities—Heartrending

Saved by Waiters. Waiters and cooks from Thompson's restaurant, which adjoins the theater on the east, rescued fifteen persons by raising a ladder from the roof of a shed to a window in the rear of the building around which a mass of screaming around which a mass of screaming women and children were congregated. C. Little, the head cook, mounted to the top of the ladder and told them to jump into his arms. Fifteen women and children did this and were passed by Little down to other men on the ladder below them. One woman attempted to jump into his arms before he was ready to take hold

of her, and she fell to the alley, frac-turing her skull, dying instantly.

D. A. Stratton of Alpena, Mich., was in the theater with 15-year-old daughter, Mattie, and his niece, Louise Bushway of Chicago. In the rush for the door he became separated from both girls and attempted to fight his way back in order to find them, but was buffeted aside by the rush of mad-dened peaple. He was knocked down, being carried out did he learn that the two children had also escaped. Both of them were burned badly, his daughter inhaled flame and was un

Shock Felt in Unity Building. William F. Grower, manager of the Unity building, got a view of the fire from the fifteenth story. "I was look-ing out of my window at the time," he said, "when I saw what seemed to be a cannon ball shoot eighty feet into the air from the roof of the theater. I feel certain that you can find many persons who felt the shock of the Unity building prior to the

"If you ever saw a field of timothy grass blown flat by the wind and rain Many of a summer storm, that was the posi-d been tion of the dead at the exits of the r mad second balcony" said Chief of Police O'Neill. "In the rush for the stairs they had jammed in the doorway and piled ten deep, lying almost like shingles. When we got up the stairs i nthe dark to the front rows of the victims, some of them were alive and struggling, but so pinned down by the great weight of the dead and dying piled upon them that three strong men could not pull the unfortunate ones

free.
"It was necessary first to take the dead from the top of the pile, then the rest of the bodies were lifted easily and regularly from their positions, save as their arms had intertwined and clutched.

"Nothing in my experience has approached the awfulness of the situa-tion, and from the point of physical exertion, the police department has never been taxed as it was taxed last night. Men were worn out carrying out dead bodies."

ACTORS' STORIES

theatrical company, being on the first floor, who had little difficulty in reachaltho their was highly critical because of the speed with which the flames swept thru the mass of scenery in the flies and on the stage.

Eddie Foy, principal comedian in the play, was one of the last to escape. He got out thru a rear door after he rear of the place screamed 'fire,' and had assisted the women members of he company to safety.

Mr. Foy attributed the extent of the catastrophe to the failure of the fire-

proof curtain to work properly.
"The simple fact," he said, the curtain did not descend entirely was what saved the lives of the company, altho it caused such a horrible catastrophe in the front of the house." Herbert Cawthorn's Part.

Herbert Cawthorn, a member of the cast, assisted many of the chorus girls from the stage exits in the panic. After being driven from the building he made two attempts to enter his dressing room, but both times was driven back by the firemen, who feared he

"There were at least 500 persons behind the scenes when the fire started assisted many of the chorus girls from the theater, and some of them were only partially attired. Two of the young women in particular were naked from the waist up. They had absolutely no time to throw a stitch of clothing over their shoulders."

Tried to Extinguish Fire. John E. Farrell, the stage electri-cian, was one of the heroes of the fire. He was the first to discover the blaze when it was a little tongue of flame running up the canvas border of the curtain. He climbed a ladder twenty feet above the stage and sought to exburned and the fire had run up the anvas border into the flies.
As the frightened actors and acwomen already were dropping into tresses rushed in a body off the stage

save as many as possible.

No ladder was available and the only method of assistance they were front of them. "I'll kill the first one that tries to he shouted, and the mem-

pass me," he shouted, and the mem bers of the company shrank back. With the aid of Eddie Foy and Far rell the members of the con hustled from the rear of the theater

Panic Among the Girls.

Penned below the stage, running about crazed by the panic overhead, were fifty supernumeraries and mem-bers of the ballet. They were shut off from exit by the crowd wedged in the row causeway.

