

NORFOLK FIRE LOSS NEARLY A MILLION.

Estimate Includes Buildings, Stocks, and Personal Effects. SOME NARROW ESCAPES.

Hotel Guests and Others Were Aroused Just in Time. BUSINESS SECTION WAS MENACED.

But a Fortunate Change of Wind Checked the Flames' Course—Accidents and Incidents—Miss Mamie Rixey Rescued—The Property Destroyed—Some Brutal Men.

NORFOLK, VA., January 31.—(Special.) The loss caused by the great fire which began in the Columbia building, Granby street, this morning, taken all in all, will foot up to nearly \$1,000,000.

The actual loss on buildings amounts to \$500,000. Of this \$350,000 was insured. The Atlantic Hotel was insured for \$700,000.

The loss caused by the destruction of the furnishings of the Atlantic Hotel, Columbia building, Albemarle flats, and Virginia Club, together with personal effects, jewelry, and money of the guests of the hotel and Albemarle flats, will run the figures close to the \$1,000,000 mark.

NO CASUALTIES REPORTED. That there were no casualties is regarded as a miracle, as the fire started in the middle of the night, when nearly 200 people were asleep in the Atlantic Hotel, beside those in the Albemarle flats.

It was lucky that the wind was from the northeast, else the flames would have swept Main street south of Plume from Granby to the Norfolk and Western Depot, a distance of nearly a mile.

The water pressure was miserably weak, and this, with a lamentably small number of firemen, accounts for the destruction of so much property.

PORTSMOUTH AND BERKLEY AIDED. Volunteers came from Portsmouth and Berkeley, and every tug in the harbor was pressed into service, to keep the flames from spreading to the mammoth piers of the Merchants' and Miners' Transportation Company, Chesapeake-Baltimore Line, and Norfolk and Washington Steamboat Company.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS. The guests barely had time to escape with their lives, much less save their wardrobe and trunks. One drummer climbed down the fire-escape and, finding the trouble, but soon realized that the building was on fire.

THE ILL-FATED HOTEL. The falling walls of the Columbia building toppled over on the Atlantic Hotel and sent thousands of sparks flying all over the downtown section. Providentially the roofs were wet, and rain began to fall, which, with the prevailing direction of the wind, saved the greater portion of the city from destruction.

SOME BRUTAL MEN. There ensued a scene of the wildest description. Men and women hastily grabbed their belongings and made for elevators, stairways, and fire-escapes.

THE NORFOLK FIRE. Local insurance men contrast facilities of a lively interest in the \$500,000 Norfolk fire yesterday morning. A study of the situation is of especial interest and value locally in the light of the discussion of Richmond's fire-fighting facilities.

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M'CARTHY DECLINED. Refused an Offer of Position at \$7,500 Per Annum. BUT HE GAVE NO DETAILS. Not Enough Money in the State to Induce Him to Retire.

BEFORE LEE DEMOCRATIC CLUB. Mayorality Candidate Opposes Proposition to Make Property Ownership a Qualification of Membership in the Connell-Down on Child Labor—Other Features of Comparatively Short Speech.

"Within the last twenty-four hours I have been offered by one of the wealthiest men in Virginia a position, with a salary three times as large as that of the Mayor of Richmond. I declined it immediately and at once. There is not money enough in this State to induce me to retire from this canvass, and I am not for sale at any price or at any time, if it means moving out of Richmond."

This was one of the striking paragraphs in Mr. Carlton McCarthy's very earnest and forcible talk of half an hour last night to the Lee Democratic Club, at No. 1010 west Broad street. Mr. McCarthy stated after the meeting that he was not at liberty at this time to give the particulars of the offer referred to.

The speaker almost exclusively confined his attention to a discussion of the principles of taxation and their relation to the responsibility of the tax-paying voter in the matter of placing the administration of government in competent hands. There were one or two vigorous digs at his Honor, the Mayor, but without the wealth of descriptive verbiage which served to enliven the Belvidere-Hall address.

REVENUE AGENT INJURED. Deputy Collector Beach Injured; Lost His Baggage Also. Revenue Agent Ingram has received a report from Washington, which states that last year Ingram's baggage was destroyed by revenue agents in this country.

