

THE FIFTH AVENUE GONE

On the Anniversary of Its Previous Fire.

An Historic Theater Burns to the Ground

Six Firemen Lose Their Lives in the Flames.

Herrmann's Play House Also a Mass of Ruins.

The Firemen Have Some Very Narrow Escapes.

Fanny Davenport Had a Presentiment of Ill Luck.

Fully a Half Million Damage Done Already.

New York, Jan. 2.—Eighteen years ago today, the Fifth-ave. theater, then in the rear of the Fifth-ave. hotel on the Twenty-fourth-st., side disappeared in flame and smoke. Within a short time after Augustine Daly had old Apollo hall, where the famous committee of seventy had its birth, changed into a play-house. Fifteen minutes or so tonight after Fanny Davenport, in the character of *Cleopatra*, had trod the boards of the Fifth-ave. theater, and the audience had passed out of the Broadway and Twenty-eighth-st. entrances, a watchman ran out of the theater screaming "fire." A few seconds later fire engines were dashing up Broadway, and until nearly 1 o'clock this morning new detachments were still responding to additional signals for help.

What was at first believed to be a false alarm proved to be one that destroyed a whole block upon Broadway, besides the Fifth-ave. theater, Herrmann's new play house, a dozen stores, and threatened the Sturtevant house on the east side of Broadway between Twenty-eighth and Twenty-ninth-sts. Up to this writing, while the fire is yet raging, no lives are known to have been lost. There were a dozen or more narrow escapes and at one time it was thought that three firemen, who were caught upon the roof top, would perish. For two of these brave fellows it was very lucky that a line of hose ran from the roof to the street. The daring "laddies" took advantage of this act, and when their comrades on the street gave them up as lost they slid down to the street. But the other, a reckless sort of an individual, scorned, it seemed, to escape that way. He stood his ground, and was soon lost sight of in the smoke. Ladders were hastily raised, but the searchers failed to find McGinnis—that was his name, it was said—but to the surprise of his comrades, half an hour or so later, the brave man made his reappearance on the street. He had crawled along the roof until he reached a hatchway, through which he made his escape.

The fire had been burning less than half an hour before the flames shot through the roof, causing the wildest consternation among the guests of the Browne house, on the northeast corner, and the Sturtevant house. The shower of sparks which covered the pavement of Broadway also set fire to the awnings of the latter. To add to the confusion there were six explosions in the Fifth-ave. theater, which blew burning rafters sky-high, and these set fire to the roofs of the buildings surrounding the burning theater. While the firemen were powerless to do anything to save the play house, they worked nobly in preventing the destruction of houses in the vicinity of the immense blaze. All the property burned belongs to the Gilsey estate and the total damage to the building and its contents is roughly estimated at \$50,000.

Manager Harry Miner was early on the scene, as was also Professor Herrmann. While the former saved nothing from the wreck, the professor and his wife worked like beavers. Mrs. Herrmann saved her four pet doves, but her husband sorrowfully said that his favorite trick apparatus—worth \$20,000—was lost to him forever. The occupants of the stores on the west side of Broadway from Twenty-eight to Twenty-ninth streets, which numbers from 1185 to 1203, were as follows: No. 1185, J. J. Slater, shoes; No. 1187, was the wide entrance to the Fifth ave. theater; No. 1189 was occupied by the Cash register company; No. 1191, J. B. Crook & Co., sporting goods; No. 1193, L. Spero, tailor; No. 1195, entrance to Herrmann's theater; No. 1197, A. D. Kirch florist; No. 1199, J. B. White, jeweler; No. 1201, Wiseman, florist, and No. 1203, Hannan & Son, shoes. The goods in all these stores are badly damaged by water and should the walls topple in the salvage will be very small. They are shaky at present, and the firemen, aware of their condition, for safety's sake are working from the opposite side of Broadway and W. Twenty-eighth-st., and the roofs of the houses to the westward.

The first of the series of explosions, which are thought to have been caused by the bursting of gas tanks, came very near being a serious affair, for a dozen or more firemen under the leadership of Battalion Chief McCabe, were at that moment working in the auditorium of the Fifth-ave. theater. They were almost blown into the street with several reporters.

At intervals of every few minutes explosion followed explosion. The firemen did not know what was coming next, and they were, for the first time in the history of the department, more or less frightened. But they soon rallied. Ladders were raised and the water towers and several nozzles with "siamese four ways" were doing their best to stay the spread of the fierce flames. The still breeze which was blowing from the Northward got in its fine work and there was no stopping the fire. It had simply to burn itself out, and to the chagrin of the fire department, Herrmann's new theater, which has recently been rebuilt at considerable expense, was found

LAST YEAR'S TRADE BIG

But the Failures More Than Kept Pace.

Dun's Agency Reviews the Situation.

Prospects For the Coming Year Brighter.

Banker Kean Offers Creditors a Compromise.

The Chicago Bankers Hopeful—Other Business News.

