

DEATH SWIFT AND AWFUL

Hundreds of Lives Lost in a Fire at the Iroquois in Chicago.

Many Suffocated by Gas and Scores Trampled to Death by the Frenzied Crowd.

Chicago, Dec. 31.—About 550 people were killed in ten minutes yesterday afternoon during a fire in the Iroquois theater, the newest, the largest and, as far as human power could make it, the safest theater in Chicago. Estimates of the dead and injured vary. The police count of dead is 536. The estimate of the newspapers is 560. Besides this there were 55 people missing at midnight, the majority of whom are probably among the dead in the morgue and various undertaking establishments. Eighty-six of the dead have been positively identified and 92 others are known to be injured. A few of those people were burned to death by fire, many were suffocated by gas and scores were trampled to death in the panic that followed the mad plunge of the frightened audience for the exits. It will be many days before all of them will be identified. There were bodies lying by the dozens last night in the undertaking rooms, in the police station and in the hospitals, from which nearly everything that could reveal their identity to those who knew them best was gone. Their clothing was torn to rags or burned to cinders and their faces mashed into an unrecognizable pulp by the heels of the crowd that trampled them down as they fled for safety.

How the Fire Originated.

The fire broke out during the second act of the play, "Mr. Bluebeard," which was the first dramatic production in the theater since its erection. The company, which was very large, escaped to the street in safety, nearly all of them, however, being compelled to flee into the snowy streets with no clothing but their stage costumes. A few members of the company sustained minor injuries, but none was seriously hurt.

The accounts of the origin of the fire are conflicting and none of them certain, but the best reason given is that an electric wire near the lower part of a piece of drop scenery suddenly broke and was grounded. The fire spread rapidly toward the front of the stage, causing the members of the chorus, who were then engaged in the performance, to flee to the wings with screams of terror. The fire in itself up to this time was not serious and possibly could have been checked had not the asbestos curtain failed to work. As soon as the fire was discovered Eddie Foy, the chief comedian of the company, shouted to lower the curtain and this was immediately done. It descended about half way and then stuck. The fire thus was given practically a free through which a strong draft was settling, aided by the doors which had been thrown open in the front of the theater. With a roar and a bound the flames shot through the opening over the heads of the people on the first floor and, reaching clear up to those in the first balcony, caught them and burned them to death where they sat. Immediately following this rush of flames there came an explosion which lifted the entire roof of the theater from its walls, shattering the great skylight into fragments. As soon as the flames first appeared beyond the curtain a man in the rear of the hall shouted, "Fire! Fire!" as the entire audience rose as one person and made for the doors. It is believed that the explosion was caused by the flames coming into contact with the gas reservoirs of the theater, causing them to burst. Will J. Davis, manager of the theater, said after the catastrophe that if the people had remained in their seats and had not been excited by the cry of fire not a single life would have been lost. This is, however, contradicted by the statements of the firemen, who found numbers of people sitting in their seats, their faces directed toward the stage as if the performance was still going on. It is the opinion of the firemen that these persons had been suffocated at once by the flow of gas which came from behind the asbestos curtain.

A Sickening Sight Inside the Building.

When the firemen entered the building the dead were found stretched in a pile reaching from the head of the stairway at least eight feet from the door back to a point about five feet in the rear of the door. This mass of dead bodies in the center of the door reached to within two feet of the passage way. All of the corpses at this point were women and children. The fight for life, which must have taken place at these two points is something that is simply beyond human power to adequately describe. Only a faint idea of its horror could be derived from the aspect of the

bodies as they lay. Women on top of these masses of dead had been overtaken by death as they were crawling on their hands and knees over the bodies of those who had died before. Others lay with arms stretched out in the direction toward which lay life and safety, holding in their hands fragments of garments not their own. They were evidently torn from clothing of others whom they had endeavored to pull down and trample under foot as they fought for their own lives. As the police removed layer after layer of dead in these doorways the sight became too much even for police and firemen, hardened as they are to such sights, to endure. The bodies were in such an inextricable mass and so tightly were they jammed between the sides of the door and the walls that it was impossible to lift them one by one and carry them out. The only possible thing to do was to seize a limb or some other portion of the body and pull with main strength. Men worked at the task with tears running down their cheeks and the sobs of the rescuers could be heard even in the hall below where this awful scene was being enacted. A number of the men were compelled to abandon their task and give it over to others whose nerves had not as yet been shaken by the awful experience. As one by one the bodies were dragged out of the water-soaked, blackened mass of corpses the spectacle became more and more heart-rending. There were women whose clothing was torn completely from their bodies above the waist, whose bosom had been trampled into a pulp and whose faces were marred beyond all power of identification.

Chicago Stirred by the Calamity.

