

windows of upper stories. The guests were panic stricken, and many jumped from windows and a number of them have been taken to the receiving hospital, but thus far no fatalities have been reported. The fire is still spreading, the height of the building making it difficult for the firemen to do effective work in extinguishing the flames. The building immediately adjoining is of brick and it is hoped it will be saved. There are many chambermaids employed in the hotel, nearly all of whom sleep on the top floor, where the fire is raging fiercest. Fears are entertained that some of them have been burned to death. The firemen are making efforts to reach them with ladders, but so far without success. It is scarcely possible that the flames will be extinguished without loss of life, as they appear to be extending downward, completely gutting the building in their progress.

The Baldwin Hotel is only second to the Palace among the great caravansaries of the city and is furnished in elegant style. The first floor is partly occupied by stores and the basement by a fashionable cafe. The Baldwin Theater, now under lease to Gottlob, Marx & Co., is a leading place of amusement on the Pacific coast. The play *Secret Service*, produced by Wm. Gillette and his Eastern company, was played there last night and it was some time after the performance that the fire broke out. All the scenery and property of the place are doubtless lost.

Smoke was first seen issuing from the roof of the hotel by several young men who were standing on the sidewalk across Powell street. They rushed into the office of the hotel and with the aid of the Baldwin hotel employees went through the corridors giving the alarm. The house was full of guests, it being a popular stopping place of racing men and other strangers who are now visiting this city in large numbers. Most of the people in the building are believed to have escaped. While the roof was in flames a man was seen endeavoring to escape from an upper window, attired only in his night shirt. To those below on the street he seemed to fall backwards into the raging flames, as he suddenly disappeared. His identity is unknown. Those connected with the hotel are convinced that several of their employees have perished in the flames, but owing to the great excitement prevailing the names of those who are missing cannot be ascertained. One man, named Morris, was taken to the receiving hospital, having been injured in his attempt to escape.

The whole interior of the hotel and theater are now a raging furnace. In the hotel proper everything above the third floor is certainly a total loss. It may be possible to save some of the merchandise from the stores on the ground floor and possibly a portion of the furniture and fixtures of the building. Thousands of people crowd the streets in the vicinity, and the guests of the establishment are making frantic efforts to get their personal property to places of safety. The entire city is illuminated by the fire, which is one of the largest ever known here. At present it appears that the loss will be in the neighborhood of \$1,000,000.

Later.—The Mr. Morris taken to the receiving hospital from the Baldwin hotel, is dead. He recently returned from the Klondike and was not well known in this city. Mr. N. D. Noon, of St. Louis, was carried to the receiving hospital, having sprained his ankle and sustained numerous bruises in leaping from the window. The patrol wagon has just been called to bring another man reported to be either dead or in a dying condition, to the hospital.

At 4:50 a. m. the Ellis street wall of the hotel appears to be swaying slightly outward and fears are entertained

that it will fall if the flames are not soon gotten under control. As the street is a narrow one and the wall very lofty, its fall would mean much damage to the Golden Eagle lodging house and Golden West hotel and other buildings opposite the Baldwin.

Across Powell street are the Columbia theater, St. Anns building, and several lodging houses, which are also in danger. The corner on which the hotel stands is one of the business centers of the city and the street car traffic will be interrupted for the greater portion of the day. The Baldwin hotel is leased and managed by Stone & company, who recently refurbished it at great expense. The building is understood to be mortgaged by its owner, E. J. Baldwin, for several hundred thousand dollars. The stores on the ground floor are as follows:

Mose Gunst & company, cigars; Well & company, gent's furnishings; J. J. Groom & company, hats; Baldwin Clothing house; Scherber & company, candy; Baldwin Jewelry Co.; Baldwin Millinery establishment; Grant & company's pharmacy; Bacigalupi phonograph parlors, and Bogan's Grotto is in the basement. On the first floor is a fashionable restaurant and grill room, conducted by the managers of the hotel.

At 5:50 this morning the fire is still beyond control, though it appears probable it will be confined to the hotel building. There is a report current that eight servant girls, who slept on the top floor, have been burned to death, but this has not yet been confirmed.

