

ROAST MAN.

The Awful Revel of the Fire Fiend at the Ill-Fated Richmond House in Buffalo, N. Y.

HELL'S HORRORS.

They are Tasted to the Bitter Full by Scores of Frantic and Helpless Human Beings.

[Subject of Illustration.]

The new Richmond Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., which was opened three weeks ago, burned to the ground the morning of March 18, with a frightful loss of life. With it went Bunnell's Museum building and two small stores. There were sixty-four transient guests in the hotel, twenty sleeping employees, several boarders and the proprietors, Robert Stafford, W. J. Mann, H. P. Whittaker, and their families, making in all about one hundred persons. Only seventy-eight of these are accounted for, and it is believed that the



A gallant rescue by Chas. A. Orr.

bodies of the others will be found in the ruins.

The hotel register was not saved, and no one can remember the names of all the guests. W. J. Mann, who had charge of the help, is delirious with pain and excitement and cannot talk rationally. No one save himself knows the names of all the domestics. The fire broke out in the cloak room under the main staircase at 3:40 A. M., and in five minutes the flames had reached the roof. The house had a square court in the center, and the windows of all the halls opened upon this court. The flames prevented escape by the staircase and the panic-stricken guests with but few exceptions made for the windows, both in their rooms and in the halls. Night Clerk William H. Alport sounded the electric fire alarm, which rang a bell in every room. He had barely time to save himself, and when he reached the street the red glare of the flames was already lighting the thoroughfare. He gave a fire



A daring jump for life.

alarm, but before the arrival of the engines numbers of people had been attracted to the scene by the shrieks of women standing in their night dresses at the upper windows. Fire Department Chief Hornung gave his order immediately and decisively: "Blank the building; save the people." Hands were put upon to the extension ladders,

which were rapidly raised. Meantime the flames became hotter and hotter, and could be seen licking the woodwork of many windows.

Press Whittaker, one of the proprietors, crawled on the window ledges from his room on the fifth floor, a distance of over 50 feet, to the ladder, and was rescued. A woman in her night clothes was seen at a window on the third floor. A ladder was placed and Charles A. Orr, County Clerk, mounted and brought the woman safely down in his arms. He took off his overcoat, wrapped it around her, and then remounted and rescued a man whose face and breast were badly burned. One man on the Eagle street side stood at his fourth floor window until the heat was unbearable. He jumped and grasped the telegraph wires with his



Without one ray of hope.

hands. The extension ladder was being raised, and while it was straight in the air he let go the wires, caught the fifth rung and descended before the ladder was up to its full length.

The last three people rescued were utterly exhausted and fearfully burned.

J. C. Gilbert, of 16 South Portland avenue, Brooklyn, was taken from the fifth floor none too soon. He was clad in drawers, shirt and socks. Minnie Stone and Kate Pearce were dragged from the fifth floor on the Main street side. They had on nothing but wrappers. They were not burned. The crowd hung with breathless anxiety on each move of the firemen and cheered lustily as rescue after rescue was attempted and accomplished.

But it was in the rear that the tragedy of the morning was being enacted and men and women were jumping to a horrible death. A. G. Clay, of Philadelphia, and Louis E. Smith, of Brooklyn, were on the fifth floor. Their rooms adjoined and they crawled along the window ledges to the roof of Bunnell's Museum, the adjoining building on Eagle street. Looking up they saw five girls at a fifth-story window. They had tied sheets together and made a rope which reached to one floor below on a level with the museum roof, but separated from it at that point by an alley about fifteen feet wide. Smith found a telegraph wire which he threw across, and four girls descended in safety and crossed on the wire. When the fifth was swinging between the two buildings the wire broke and the girl fell four stories to the ground. She was not killed, but the doctors say she cannot live. Her legs were terribly cut and bruised, her back was broken and her face and arms frightfully

this incident of the catastrophe to a correspondent: "When I was nearly down a man shot past me who had jumped. He came near striking me. My God! the people lay on the roof all around me. They were groaning and dying. It was awful."

He shrieked with pain and a physician gave him morphine. Many who jumped to the saloon roof crashed through the photographer's skylight and are now buried in the ruins. Those at the east end of the hotel who jumped landed on the roof of the Tivoli Hall, and were assisted to safety by Anthony Kaiser, the proprietor. Between the hall and the frame building there is a space of fifty feet. A P. Phillbrook, a shoemaker, who lives at the top of the building south of Tivoli Hall, looked out of his window and saw

people jumping. "I had to turn my face away," said he. "I couldn't stand it. Some jumped through the skylight. I saw them, and I saw a woman with nothing on but a chemise jump to the ground between the buildings. I heard her drop. I couldn't look any more and I went down to the street."

Anthony Kaiser says that before the walls fell he saw this woman and a man almost naked both lying dead underneath his window. Then a portion of the south wall of the Richmond fell and the ghastly sight was covered by bricks and debris.

Robert Stafford, a proprietor, roomed on the third floor. His window faced Creighton's saloon and he jumped, telling his wife to follow. She did so and he caught her. The two made their way through the building downstairs. W. J. Mann, another proprietor, escaped by jumping. His wife refused to jump and stood at the window screaming with her little girl in her arms. At last she faintly. B. G. Baldwin, of Jordan, Marsh & Co., Boston, lifted her and dropped her into her husband's arms. Then he picked up the child and jumped safely. Mrs. Mann was frightfully burned about the face, arms and legs. She was taken to a lawyer's office, where she lay, screaming and calling for her little daughter Jennie. "Do something to stop the pain," she yelled. "Oh, I shall die, Jennie was burned to death. I know it, I saw her."

