

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

PHILADELPHIA, Pa., Jan. 26.—The most disastrous conflagration that has visited this city in recent years broke out shortly before 7 o'clock this morning in the basement of the big grocery store of Hanscomb Brothers, 1317 Market street. Property to the value of \$2,500,000 or more was destroyed.

The flames were first discovered by John Wagner, a reserve policeman. Before the engines reached the scene the entire rear portion of Hanscomb's store and Dennett's big restaurant were ablaze. A second alarm was sent in, and a few moments later a general alarm was sent in.

Immediately adjoining Hanscomb Brothers on the west was a five-story building occupied by Blum Brothers, manufacturers of ladies' cloaks. This was soon a mass of flames. The water seemed almost to freeze before it touched the buildings. The next building to the west to be eaten up was that occupied by George Marshall as a restaurant. Then came Hat Manufactory G. E. Welle and the rear of the wholesale grocery of Showell & Frier, 1325 Market street. While the flames were sweeping west on Market street the umbrella manufactory of Hirsch Brothers, the largest in the world, which adjoins the restaurant, caught fire. The inflammable nature of the immense stock of light silks added fuel to the flames and in half an hour the building extending from 1309 to 1315, eight stories, on Market street was a mass of flames. On the east of the Hirsch building, between 1309 and 1301 Market street were the following tenants: Missah restaurant; Sterner & Ball, cigar factory; A. Nickolacky, confectionery and the big drug store of H. Hillman, the upper story of which was occupied by Potter Bros. as a photographic gallery. On the north side of Hirsch Bros., immediately across Silver street, stood the new seven-story building of Dunlap Brothers. This building extended from 1306 to 1310, Filbert street, and was 100 feet deep. The first floors were occupied by Collins' Carriage Co. The flames swept through this structure and gutted it completely. The small buildings on Silver street which run west from Thirteenth to Juniper, were all gutted. The shop of Contractor Lewis Havens caught fire from the rear of Blum Bros., and three firemen were caught by a falling wall. Frank Pifer, of engine company No. 30, was the only man seriously injured.

At 8:15 a. m. fire was discovered in the tower of John Wanamaker's big dry goods store. A stream of water from one of the water towers was run up the burning structure, but the supply of water was either too small or the apparatus defective, as the stream did not reach the flames. The tower contained a handsome clock and chimneys.

At 9 o'clock the entire tower collapsed, the clock falling through to the first floor. Two lines of hose were then gotten on the top of the gigantic structure and the flames which threatened to destroy Philadelphia's most famous store were soon under control.

The fire had been confined entirely to Market street front and the loss sustained by Wanamaker was principally in the destruction of the clock and chimneys and the breaking of all large plate glass windows on Market street. The roof was ablaze one time and it seemed as though the entire structure was doomed, but the hose operated by the employees of the big establishment kept the flames in bounds.

Up to this time the flames had been confined to the block bounded by Filbert street on the north Thirteenth on the east, Market on the south and Juniper on the west. The wind was blowing from the west and carried the flames right into the rear of the buildings on Thirteenth street. The first building to catch fire was that of Jacob Miller, gent's furnishings. Fifteen other shops and stores on the north Thirteenth were gutted. Flames ate their way almost directly northwest from the rear of Blum Brothers building, gutting the rear of Showell & Fryers' big grocery, the rear part of Nos. 7 to 25 north Juniper used as law offices and private residences was completely burned out.

While the fire was at its height flames were discovered on the window sashes of the big city hall. The city hall fire department ran a line to the roof and in a few minutes had the structure free from danger. The walls of Hirsch Bros.' factory collapsed soon after 8 o'clock. The other walls left standing resemble huge ice bergs.

Between 3 and 4 a. m. a fire broke out in the five story building occupied by O. H. Bunnell, wholesale stationer, Chestnut street. The loss is \$10,000.

Shortly before 6 o'clock fire started in the big carpet store of John and James Dobson, Chestnut street. By hard work the flames were confined to the sixth story but the water soaked through to the basement. The loss is \$100,000.

CHICAGO, Jan. 26.—The large grain elevator of the W. H. Purcell Malt company, 123rd street and the Belt Line tracks, was burned today. Before the fire department arrived the whole structure was enveloped in flames. The firemen were badly handicapped by the scarcity of fire plugs and the intense cold. The elevator was recently rebuilt, two former structures having been heavily damaged by fire.

Vice President Gulckeulheimer estimated the loss at \$350,000, almost covered by insurance.

ALTOONA, Pa., Jan. 26.—At 1 o'clock last night a sledding party of forty persons from Tyrone drove into a quarry at Pemberton, six miles below that place. Sled, horses and pleasure-seekers were precipitated fifty feet to the bottom of the precipice where they lay in a great mass. Twenty persons were badly injured. As soon as the news reached Tyrone a special train was fitted out and all doctors in town conveyed to the place.

The party was mostly made up of boys and girls. With arms and legs broken and blood streaming from their wounds they lay in the drifts of snow. The mercury stood 3 degrees below

zero adding to the horror of the catastrophe.

SAN DIEGO, Cal., Jan. 27.—A deal has just been closed in this city which though surrounded with the greatest secrecy has become known sufficiently to reveal that it is of the greatest importance to San Diego, foreshadowing the construction of a railway from Salt Lake, presumably by the Vanderbilts interests, to afford an outlet for the Union Pacific. As several steamship men are connected with the deal the belief is expressed that trans-Pacific steamship connection is contemplated by the railroad promoter, but this is nothing more than supposition.

The man who planned the deal was C. A. Griscom Jr. of New York. He is prominently connected with a trans-Atlantic steamship line, but in what capacity is not known here. He arrived about ten days ago and was met by Edward B. Rambo of San Francisco. They made a number of mysterious trips while staying at the Brewster Hotel, and gave out that they were looking for orange orchards. One hundred and thirty acres of land were purchased for the nominal price of \$12,000.

Mr. Griscom is said to be acting as agent for a New York syndicate in the matter. He wired to New York immediately after the deal was closed and then arranged with the hotel proprietor for the entertainment of fifteen of his associates, who, he said, would arrive in the city between February 11 and 15. He volunteered no further information.

UNIONTOWN, Pa., Jan. 27.—An explosion in the Smock mines of Hurst & Co. last night killed two miners and injured seven, three of whom will die. The dead are Peter Houser and Charles McQuistery.

Injured: Andrew Hoosobod, Michael Horrace, John Augustine, Michael Kenne, John Mitchell, John Gillis and William Gillis, and son.

Augustine, Kenne and Mitchell cannot recover. All the injured men were blasting coal. Large pieces undermined by dynamite released a pocket of gas and the explosion was caused by the miners' open lamps.

SOUTH NORWALK, Conn., Jan. 27.—Five men were killed this afternoon by a freight train near East Norwalk station. It is supposed that while walking upon the tracks they stepped from in front of an express train directly in front of a freight.

BOISE, Idaho, Jan. 27.—The Democrats refused to support State Senator Helffeld, the Populist nominee for United States senator today.

Ballot: Helffeld 25; Dubois 27; Nelson 15. Dubois got one Democratic vote.

NEW YORK, Jan. 27.—Abraham I. Eikun today appeared in the court of general session with power of attorney for Herbert B. Seeley, Theodore Rich and James H. Phipps indicted yesterday on a charge of conspiring to procure indecent exposures on the part of little Egypt and Minnie Renwood, who figured at a recent dinner at Sherry's, and pleaded not guilty. He took the privilege of withdrawing the plea and furnished bail of \$500 for each defendant.

BOISE, Idaho, Jan. 28.—Henry Helffeld was today elected United