

fore the flames appeared at the doors and windows, but all this time they were raging round the interior; the wooden lining of the walls (the building had once been used as a racket court) quickly caught fire, also the sloping floor and benches; black and stifling smoke from the camphine rolled down the fatal stair, and hid the victims for a moment and drove those courageously assisting outside; then the smoke would roll back and disclosed the agonized countenances of those doomed to destruction; then at once a stream of flame ran down from the top to the bottom of the stair, every head seemed on fire, and they were painfully and helplessly moved about, the swollen tongues preventing utterance: it was an appalling sight. Again, another cloud of smoke, the roof fell in, and forty five human beings, lately in health, ceased to exist.

The Rev. Mr. O'Reilly, a Roman Catholic priest, in the conscientious discharge of his sacred office, stood in the doorway, and prayed over them to the last. To the last they were sensible. How fearful must have been their mental agonies!

Living at the time in St. Louis Street, I was soon at the scene of the dreadful calamity; though I was not aware at first that any one had been left in the theatre. I saw the horses and carriages saved from the livery stables, which the fire was approaching. The bells began tolling and the bugles blew loudly 'The Assembly.' I worked at first with the 89th Regt. (which was quartered in town in the Jesuits' barracks,) to get water for the military engines. Colonel Walker, R. A., the Commandant of the Garrison, was on the spot. Colonel Thorpe, commanding the 89th, was actively directing the energies of his men, and was ably seconded by his Adjutant, Lieut. Knippe.

At first there was a great delay in getting water. The fire companies brought up their engines, but they were useless for some time; at last the neighbouring wells were tapped, and water-carts brought up a supply from the river. A good deal of struggling now took place between the military and the civilians in their eagerness to get water, each party for their own engines; no blows were struck there was only an excess of zeal. Mr. Okill Stewart, the Mayor, was present and busily engaged, as were Mr. M'Cord, and Mr. Russell with the police force, and Mr. Wells, the Inspector of the Fire Department.

I met Lieut. Armstrong in the crowd after his escape; he told me of those burning inside. I ran round to the south gable where ladders were being planted. Some British sailor had, with an axe, knocked out a hole in the wall near the box door, but the opening was made too late to be of use; but those who made it are deserving of every praise. I saw Mr. Alexander Bell, a merchant, and Mr. Jessop, a collector of customs, carrying a young lady (Miss Rea) down a ladder. I ascended another and carried down a respectable looking woman, who was scorched, yet who in the midst of her agitation cried out for her bonnet! I saw a poor man, near the door, who had been rescued crying in despair for a young woman with whom he had gone to the theatre, and who was nowhere to be seen. The building was white and red with flames inside. The charred victims of the fire were in a heap inside, and the smell of roasted flesh was sickening.

A strong detachment of the 14th Regt. came from the citadel with the engines, hooks, and ladders. Major Watson, commanding the regiment, was present with most of the other officers. The men, in conjunction with the Royal Artillery and 89th Regt. formed streets to pass supplies of water, and by means of their united efforts with the hooks and ladders, they dragged the roof off the stables, and saved the guard-house. Among them worked vigorously Captain Ingall, the Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General. Nothing could exceed the devotion and energy of the soldiers; they fearlessly exposed themselves to danger from falling timber and their clothes to injury; and it is the opinion of those who lost relatives on this occasion, that if the soldiers had been present to assist those who so courageously tried to save the sufferers, that all might have been got out.

The wing of the chateau began to smoke. I was interested about it, to preserve it as a relic of the palmy days of Quebec. On the outer wall is a cross of St. John of Jerusalem, cut in stone, and with the date 1647. I got an axe, and hewed down part of a wooden spout at an angle, to prevent the fire from running up to the roof. I was immediately surrounded by three of the corporation, who thought there was no danger; but danger there was, for a ladder on the roof quickly caught fire from the sparks brought by the fire-wind which began to rise, though before this the night was fortunately calm and the moon shining brightly on the scene. I ran upstairs, with an active corporal (Garlin, 14th): we found that the fire was not inside. A bold fireman, Thomas Andrews, climbing on the roof, cut away the burning ladder, and hurled it over the eaves. Water thrown on the windows prevented further danger.

The appearance of the fire and the surrounding objects was now awfully grand. Under the black canopy of smoke, the flames rose high in the air, illuminating the tin-covered roofs and spires of the churches and buildings around, and showing the large body of military at work, the helmeted firemen and their bright painted engines, and a great multitude of anxious spectators in the Place D'Armes. Among them were those who ran about, and who cried distractedly for their lost relatives or friends—for those who were never again to cheer the domestic hearth.