PETERSBURG AND RETURN FOR SIXTY-FIVE CENTS. Straight Fare, via Electric Line, Forty cents—Cars to Leave Manchester Every Hour.

SUFFOLK'S "SPOOK" BADLY OUT CLASSED. Halifax, N. C., Has a Lively Feminine Ghost Who Does Many Funny Things.

WELDON, N. C., January 31.—(Special.)—The Suffolk "ghost," or something on the same order, has been disturbing the people of Halifax.

RAIN FOR TO-DAY. To-Morrow Cloudy. WASHINGTON, January 31.—Weather forecast: Virginia: Rain Saturday; Sunday, cloudy; light to fresh north-easterly to easterly winds.

PADEREWSKI HURT IN A STORM AT SEA. Piano of the Artist, Who Was a Passenger on the Oceanic, Fell Upon His Head.

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THE BIDDLES SHOT: SOGS MRS. SOFFEL.

Thrilling Story of the Capture of the Trio. EDWARD BIDDLE IS DYING. John Biddle Riddled With Shot and in Precarious Condition.

WOMAN'S WOUND SELF-INFLICTED. On Seeing the Men of Her Party Flee, She Fires a Bullet Into Her Own Breast—Dying Statement of Ed. Biddle's, in Which the Desperado Asserts Innocence of Murder.

PITTSBURG, Pa., January 31.—Edward Biddle in jail, dying; John Biddle, riddled with buckshot and in a precarious condition, and Mrs. Peter K. Soffel lying in a hospital with a self-inflicted bullet wound in the breast, in the sequel of the sensational escape of the Biddle brothers from the Allegheny county jail, aided by Mrs. Soffel, the wife of the jail warden, on Thursday morning.

The story of the close of the Biddle tragedy, which came at 5:45 this afternoon, is a thrilling one. The scene was a snow-covered road two miles east of Prospect, Butler county, near Mount Chestnut, and the exact place was at McClure's barn, where two double-team sleighs, filled with eight officers, three of them Pittsburg detectives—John Roach, Albert Swinehart, and Charles McGovern—met the two Biddles and Mrs. Soffel in a one-horse sleigh, stolen at Perryville, and at once opened fire on the trio.

The Biddles returned the fire, after jumping out of the sleigh. Mrs. Soffel's wound is through the breast. Edward Biddle was shot in the left arm, in the breast, and in one leg. John Biddle was riddled with buckshot in the breast and head.

CHASE OF THE DESPERADOS. The Pittsburg officers were met at Butler this afternoon, by Deputy-Sheriffs Rainey and Hoon, and Officers Frank Holliday and Aaron Thompson, the latter under the command of Chief of Police Robert Ray, of Butler.

The officers were certain that they were on the right trail. It was only a question of time when they would catch up with the escaping condemned murderers and their companions.

THE BIDDLES AND MRS. SOFFEL. The Biddles and Mrs. Soffel at Mount Chestnut, five miles east of Butler. They had made a detour at the town of Butler, and after going several miles east, turned north and then west. The Pittsburg officers, only a few miles in the rear, took the wrong road for about eight miles, when they found their mistake, they made up for lost time, by telephoning and telegraphing ahead for fresh horses.

THE CONVICTS AT BAY. The two sleighs with the eight officers aboard, started westward and met the Biddles and Mrs. Soffel at Mount Chestnut's barn, two miles from Mount Prospect. The Biddles, having learned that they were almost overtaken, and taking what they considered the only chance they had, drove eastward and met their doom.

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BRITISH REPLY TO DUTCH NOT E. It Has Been Dispatched to the Hague, and Will Probably Have Effect of a Negative.

LONDON, January 31.—The British reply to the Dutch note in regard to the bringing about of peace in South Africa was dispatched yesterday to the Hague. The contents of the note are kept strictly secret, as the first publication of the text is intended to be made in Parliament, Monday, February 3rd.

WASHINGTON, January 31.—The investigation into the conditions in the Philippine archipelago, apropos of the effort to secure legislation for the government of those islands, was held in the Senate Committee on the Philippines today. W. H. Taft, Civil Governor of the archipelago, was the first witness called.

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