Rarely in the history of Chicago has its people been so stirred as by the calamity of yesterday. It is next to the Chicago fire, the greatest catastrophe that has ever occurred, and the speed with which it came and went seemed for a brief period to appal the business section of the city. The news spread with great rapidity and in a short time hundreds of men, women and children were rushing toward the theater. The building in which the calamity occurred stands midway between State and Dearborn streets, on the north side of Randolph street. Although every available policeman within call of the department was immediately 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 State, it was found for a time at first impossible to hold back the frenzied crowd that pressed forward, many of them having friends or relatives in the theater, and anxious to learn something of them. The conduct of the police was beyond all praise. The officers held their ground firmly and gently pushed back all those who sought to gain an entrance to the theater, although in some instances frantic men, anxious to look for their loved ones, actually beat the officers with their fists in their rage at being prevented. In spite of the efforts of the police, however, a large number of people succeeded in breaking through their lines and entering the theater and in many cases did heroic work in rescuing the injured and carrying out the dead.

Dead Women Piled in a Heap.

The first newspaper men upon the ground also 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 immediately grasped until a fireman and a newspaper man crawled up the 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 in such emergencies, seized his companion by the arm, exclaiming: "Good God, man, don't walk on their faces." The two men tried vainly to get through the door, which was jammed with dead women piled higher than either of their heads. All the lights in the theater were necessarily out and the only illumination came through the cloud of smoke that hung between the interior of the theater and the street. The two men immediately hurried to the floor below and informed Chief Musham, of the fire department, that the dead bodies were piled high in the balcony and prompt assistance must be rendered if any of them were to be saved.

Des Moines Jeweler Robbed of \$8,000.

Des Moines, Ia., Dec. 31.—Burglars dynamited the safe of O. Cohen, jeweler and pawnbroker, and secured \$8,000 in cash, diamonds, watches and other property. The theft was discovered in the morning when Cohen opened his shop.

Swifts Buy Sioux City Bridge.

Sioux City, Ia., Dec. 31.—Swift & Co., who own the stock yards and half interest in the street car system here, have bought control of the \$2,000,000 combination railroad and wagon bridge across the Missouri river.

MANY ARRESTS MADE

Chicago Officers Trying to Place Blame for Iroquois Theater Fire.

Mayor Harrison Closes 19 Playhouses in the City Which Have Been Violating the Ordinance Compelling Use of Asbestos Curtains.

Chicago, Jan. 2.—Such a day of mourning Chicago never witnessed as that which ushered in the New Year. In every portion of the city almost it seemed as though there were funerals going, or undertaker wagons arriving with dead who were being brought to their homes for the last time. While the funeral processions were moving through the snow-covered streets to various cemeteries the throng about the various morgues and undertaking establishments seemed almost as large as ever.

At midnight only 21 unidentified dead remained in the several morgues. The total number of bodies that have been accounted for is 582. Of these 561 have been identified.

The liverymen were simply overwhelmed by the demands made upon them and earnestly urged that as far as possible the relatives should content themselves with a carriage for the pallbearers, the hearse and one other carriage for the family. Where there were more family than could conveniently ride in the single carriage they were compelled to make their way to the cemetery by other methods of transportation.

Chicago, Jan. 2.—Mayor Harrison yesterday, in company with Building Commissioner Williams, Alderman Mayor and several architects visited the Iroquois theater building and went over it thoroughly. As they stepped into the building the mayor accidentally trod on a large lock of human hair, which had been torn from the head of some victim of the disaster. He shuddered and, removing the hair from his shoe, placed it on one side of the hallway and passed in.

Mayor Carter Harrison yesterday took steps to provide as far as possible against a repetition of Wednesday's horror at the Iroquois theater. As a result of an investigation made at his orders and lasting but a few hours 19 theaters and museums were ordered closed, some of them being among the leading and most popular playhouses of the city. The action of the mayor was based on one single violation of the ordinances which are intended to protect the patrons of theaters from just such an occurrence as that which cost so many lives on Wednesday. This was that everyone of these places had omitted to supply an asbestos curtain.

The police yesterday vigorously pushed their inquiry into the causes of the fire and made several other arrests of stage hands, among them William McMullen, the operator of the light which started the fire. He was locked up at the Central station and Wilson Kerr, a fly man at the theater, was also placed in a cell. Fifteen members of the double octette, which takes part in the song, "In the Pale Moonlight," have been placed under arrest by the police, Miss Romaine being the sole one who has so far eluded the detectives. They are wanted as witnesses and there is no charge against any of them.

FATAL FIRE AT A HOTEL.

Three Persons Killed and Four Injured at the Louvre in Chicago—The Guests Panic-Stricken.