New York, Jan. 2.—R. G. Dun & Co's weekly review of trade says: "The new year opens with so much of uncertainty that there is a natural disposition to dwell upon the crowding records of the year just closed which show an extraordinary volume of business in many lines surpassing all precedent. Iron, cotton, leather, boot and shoe and meat production were larger than in any previous year. Thus 2,219,312 cattle were slaughtered at Chicago against 1,763,310 in 1889, a gain of 25 per cent; and 5,733,002 hogs against 4,211,767 in 1889, a gain of 36 per cent. At Boston 3,355,211 cases of boots and shoes were shipped against 3,399,980, a gain of 4 per cent.

"The clearing house exchanges show that the volume of all business in 1890 exceeded that of any previous year by at least 10 per cent, though in part this increase was due to the higher range of prices during the greater part of the year. The advance in prices of all commodities compared with a year ago is 6.6 per cent, and the average has been about 5.5 per cent, higher for eight months; but this unprecedented volume of business has not been altogether successful and the record failures have been in number and in amount of liabilities larger than in any previous year since 1884. Though in number only a trifle greater than in 1889 the average of liabilities was \$17,436 for the year against \$13,722 in 1889. Moreover the average of liabilities for the last quarter was greater than in any other fourth quarter on record, namely \$26,784 against \$14,907 in 1889.

"The reports from other cities are almost uniformly confident in tone and indicate a good volume and fair condition of trade for the season, but are liable to be colored by the retrospect of a generally prosperous year. The South rejoices in great crops and the Eastern line and for the moment notes less financial pressure, good holiday trade and bright hopes. St. Louis has weather more favorable for distribution and money at a 7 to 8 per cent; Kansas City notes a strong demand for money and receipts of 14,000 cattle and 35,000 hogs, and St. Joseph reports a large increase in the year's trade and car in credits resulting well. At Milwaukee and St. Paul unseasonable weather has affected trade for the week but very satisfactory reports are made for the past year and money is easier. At Chicago, though money is close, confidence rapidly revives, collections are easy and the past year's trade exceeds by 6 per cent that of 1889 in general merchandise, dry goods and shoes, somewhat more in clothing, 20 per cent in furniture, and 33 per cent in some other lines while the increase in products of factories is \$25,000,000. At Cleveland, jobbers are surprised at the fullness of collections, but note that the business in the Mahoning region are about to close. Pittsburgh reports a decline of 25 cents in pig-iron, weaker finished products, and a reduction in prices of coke to furnaces from \$2.15 to \$1.95, though Shenango furnaces are also to close. The Eastern reports show easier money markets, and a more hopeful feeling. At Philadelphia the grocery season has been satisfactory, with good collections. At Boston, conditions are deemed favorable. Wool is fairly active, with a good demand. The reports reported at 27,000,000 pounds against 30,000,000 a year ago, and a better prospect for woolen goods. Domestic hides are firm, and leather and boots and shoes are more active.

"The iron industry does not improve as the closing of many furnaces indicates. Copper and tin open the new year lower. There is a better tone in the anthracite coal market. It is evident that prospects are thought brighter in the cotton and woolen industries for the new year, and a number of new mills are being erected; and while the great majority of domestic woolen goods are selling at low prices as a year ago and some even a shade lower, the volume of sales improves and the market for dress goods and worsteds has been improved both in volume and to some extent in price.

"The cotton market has advanced 1 cent with sales of 465,000 bales, although both receipts and exports for the week exceed those of a year ago. Other speculative markets have been comparatively dull, but wheat has advanced 1 cent and oats 1/2 cent, lower, and corn 1/2 cent higher and land 20 cents per 100 pounds higher. The closeness of money markets, however, is a factor in the future, has promoted a healthy activity in most kinds of speculation and the exports of wheat at the current prices begin to approach those of corresponding weeks last year.

"The stock market has been dull rather than weak, though prices closed much below those of a year ago, averaging for the sixty most active stocks \$55.49 per share against \$64.63 Jan. 2, 1890. The average rose to \$69.93 with the silver boom May 24 and fell to \$36.91 on Nov. 15, the day the Barings liquidation was announced. The most significant fact in this business is that new issues of securities during the year after deducting all for the replacement of older securities have amounted to \$230,174,810 and \$180,637,731 stocks, exceeding by \$134,000,000 net issues for the previous year. The prospect for traffic is affected unfavorably by the shortness of crops which some roads begin to feel seriously, but favorably by the better understanding between managers, which promises more satisfactory rates. The monetary situation has not changed during the week, though the treasury has put out \$800,000 more than it has taken in. Exports at this port continue to exceed those of a year ago, swelling the excess of exports over imports, and the rate of foreign exchange has again fallen to \$4.83, indicating that gold imports may not be distant.

"The business failures occurring throughout the country during the past seven days number 348, as compared with a total of 333 last week. For the corresponding week of last year the figures were 322.

"The trail of the serpent is over them all. The notice with regret that many democratic newspapers, published in democratic countries, are painfully and susi-

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