The progress of the fire was most rapid. yet it was at last got

under when there was nothing left to burn. The gongs of the engines signalled for more water ever and anon! and, about two in the morning, one by one they left off working, each company, unnecessarily, giving three cheers; silence was best after such a scene of distress.

The energetic magistrate, Mr. R. Symes, had directed that the bodies should not be touched till daylight. I went to bed for a few hours, and rose early to search for my brother officer. The blackened remains of the sufferers were brought out, and laid on the grass of a small terrace at the south gable of the theatre. Forty three at first were found in a heap, ten feet long, four broad, and four in height; two others were afterwards found but mere trunks: forty five victims in all.

Most of the heads, the chests, and the arms were consumed by the fire; the lowest of all were tolerably entire; the legs were twisted and distorted in every possible manner, some drawn up to the chest, others stretched out, the feet and legs in one line; in some the clothes were almost all burned off, in others the gowns and trowsers were entire. By the dresses and shoes and boots the bodies were made out. One body, that of a man, was covered with long brown hair, trunk and limbs! It was two hours before I could identify poor Hamilton. At last, with the assistance of the Hospital Serjeant, Hadford, Corporal Rundall, and some of the men of the regiment, we recognized the remains, and had them carefully removed; a lady's black scarf was under the left arm; the watch had stopped at twelve minutes to eleven. It was most distressing to witness those who came in search of relatives—the intense grief which blinded them as they spread a sheet over the miserable remains of mortality, and removed them to their residences for the coroner's inquest.

Besides those already named, there perished Mr. H. Carwell, a merchant, and two of his children; Mr. Sims, a druggist, with his eldest daughter and a son; the wife and a daughter of the editor of the Canadian; Mr. Hoogs, book-keeper Montreal Bank, and two sons; Mr. T. Harrison, brother of the owner of the Diorama; Mrs. Molt and two sons; Mrs. Atkins and her son; Mrs. Gibb and daughter; Mr. Marcoux, a bailiff; Mr. Devlin, a watchmaker; Mr. Wheatley, a stationer; &c. The aged pair Tardif, formerly mentioned, were found among the rest, arm in arm.

On the Sunday following the fire, the tolling of the bells was heard from an early hour, and funeral processions traversed the streets all day. Fifteen coffins were laid out at one time in the Roman Catholic cathedral, and an air of melancholy reigned over the city. For a considerable time after the late distressing event people could talk and think of nothing else. Lieut. Hamilton and Miss Julia Rea were buried in one grave: 'wedded in death.'

Some useful lessons may be derived from this fire. That there should always be very easy modes of egress from public buildings, and doors opening outwards, according to the laws of Holland, in which a theatre was burnt sixty years ago, attended with loss of life. In Richmond, In Virginia, December 26, 1811, six hundred persons were present at a theatre, of whom seventy two perished by fire, among whom were the Governor of the state and the Mayor of the city. Last year, in Russia, three hundred are said to have perished under similar circumstances. Again, fire companies should be frequently drilled, exercised, and directed to act without noise or confusion, and the captains should have, and *should use*, speaking trumpets; above all, the supply of water should be ample. There are no water works at Quebec, though they are proposed (as is also lighting the streets, which are still in total darkness); the water at present is got from wells, by introducing suckers, and in water-barrels or carts from the river. This last is a very rough way; much is lost, and long delays arise.

In the West India Islands there is an excellent arrangement for water. Large upright tanks, made of plates of cast iron, which stand up against the public buildings, like immense octagonal sentry-boxes, twelve or twenty feet high, and are supplied by rain-water from the roofs. The pressure of the water sends a powerful stream through the cock below when the key is applied, and the water is useful for household purposes—after filtering, for watering the streets, or for extinguishing fire. In Canada, by casing the tanks, the frost might be kept off; but even if they were useless during five months of the year, they might be of essential service during the other seven months, and there is only a trifling expense attending their construction.—*United Service Magazine*.

NOTICE.

THE Business heretofore carried on by the Subscriber under the Firm of JOSEPH CUNARD & Co., will from this date be carried on in his individual name.
Miramichi, 1st June, 1846.—3m. JO. CUNARD.

TOWN LOTS FOR SALE.

THE Property of the Honorable John S. Saunders, bounded by George, Charlotte, and Regent Streets, is offered for sale, in Building Lots.

Also several Lots in the neighbourhood of the Scottish Church, between George and Charlotte Streets.

A Plan will be exhibited at the Royal Gazette Office; and the conditions of sale will be stated on application to the Proprietor. Fredericton, 3d February, 1846.

All Letters must be Post-paid.

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