Chicago, Jan. 2.—Three persons were killed by smoke and four others injured in a fire last night that destroyed the Louvre hotel, 3611-3623 Lake avenue. Nearly 100 guests were in the hotel at the time the fire broke out, several of whom had retired for the night. With the remembrance of the Iroquois theater horror fresh in their minds everyone in the place became panic-stricken and rushed madly for the streets as soon as it became known that the hotel was on fire.

Middleton's Daughter Perished.

St. Louis, Jan. 1.—One member of a St. Louis family whose loss of life in the Chicago fire is recorded, is Kathleen, the 13-year-old daughter of John A. Middleton, general freight agent of the Frisco system, who was spending the holidays there with a family named Polz. A visit to the Iroquois theater was planned as a farewell entertainment for the St. Louis visitor.

Two Victims from Des Moines.

Des Moines, Ia., Jan. 1.—John Holland, of the firm of Holland & New, wall paper and paints, and daughter Lillian, aged 35, were both killed in the Chicago fire. Mr. Holland and his daughter went to Chicago two weeks ago to spend the holidays.

Kratz Will Soon Be Back.

St. Louis, Jan. 1.—Chief of Police Kiely received a telegram yesterday from the American charge d'affaires, Senton R. McCreary, stating that arrangements had been perfected to turn Charles Kratz over to the United States authorities.

THE BLOOMINGTON STRIKE.

Riotous Scenes Marked the Attempt to Run the Street Cars Yesterday—Two Men Badly Beaten.

Bloomington, Ill., Jan. 4.—Riotous scenes marked the street car strike yesterday. Windows in six cars were badly smashed by missiles thrown by strike sympathizers, who congregated several hundred strong at various points along the line. J. Knoeks and G. R. Morris were dragged from their cars and severely beaten. The mayor admits that he is not able to cope with the situation and President Demonge, of the street car company, announces that to-day he will appeal to the mayor to ask for militia to protect the street car property. Three arrests were made during the day. After 4:30 p. m. the company abandoned all efforts to run cars.

INVESTIGATE NEW "GRAFT."

Treasury Department Experts Are Now Looking into the Accounts of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Washington, Jan. 3.—Treasury department experts have instituted an investigation of the accounts of the Interstate Commerce commission. The action is taken at the instance of Acting Chairman Clements, of the commission, as result of persistent rumors of irregularities in the drawing of vouchers, etc. When the expert accountants reached the commission they sealed the safe and examined Secretary Edward A. Moseley, H. S. Milstead, the cashier, and other employees. Milstead has not been suspended.

Banquet to Bryan January 18.

Lincoln, Neb., Jan. 3.—In an interview signed by T. D. Worrall, Bryan democrats ask the faithful to a banquet January 18. After telling of the honors conferred upon Mr. Bryan abroad, the call declares: "Loyal democrats, therefore, deem it only fit and proper that this splendid American citizen and great democrat be honored by his fellow democrats upon his return home and to that end are arranging a 'dollar dinner' to be held at the Lindell hotel, Lincoln, on January 18, 1904."

Jacksonian Banquet at Omaha.

Omaha, Neb., Jan. 3.—The eighty-ninth anniversary of Andrew Jackson's victory over the British in New Orleans was celebrated here by 500 democrats, who attended the thirtieth annual banquet of the Jacksonian club of Nebraska. The speakers included Senator Francis G. Newlands, of Nevada; Congressman David DeArmond, of Missouri and Congressman Hitchcock, of Nebraska.

War Rumors Excite Wheat.

Chicago, Jan. 3.—Complications in the far east has caused a rush of buying orders in wheat and the market was excited and extremely strong. There was absolutely no wheat for sale at the opening Saturday and initial sales showed an advance of ¼ to 2¼.

Don't See a Cure for Consumption.

Moscow, Jan. 3.—United States Consul Smith has issued a statement denying that he is co-operating with Kisel Ziegeranski in treating consumptives and saying that the cases brought to his notice have not demonstrated the possibility of curing tuberculosis.

Cannon Boomed for Vice President.

Chicago, Jan. 4.—Republicans are expected to look to this state for a vice presidential candidate. If they do, the talk of ex-Speaker Cannon being the favorite is increasing. The main objection to this seems to be Mr. Cannon, who so far has not agreed to the plan.

A Secret Circular Against Roosevelt.

Chicago, Jan. 4.—A secret circular, it is reported, has been issued by the Chicago union of bookbinders announcing a wholesale labor union conspiracy against the re-election of President Roosevelt as a result of the Miller case.

A Revolution in Uruguay.

Buenos Ayres, Jan. 4.—A dispatch from Montevideo says that a revolution has broken out in the department of Maldonado and that a state of siege has been proclaimed throughout the entire republic of Uruguay.

Modern Woodmen to Celebrate.