Bishop Fallows, who happened to be passing the theater, made his way thru the darkness, which was intenthru the darkness, which was intensified by the volume of smoke that filled the auditorium to the top of the gallery, and assisted in carrying out lifted men and women clad in their costumes, wearing helmets, stage costumes, wearing helmets, tights and one "supe" who insisted upon carrying his spear with him, until Hamilton threatened to brain him with it unless he dropped it.

Actors Jump From Fire Escapes. "The fire suddenly burst out of the back windows of the theater and threw a glare of light into our store." with blackened faces and remnants of charred clothing clinging to them. Some were alive and moaning in their agony; the greater number were dead. I assisted in carrying many of the I assisted in carrying many of the injured down and ministered to them as best I could."

Sheriff Barrett and a score of deputies from his office were engaged in that the fire had been either smoth-

ing order among the frantic relatives who occupied the street in front of the burning building.

It burst forth again, and the shrieks railing of our box to the aisle in front. the stage was a mass of flames. As I actresses and stage employes were started up the aisle a man rushed into

of the madhouses of fiction."

an employe of Klapperich & Co., 75 Lake street, declared that he reached the alley back of the theater before the alley back of the theater before the alley back of the theater before many of the employes of the theater were able to get to the windows and

on and said that she was uninjured. the stores to buy wraps to cover Another, woman attempted to tie a them." long drapery to the rail of the fire escape, but the persons behind her pushed her off. A man below caught one of her arms and kept her from Touching Scenes When Catholic striking on her head. The woman complained of a sprained ankle, but otherwise was uninjured."

RELIEF WORK ORDERED

Councilmen Instruct Officials to Spare No Expense. the extent of the disaster became known. Mr. McGann at once walked into the committee-room and was told by Chairman Mavor of the committee to direct the fire marshal, the chief of police, and the commissioner of pub-

lic works to proceed in the emergency

without restriction of any kind as to expense. He was told to do everything needful, spend all the money neces-

sary, and look to the council for his warrant. "We will be your authority for everything you do," said Alderman wayor. "Said Alderman with pain, ceased to moan and fastering everything you have the scene in their lives. Many, the crazed with pain, ceased to moan and fastering every out the A telegram at once was sent to Mayor Harrion, and he returned to

Chicago on the first train, arriving here to-day. STORY OF AN EYE WITNESS

Girl in a Box Party Describes Vividly What Happened. Chicago, Dec. 31.—One of the mar-relous escapes was that made by the nembers of a theater party given by Miss Charlotte E. Plamondon of Chicago. The party was made up of a number of prominent society people of this city, Miss Elsie Elmore of Astoria, Ore.; Miss Mary Peters of Columbus, Ohio, and Miss Josephine Eddy of Evanston, Ill.

Miss Plamondon was the first to drop curtain. She called the attention manager in Chicago to divert the re-

peared before the footlights and requested the audience to keep their seats, as there was no danger. 'Eddie Foy then hurried to the front of the stage and commanded the ple to remain calm, saying that if they would keep their seats the danger would be averted. The curtain, how-

ever, still burned, pieces of the smol-dering cloth falling into the orchestra "An effort was made by the stage by the numerous reports, and had lithands to arrange the curtain so that the to say. forced, had met with public disapproval, the contentions of the theater managers being sustained in the courts. He said:

"While we have in this city many so-called modern and fireproof theater to so-called modern and fireproof theater to stage are given by the members of the stage are given by the members of the many children were present. I could stage are given by the members of the stage are given by the their eyes wide open as they watched the burning curtain. Just then the way the Chicago disaster was the one people in the balcony rose to their subject of conversation among manfeet and crowded forward to obtain a better view of the fire. Eddie Foy rushed to the center of the stage again and waved his arm in a gesture meaning for the people to be seat-ed. At that instant a woman in the entire audience of women and children rose to their feet, filled with incontrollable terror. In another in-stant there was a confused roar made

by a thousand people as they rushed madly from the impending danger. "On the stage the chorus girls, who had aroused my admiration because of their presence of mind, turned to flee, but many were overcome before they could take a step. Several fell to the floor, and I saw the men in the caste, and the stage hands, carry them off