Little Jennie was at Dr. Hayd's office. Her burns were painful though not severe. She went to sleep and when she woke up at noon told her story in a childish treble:

"I waked up and heard a noise and ran out into the hall and down some stairs and then there was so much fire and smoke I could not go any further and I



A ghastly sight which was soon hid from view.

burned. She is Mary Connell, of No. 411 Hamburg street; a chambermaid. The others made their escape safely through the museum.

Wilson Purcell, credit man for the R. G. Dun Mercantile Agency here, roomed on the fifth floor. He jumped to the roof of a two-story frame building occupied as a saloon and photograph gallery, which adjoined the hotel on Main street. Picking himself up, he reeled to a ladder erected from the street, but had not descended two steps when he reeled and fell to the street. He struck on his head and died instantly. He was so badly burned as to render identification difficult.

Clinton Bidwell, of Pittsburg, roomed with Mark Osborne, the hotel clerk, on the fifth floor. Osborne awoke him and both ran into the hall. Osborne never returned. Bidwell made a rope of sheets and reached the roof of the saloon, but not until the advancing flames had terribly burned him about the chest and arms and face. Moaning piteously at times, he told

went back to my floor and into a bedroom. It was mamma's room, and she picked me up and hugged me and then she let us both drop. Then a great big man came and he put mamma out the window and on to the roof, and then he jumped on to the roof with me. It was all afire there, but the man picked me up in his arms and carried me down through the fire and took me through the street to a place, and then the doctor there carried me over here."

James McGuire, night engineer at the post office, saved one life, and tried to rescue a girl from a room on the third floor. She could not open the door and McGuire could not break it. He had to leave her to her fate. R. H. Humes jumped through the skylight in the roof of the two-story brick kitchen and dashed his way through the flames to Eagle street. He left five persons on the roof, and thinks they were all lost. He was badly burned.

Foster Milliken, of the iron commission firm of Mil-

lken, Smith & Co., New York, was on the third floor. He ran down one flight of stairs and out to a balcony. The crowd shouted to jump and a canvas was brought, but Milliken showed them a neater trick and lowered himself to an awning rod and thence hand over hand to the street. He was followed by E. H. Wimpshelmer, who travels for the New York printing-ink firm of Slegmund, Ulman & Co. After them came Mrs. Wimpshelmer, a pretty brunette, who did the acrobatic feat gracefully and was rewarded with the crowd's cheers. None of the three were hurt.

H. B. Rumsey of New York, rescued a little girl at the risk of his own life and carried her through the burning hotel to the saloon roof. When getting out of the window he buried the girl's face in his night gown and thus protected her. He inhaled the flames, and was in a delirium until just before his death.

Proprietor Stafford was the picture of misery. "I would give all I am worth," said he to a correspondent, "to see Mark Osborne alive again. I loved him as my own son." When asked if he had formulated any plans for the future Mr. Stafford shook his head sadly. "No, sir, but you can say this, I'll never touch



The wire failed to save her.

another hotel so long as I live, even if it paid \$10,000 a day and was rent free, unless it is absolutely fireproof. I wouldn't take the responsibility and go through the mourning I did this morning for all the hotels in the United States."

The Richmond Hotel was the old Young Men's Library building, and was built in 1856. It was originally run as the St. James Hotel, and St. James Hall stood alongside it. Recent changes made the Richmond and Bunnell's Museum stand side by side. The two buildings were worth \$150,000, and insured for \$90,000. Stafford & Co. lose \$75,000 worth of furniture, wines, &c., which is partially covered by \$54,000 insurance. The Boston Clothing House lose \$60,000, Peter Paul & Bro. \$40,000, and Ulbrech & Kingsley \$35,000. Jos. E. C. Palactio, cigar dealer, puts his loss at \$8,000, partly insured. Von Norman, photographer, loses \$5,000. Other losses will bring the aggregate to \$400,000.

Chief Hornung, of the Fire Department, says "The number of people rescued by the firemen is about twenty to twenty-five. We got two streams into the corridor of the hotel, and at that moment the flames were shooting up the big staircase and elevator way beyond the reach of the hose. We tried to play both streams upward on the fire, but there was so much screaming of guests and calls for help from the windows that we called off most of the men from the hose and let the building go for a while, giving all our attention to the ladders. 'Damn the building,' I yelled; 'save the people;' and the boys helped man the ladders on the outside, putting up two on the Main street side and the short ones on Eagle street. There was need for them, too. It was a horrible sight to see the people jumping from every side. The cool-headed ones were rescued all right, but some wouldn't wait."

Among the brave deeds of the firemen was one deserving of special mention. District Engineer Murphy was on a ladder rescuing some of the occupants of the hotel. At an upper story window was one of the female domestics. He shouted to her to remain where she was, and he would come up and save her. The



Heading to certain death.

poor creature, frantic with terror, instead of obeying, leaped from the window and literally threw herself at Murphy. This caused him to lose his balance on the ladder, but he hung on with one hand and caught the girl around the neck, firmly holding her thus until he could regain his equilibrium, when he slid down the ladder, bearing her safely to the ground.

