

THE BALDWIN HOTEL BLOCK ENTIRELY GUTTED BY FIRE

Appalling Conflagration in the Very Heart of the City.

CAPTAIN A. J. WHITE'S FEARFUL DEATH.

Many Others Are Believed to Have Perished—Wild Scenes of Panic.

The Baldwin Hotel is a ruin. The most tremendous conflagration that has ever happened in San Francisco burst forth in the Baldwin Hotel shortly after 3 o'clock this morning. From the very interior of the building a shaft of fire ascended with tremendous volume, and the sky burst forth into thousands of falling sparks.

It has come at last! The Baldwin Hotel, which for years been looked upon as a fire-trap, burst into flames early this morning, and is rapidly becoming a mass of charred and blackened ruins.

the fourth floor corridors and down the main stairway. Then he fastened the rope for himself and commenced to descend. He was a heavy man and the rope was small. It stretched, snapped, and the man plunged down to the stone sidewalk.

OUT OF SLEEP TO FACE DEATH Men, Women and Children Join in a Mad Race For Life. A few minutes after 3 o'clock this morning fire broke out in the kitchen of the Baldwin Hotel on the easterly end near where the main structure joins with the annex and spread with such frightful rapidity that the splendid structure, erected from the winnings of the famous race horseman, is now a mass of seething ruins and other buildings in the vicinity are complete wrecks.

WHEN THE FIRE BROKE OUT Panic Among the Guests. Grave Fears That Those on the Upper Floors Could Not Escape. Five minutes after the fire alarm was given the scene in the office of the hotel was one pandemonium. For some reason the lights throughout the great caravansary were extinguished, leaving the guests to grope their way through the long dark corridors and down the winding stairs.

Some of the people on the first floor succeeded in saving their trunks and carried them to the doorways on the opposite side of Market street, where men, women and children were temporarily camped until they gathered their wits sufficient to seek shelter elsewhere.

DROPPED FROM THE THIRD STORY

A. J. White Falls to a Horrible Death on the Pavement.

The first fatality known to have occurred was the horrible death of a wealthy, retired dry goods merchant named A. J. White, who had his apartments on the fifth floor of the hotel on the Market street side.

BALDWIN AND KOWALSKY SAFE

They Were Dragged Half-Stupefied From Their Rooms.

Colonel Kowalsky was asleep in his rooms and with great difficulty awakened. His door was locked and the rescuers were obliged to break it in. He was found in his bed breathing heavily and half stupefied, but soon revived when brought to the air.

room 208 on the third floor, were driven from their bed by the fierce burst of smoke and flames. Escape by the hallway was impossible and they jumped from their window to a balcony several feet below and climbed down the fire escape.

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PANIC REIGNED IN THE VICINITY

Denizens of Adjacent Lodging Houses Rushed to the Streets in Deshabile.

The entire scene about the streets surrounding the hotel was something never seen in San Francisco before. Ellis street, from Powell to Stockton, was visited by a shower of living fire with chunks of burnt wood which had been carried skyward by the force of the flames until thrown back to the earth, striking the pavements and spreading out in a mass of fire, until the street looked as if it had been paved with bricks of fire.

the fiery caldron that was seething and roaring just a few feet below him, Christie made a thrilling picture, silhouetted against the flames and wildly and pleadingly waving his hands to those below.

FIRE THREE SHOTS AT THEM

Bold Thieves Attempt to Get Away With a Valuable Trunk.

During the progress of the fire three thieves entered the hotel and stole a trunk containing considerable jewelry and wearing apparel. They succeeded in passing the police line and started up Powell street. On reaching O'Farrell street the desperate thieves stopped as if exhausted from their heavy load, Special Officer Judge happened along at this juncture, and suspecting that the men had stolen the trunk, awaited developments.

GALLANT DEED OF A TRUCKMAN

One Guest Prepared to Cut His Throat to Avoid Incineration.

One of the most thrilling incidents of the catastrophe was the extremely narrow escape of A. H. Christie, one of the guests of the hotel, from the horrible fate of being incinerated while in the full flush of health.

NARROW ESCAPE OF SOME GUESTS

Well-Known People Who Were Almost Suffocated by the Flames.

In the southwest corner of the fifth floor, the servants' apartments, a dozen men and women huddled together at the windows, striving to keep away from the suffocating smoke in a desperate effort to preserve life for a few moments longer, although there seemed no hope of escape. There was no fire escape within reach and the longest ladders were too short by far.

A CHAMBERMAID BELIEVED LOST

Fire Marshal Towe Hit by a Falling Cornice on Market Street.

Sadie Hart, a chambermaid, has not been seen since she went to bed early in the evening, and is believed to be lost.

NO INSURANCE ON BUILDING

At 5 o'clock the walls were tottering and the policemen were ineffectually struggling to keep the crowd back. "Lucky" Baldwin was racing around like a madman trying to find some one who would go into his room and bring out something—what it was he would not state—but a negro servant is authorized by the statement that it was a set of gold mounted harness valued at \$7000.