Kansas City, Mo., Jan. 3.—The Modern Woodmen of the two Kansas City will celebrate the twenty-first birthday of the order this week. The anniversary will be observed by every camp in the United States.

An Overheated Furnace Burns a Church.

Indianapolis, Ind., Jan. 4.—The First Baptist church, one of the finest in the city, was burned to the ground yesterday morning at eight o'clock. The loss is \$50,000. It caught from an overheated furnace.

Gov. Wright Gives Popular Reception.

Manila, Jan. 3.—The New Year reception given by Acting Gov. Luke Wright, was a brilliant social affair. About 3,000 persons were present.

Princess Mathilde Dead.

Paris, Jan. 2.—The Princess Mathilde, only daughter of Prince Jerome Bonaparte, died at seven o'clock Saturday evening.

BELLS TOLL DIRGE.

All Chicago Mourns While Hundreds of Dead Are Laid Away.

Last Rites Held from Early Morning Until Night, with Three or Four Hearses in a Block—All Chicago Theaters Closed.

Chicago, Jan. 3.—Church bells tolling at noon, business activity checked, many celebrations postponed and long lines of funerals making their way to the outlying districts where the cemeteries are situated—these circumstances evidenced Chicago's outward grief Saturday for the victims of the Iroquois theater disaster. Priests and ministers of the gospel went from funeral to funeral, as they will Monday. The unidentified dead will be kept as long as possible at the morgues. If no one then comes to lay claim to the bodies they will be buried at the city's expense. By common assent of the clergy "Lead Kindly Light," the hymn written by Cardinal Newman, was sung at all the funerals.

The city hall, except absolutely necessary departments, was closed. The board of trade closed an hour earlier than usual and a number of mercantile and manufacturing establishments also closed early.

From the large number of complaints received of the loss of personal effects from the bodies of the fire victims, coroner's office clerks estimate that \$100,000 worth of diamonds, watches, jewelry, furs and other personal property was lost in the fire. Many of the victims had money in their possession which could not be found when the bodies were examined at the morgues. Much of the property of value was undoubtedly lost, but a large amount may have been stolen by ghouls. Hundreds of the bodies were carried away in trucks and express wagons, and there was no way of preventing persons from searching the victims and taking their valuables.

A thorough analysis of the composition of the "asbestos" curtain of the Iroquois is being made by the city chemist. The curtain was consumed by the flames, although the ordinance requires a fire-proof curtain, such as genuine asbestos material.

From the stage hands Coroner Traeger has learned the cause of the mysterious explosion which occurred shortly after the fire was discovered. It was caused by the falling of the big fan scene which contained 80 incandescent electric lights. This scene was not in use at the time of the fire, but was set in the rear of the stage. The opening of the double doors in the rear of the stage created a draft which caused the big fan scene to topple over and break the incandescent bulbs. This produced a noise like an explosion. The stage hands deny that there was a calcium tank on the stage at the time of the fire. Coroner Traeger has learned that each of the 180 drop scenes in the theater was hung on new, oily, Manila rope. It is estimated that there were 750 lineal feet of this inflammable material used in supporting the drop scenes and that it added fuel to the flames in the rigging loft.

Mayor Harrison has ordered the closing of every theater in Chicago without exception until it has been definitely ascertained that they are not violating any city ordinance. This is supplementary to the mayor's order of last night which closed 17 theaters, about half the total number of playhouses in the city.

CLAIM TO BE "CURED."

At Galena, Kan., Several People Furnish Testimonials as to the Work of Dr. Parham.

Galena, Kan., Jan. 3.—Rev. Mr. Parham, the divine healer and evangelist, who had been holding a six weeks' session of meetings here, finished baptizing by immersion the remaining 250 converts New Year's day. This was the third baptizing, the whole number aggregating over 500. Many profess to have been cured of their diseases and infirmities by Rev. Mr. Parham's power. Life-long cripples, partial blindness and cancer in many forms have furnished testimonials of complete restoration.

Texas of 99 Marries.

Texas, Tex., Jan. 3.—R. A. Cain, 99 years old, was married near this place to Miss Ella Keller, aged 33. Immediately after the ceremony the couple had their photograph taken and left for their future home in Limestone county. Cain was born in Madison county, Tenn., in February 1804, and came to Texas in 1835. He was in San Antonio during the Alamo massacre, and is the last surviving veteran of the Mexican war who fought Santa Ana.

\$32,000 Monument to Pope Leo.

Rome, Jan. 3.—The design for a monumental tomb for the late Pope Leo XIII. inside the church of St. John Lateran has been approved. It represents Pope Leo wearing the triple crown, sitting on a throne supported by the world, each hand extended in the act of blessing, the whole symbolizing one fold and one church. The cost of the monument is estimated at \$32,000.