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FIRE SWEEPS AWAY ALMOST ALL CHINATOWN

Attempt to Burn Block Fifteen Clears Many Blocks.

THE PLAGUE DISTRICT A HEAP OF SMOLDERING RUINS

Thousands of People are Home-less and in Need
of the Charity of the Government
and the People.

(From Sunday's Extra.)

Chinatown is no more. Here and there on its desolate expanse are a few buildings saved from the burning, these mostly on the edges of the tract nearest the white district. Practically speaking, however, Chinatown is a dead letter. It is what the prudent citizens of Honolulu have longed for, though they did not expect to have the Asiatic quarter go out all at once on a whirlwind of flame. But that was the choice of Providence and it is better so. Unhappily the great Kaumakapili church had to go too—unhappily from a historic religious standpoint, though perhaps not from a sanitary one.

Such a time of excitement as yesterday presented, perhaps Honolulu never before saw. Our rose-water revolutions were not in it with the hurly-burly when the fire, started by the authorities in Block 15, near the Kaumakapili church, got the better of the Department. Then there was the kind of turmoil one sees only in great fires, or during volcanic menace or when an enemy's shells begin to come over a city's wall, presaging the death or ruin of the populace. From one end to another of Honolulu the wild news ran and men at once flocked to the common center where, in dense and excited masses, they watched first the lurid threat of the flames and then their deadly achievement.

In Chinatown itself there was both the frenzy of fear and rage. The quarantined population ran into the streets, shouting and shrieking and pressed so menacingly on the lines of soldiers that citizens ran with ax-helves to the aid of the military. Rumors of riot and bloodshed spread but these were not true. However they served to call out the Citizens' Guard. Marshal Brown with his police and Colonel Jones with his regiment took the excited coolies in hand and massed them on King street beyond Nuuanu. They stood there in a huddled multitude, women and children crying and men demanding to be let out. Steadily the authorities worked, among them President Dole, Minister Mott-Smith, the Minister of the Interior, Alexander Young, who was conspicuous for his energetic service; his assistant, Mr. Hassinger; President Wood, of the Board of Health; Attorney General Cooper and many others. These soothed the Asiatics and natives and, before the fire got dangerously close, marched them under guard of troops and citizens to the Kawaiahao church and a near-by vacant lot.

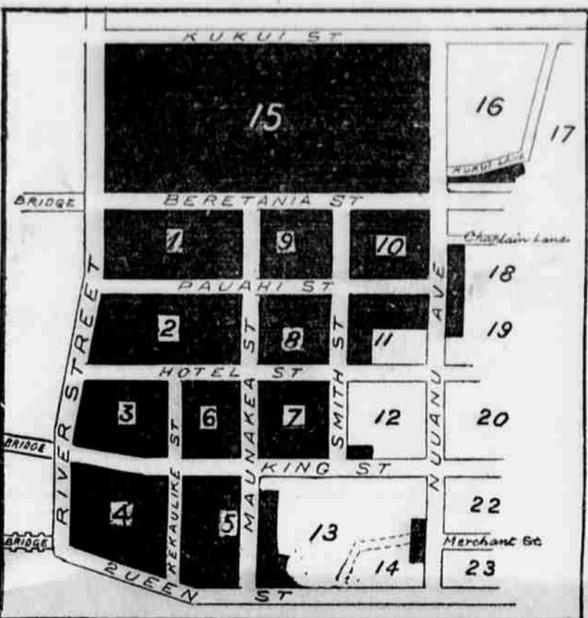
The sight of these unhappy people was one long to be remembered. It looked like the march of the surrendered tattered demoralized of the Chinese army at Wei-hai-Wei. The poor people came trudging along disconsolately, loaded down with all sorts of queer traps. A yellow trunk burst open and some dice fell out. Another trunk had a small package of papers. Sewing machines and sacred relics from the Joss house were seen. There was an immense amount of bedding, perhaps containing germs of the plague, but to take it away, as President Wood said, might start a riot. The Chinese women with little feet and the aged, sick and crippled, came in carriages which were sometimes pulled, rickshaw fashion, by Japanese girls. Trucks, loaded to the guards with combustibles and inflammables hurried away from the fire and loads of hose and patrol wagons carrying police hurried towards it. Meantime the vista down King, Hotel and Beretania streets and Chaplain lane was one of boiling flames and smoke from the midst of which, as from some inferno of war, came the tremendous boom of explosions, some of these caused by dynamite with which the firemen tried vainly to destroy wooden buildings in the path of the cyclonic flames and some by warehouse stores of kerosene. One mass of 250 cases of gasoline blew up sending a pillar of flame to the zenith, the edges of which were as yellow as sulphur or gold.