"Elsie Elmore was the first to leave ur box. The upholstering on the our box. The upholstering on the compelled to brush fragments of the ourning curtain from our clothing to prevent them from catching fire Then there came a great roar and a great draft of air and the flames shot out over the parquet until it seemed to me as tho they must reach the very

front walls. "There were but few men in the audience, but I saw several pulling and pushing women and children aside as they fought like maniacs to reach

the exits. I saw a number of chil-dren trampled under foot, and none arose again. "In the balcony there was a big, black crush of human beings, each ap-parently fighting everybody else. The balcony was so steep that many fell before they had left the first four rows tinguish it with his hands. He beat helplessly until his hands were badly were choked, and those in the rear rushed with all the strength they possessed upon those who were nearer

doorway. "It was almost incredible, the speed with which the flames ran thru the scenery, and altho I was but a second after Miss Elmore in jumping over the

persons in the theater reminded me entrance, where, men were kicking of the medhouses of fiction" against the doors, and shattering the Thomas Miller, 3960 Drexel avenue, an employe of Klapperich & Co., 75

to fresh air and safety.

"As I look at it now I must have been walking on prostrate bodies as I been walking on the opening. All of "I saw one actress jump from the second story fire escape and alight in a delivery wagon," he asserted. "She went thru the canvas roof of the wagon and said that she was projected."

GIVING ABSOLUTION

Priests Visit the Dying.

Chicago, Dec. 31.-When Rev. O'Brien of the Holy Name Cathedral learned of the fire, he rushed into the old Tremont house, now converted into the Northwestern University law school, into which many victims No Expense.

Chicago, Dec. 31.—Mayor Harrison was on his way south for a hunting trip and Controller McGann was acting mayor. The finance committee of the church was in general trip and trip are trip and trip are trip and trip are trip and trip are trip are trip and trip are trip a the city council was in session when Archbishop Quigley in the diocese of the extent of the disaster became Chicago. Finding that they were unable to attend the great number being brought in, Bishop Muldoon announced that he would give a general absolution to all the Catholics

among the victims. During the brief moment that the two priests with uplifted hands be-sought God to pardon all the frailties of his dying servants, the poor mangled men and women who lay in dozens on the floor seemed to realize that tened their fast dimming eyes on the

two priests. After the absolution was given, many, barely able to move, feebly stretched out their hands imploringly to the priests for one handclasp and one word of sympathy before they passed away. Both clergymen ad-ministered absolution, remaining till the dead were removed to the morgue and the injured to various hospitals.

MANAGERS ARE STUNNED

They Arrange for Benefits for the Sufferers. New York, Dec. 31.—The news of the Chicago disaster was followed in New York by the announcement of otice the fire along the top of the S. S. Shubert immediately directed his several benefits for the fire sufferers. manager in Chicago to divert the receipts of next Wednesday's matinee of celpts of next Wednesday's matinee of "The Pit" to the sufferers, and said that Wednesday's receipts of "Winter the slowly moving line of flame. One of the store bands were like t that Wednesday's receipts of "Win-some Winnie," now here, would be devoted to the same cause. The "Red the stage hands, wearing overalls, ap-

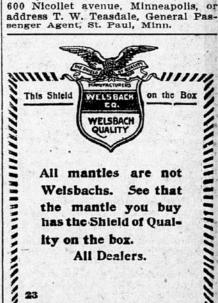
benefit. Al Hayman, Marcus Klaw and Abram Erlanger, the leading members of the theatrical syndicate, who own large interests in the Iroquois theater, sat in their offices in the New Amsterdam theater until after midnight, eagerly awaiting the telegrams from their Chicago representatives. They were horrified and bewildered

At every other theater on Broadway the Chicago disaster was the one

agers, employes and audience. Actors crowded the wings between the acts, listening to news of the disaster.

present "Mr. Bluebeard" combegan its tour at Pittsburg.

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Defective Page