Shortly after the flames broke out two women were seen at a window of the cupola on the northwest corner of the building. Several gentlemen in the street volunteered to go to their rescue, but, it is said, were prevented by the police from doing so. Soon after that two other women were seen in one of the upper windows and they have not been accounted for. The members of the Secret Service company are all accounted for. It does not appear that the loss of life will be as great as at first was feared, owing to the timely warning given to the guests but at this hour it is impossible to state definitely either the number of victims or their names.

Later.—10 a. m.—The Baldwin hotel is still burning, but the fire is under control. The number of lives lost is not yet known.

Only two are definitely known, A. J. White and Louis Meyer of Skagway.

Meyer dropped dead from heart disease, caused by the excitement. He was a guest of the hotel. The hotel is a total loss.

CHINESE AS MODERN SOLDIERS.

Having succeeded in making good soldiers of the Sikhs and Gorkhas of India, the fellaheen of the Nile and the negroes of the West Indies and the Cape, Great Britain is going to try her educational system on the Chinese. A battalion of 1,000 natives of Shan-tung are soon to be enrolled under British officers at Wei-Hai-Wei. In the length and breadth of China there could be no more unpromising material, for the Wei-Hai-Wei Chinese are the ones that led the flinching before the invading Japanese in the winter of 1894-95; so, if the British officers succeed with them, they may safely count upon the soldierly qualities of the race.

That such qualities exist was long ago asserted by General Gordon and was even recognized by Japan in the late war. Gordon's "Ever Victorious Army," as the corps with which he suppressed the Tai Ping rebellion was called, contained men of indubitable

courage and zeal. So, indeed, did the hordes of Tai-Ping. In the contest with Japan the Chinese in the far north held their own gallantly, keeping Moukden from capture by Marshal Yamagata's army, while Admiral Ting's sailors made a drawn battle of the Yalu. Foreign observers, who saw them at their best in 1894-95, as well as during the Tai-Ping war, concluded, as Mr. Macell of the British army recently put it, that they are not at all a cowardly people when properly paid and efficiently led; while the regularity and order of their habits, which dispose them to peace in ordinary times, give place to a daring bordering upon recklessness in time of war. Their intelligence and capacity for remembering facts make them well fitted for use in modern warfare, as do also the coolness and calmness of their disposition. Physically, they are not so strong as Europeans, but considerably more so than most of the other races of the East; and on a cheap diet of rice, vegetables, salt fish and pork they can go through a vast amount of fatigue, whether in a temperate climate or a tropical one, where Europeans are ill-fitted for exertion. Their wants are few; they have no caste prejudices, and hardly any appetite for intoxicating liquors.

What prevented the Chinese from doing well at Port Arthur, Tallen-wan and Wei-hai-wei are matters which foreign organization and discipline would remove. In the first place the Chinese government has never considered honesty or fitness as a sine qua non in the appointment of commanding officers. A thief, who had done well on the highway, might be made a governor so that he could steal on a larger scale, under a contract to divide with Peking. Later he might be made an admiral to rob the navy and then transferred to a military command to apply his processes to the army. All his official subordinates would be thieves like himself, and between them the underlings would get no pay and scant rations. Soldiers and sailors will not risk their lives under men of that kind; and men of that kind, knowing and caring nothing about the military art, can neither drill nor lead them. But Chinese soldiers and sailors, well dressed, well fed and well paid, and with confidence in the professional knowledge of their officers and in their personal honesty might do wonders. We all know the difference in efficiency between the militia and regulars of the American army; and how quickly the one slunks at what the other would carry with a dash. Yet the militia-man, transferred to the ranks of the regular army, grows to be a hero. It is likely to be the same way with the Chinese.

Upon that assumption it becomes of first importance to Europe not to let the great Mogul empire fall into the hands of any one power. Europe has had experience with the Tartar hordes of Genghis Khan; it does not want another. Give China to Russia and in a decade or two the latter power might have the most formidable army in the world, one capable of conquering India on the one hand and western Europe on the other. "Russia," said a recent British lecturer in Hongkong, "is, as regards China, 'too much with us late and soon.' Is the great empire to find in China the drilled and armed millions with which to crush those daring spirits whose teachings is even now molesting her despotic peace?" If that is her aim, Germany and England cannot move too soon toward organizing their own Chinese legions to hold the Russified native warriors in check.—*San Francisco Chronicle.*