There was more than a chance, once, twice, perhaps oftener, that the Honolulu Iron Works would have to go. The fire came dangerously near it, menacing the shipping and the lumber yards as well. Ships left the harbor as fast as they could. The U. S. S. Iroquois and the tug Eleu came to the rescue, however, with powerful streams from their fire pumps and the red wrath of the conflagration was stayed. It recoiled, hissing and sputtering to lick up the relics it had missed on its forward rush.

When the sun went down last night one could see it set from Fort street. Everything was down between Nuuanu and the country

beyond, save blackened trunks of trees and the bare walls and towers of Kaumakapili. On the desolate waste fires like enormous headfires were blazing everywhere and lighting up the buildings on the outskirts which still held together. It was a melancholy sight though one could not but remember that it meant, perhaps, the freedom of Honolulu from the plague.

THE PASSING OF CHINATOWN.



The burnt area now covers all the blocks except the ones marked in white. Whether these will be burned probably depends on the reports of the Board of Health and the relation they may bear to new plague cases.

It was intended by the Board of Health that that portion of Block 15, between Kaumakapili Church and Nuuanu street and mauka from Beretania, should be given to the flames, as has been done with several other plague spots. The Fire Department proceeded as usual to carry out the instructions of the Board. Chief Hunt, with the entire Fire Department forces, and four engines, got to work at about 9 o'clock yesterday morning. A fair northeast wind was blowing across the city at the time, and, realizing the danger from a break away should the wind rise, one engine (No. 1) was placed at the intersection of Maunakea and Beretania streets while the others obtained connection with the water mains along Beretania street. It was intended that the fire should eat its way back against the wind toward Kukui street and with this object in view a two-story frame structure back of the church was selected as the best situated for the application of the torch.

Fire Breaks Away.

All went well for about an hour, when the wind began to rise and changed about two points eastward. This combination carried the blazing embers upon the dry roofs of the closely packed buildings in the vicinity and in a very short space of time the Joss-house, Ewa of the church, and many other buildings near by were blazing. So high were the embers carried that many lodged right on the top of the Waikiki spire of the church and set fire thereto.

It was found impossible to force the water to a high sufficient to extinguish the flames, which gradually worked their way downward, although at the risk of bursting the hose, one stream was forced by engine No. 1 in an attempt to save the steeple, but even this expedient failed. A gallant fireman entered the church, and, climbing as far as possible up the ladders, completed his journey up the bare rafters of the middle of the spire. Arriving as far as the flames would permit, he cut his way through the roof and appeared to a thousand observers at the opening, framed in flame. The heroic effort was, however, unavailing, and he was forced to retreat.

Kaumakapili Doomed.

The spire was shortly afterward a mass of flame, blazing beams fell through to the church interior, and the Waikiki corner of the church was soon ablaze. In the meantime the flames had communicated to the buildings immediately Ewa of the church; the roof of the building used as the headquarters of the Chinatown quarantine station became ignited several times and was as often extinguished; but the beginning of the end was in sight. The fire now became too hot for the men to approach near enough to be of use; the water pressure gradually decreased, and almost in a moment the fire was out of control.

The flames roared and licked round the shacks on Beretania street in both sides of the church, which by this time was on fire from end to end with the flames from the second steep e shooting far into the air through the dense smoke. The chimneys fell with a muffled clang and crash from the high brick towers. The flames worked on unchecked. The entire Beretania street frontage was now a mass of fire.

Loss of No. 1 Engine.

The engineer and fireman No. 1 Bagne on Maunakea street stuck to

built of wood, burned quickly, and at 1 o'clock fell with a crash, but without injuring any one. When the tower fell the firemen were working further down Maunakea street trying to check the fire from spreading to the Waikiki side. The fire engine which had been stationed there was quickly run down to the corner of Hotel street, the hose being carried by citizens.

In the meantime the fire had again made a leap and was burning fiercely in Blocks 3 and 6, the flames being carried in great sheets across the narrow street. Dynamite was freely used. In front of the fire, but the quantity in each case was too small to make any impression. The loss of fire engine No. 1 was keenly felt at this time, as the streams, reduced to a minimum, made no impression whatever in staying the progress of the fire. Citizens and guards made several rounds through the block, and every room was looked into to prevent any loss of life. Everywhere could be seen the evidences of hasty flight; little did the Chinese save of their personal property, for it was strewn through the block and over the sidewalks in wild confusion. Electric light wires began falling about the firemen, and kept the linemen busy coiling up the live wires. These men watched every pole, and one lineman showed special bravery by climbing a pole while it was smoking from the heat, to cut the wires. It was a brave act, and was applauded by the spectators.

The frenzy of the Chinese and Japanese residents was pitiful to observe. They fled to the streets, lugging away at bundles too heavy for a man to ordinarily carry, but the keen excitement of the moment gave them the strength of two men. Women with strained eyes and tears rolling down their cheeks clung to little children and babes, in wild excitement, searching everywhere to find a place of safety. Few carried more than a change of clothing for their babies; none had the forethought to take a loaf of bread or a bowl of rice to eat. Every one was making a supreme effort to flee from the fire-dread that destroyed their homes and household goods.

Shipping Threatened.

The fire quickly enveloped Block 2 in a roaring mass of flames, and then it was that the shipping began moving hastily out into the stream. The Board of Health had early notified the vessels to leave the wharves for their own safety, and in a short time the harbor was filled with innumerable craft seeking an anchorage farther out in the Naval Row.

All the vessels from the old Fish-market to the front of Kekaulike street were moved out hastily, as it was feared that the flying embers might set them afire. The United States tug Iroquois, under orders of Commander Merry and Commander Pond, steamed up to the wharf below the Honolulu Iron Works and placed two lines of hose at the disposal of the Fire Department, concentrating the streams upon the Honolulu Iron Works, and the structures in that vicinity. In a very short time one of the streams gave out on account of a broken connection, and the tug kept on with one stream thereafter.

The tug Eleu also moved alongside the wharf near the Iroquois and was soon pumping two streams of water, which were directed on the Maunakea street buildings. Both vessels rendered valuable assistance to the shipping in the harbor and the warehouses along the waterfront.

All Efforts Fail.

It was soon apparent that Block 2 could not be saved, nor could the progress of the fire be stopped there. Dynamite was time and time again placed in buildings along the corners of Kekaulike and King streets, but without avail. No power could withstand the fury of the flames. No street seemed too broad for them to leap; in some instances the heat caused a building front to burst into flames. The great difficulty throughout the entire day was the flying embers lighting on roofs of distant blocks. The combined efforts of bucket brigades failed to put out the fires caught in this manner. Buildings were cut down with axes, balconies torn away in a vain effort to put a barrier of space between the surging fire and the doomed structures on the harbor side. The fire raged fiercely from all sides; the firemen were half the time enveloped in dense clouds of smoke, the blaze blistering their hands and skin, but they stood nobly at their posts, retreating foot by foot. Volunteers passed buckets of water to the men at the hose nozzle, drenching them constantly, but even then the heat was so terrific that the steam arose in white clouds from the men.

The engine stationed at the corner of Hotel and Maunakea streets retreated time and again from a fresh onset of flames. It was a time when the citizens thought nothing of clothes or comfort, and eagerly assisted the firemen in carrying the muddy hose along the street.

After Blocks 3 and 6 were in flames the scene down King street became almost indescribable. The entire district was covered with a heavy, pungent pall of smoke. The King street bridge was observed to be on fire and the heat drove the guards across to the Palama side. Nothing could be done toward stopping the flames, and soon Blocks 4 and 5 were raging. The heavy wind blowing steadily from the Pall carried the flames to the wharves, where great piles of lumber, lately discharged from vessels, were consumed.

From Church to Harbor.

After 2:30 o'clock every block from