

TELEGRAPHIC. A THEATER PANIC.

Shelling in the Death of Twenty-four People.

OTHERS SERIOUSLY INJURED.

It was All Caused by a Defective Gas Burner and a Foolish Cry of Fire.

BALTIMORE, Dec. 27.—In a explosion caused by a defective gas burner and a faulty cry of fire at the old First street theater tonight, twenty-four people were killed, two seriously injured and ten more seriously hurt.

Up to 2 o'clock this morning thirteen of the dead had been identified. The others are at the morgue awaiting identification.

Almost all the victims are of Polish nationality and Hebrew extraction. Many of the injured were taken to their homes by friends, considering it almost impossible to get a ambulance that night.

The theater, which is probably the oldest in the city, was filled from pit to boxes with people who had assembled to listen to a Hebrew organist, while he was giving a recital. The organist had been engaged for a week or the past month. The theater receipts show that over 2,000 people had been sold when at 9 o'clock the sale of seats was stopped because there was no more left. General admission tickets were sold at \$1.00 apiece, and it is supposed that there were at least 3,000 people within the walls when the organist went upon the platform. As the capacity of the house is less than 2,000, the density of the crowd may be imagined.

The minutes after the explosion, several spectators went up to the auditorium to light a gas jet which appeared to have been extinguished. As he turned the coat and applied a match the light flared up, and it was seen more was not up to the burner. The jet of flame was directed toward the stage on the left hand side of the auditorium, in plain view of the greater part of the audience, but the glass from it shattered against the wall, some in the gallery shouldered fire.

In an instant a wild scramble for the door, in which the aisle and auditorium took part. The van-guard of the semi-panicked multitude reached the entrance on Front street, and fled on by the howling, shrieking mob behind them. There three thousand spectators, who had been in the auditorium right and to the left to reach the double entrance-way, built in the form of a dumb drum. Passing through these doors they reached a flight of steps, leading from each door down a way to a landing from whence a long flight of stairs led down a flight which would have carried them into the basement and to safety. These steps leading from the doorway are but five feet high, but the landing at their base is narrow. Down these frightened people hurried—there were no exits save one, and to escape the certain death behind them. As they reached the landing, one to the right and one to the left, they met. There was brief struggle, and then some two or three hundred falling into a mass in a moment. The crowd joined with irresistible force from the rear, crowded upon the prostrate form and began, in turn, to stab and rend, and presently fell upon upon the floor, under the myriad of feet coming down like a herd of buffaloes from a cliff. In less time than it takes to tell, the scene was a ghastly one of thirty deep with the pale-skinned multitude and the hundreds behind them were struggling over them to reach the stairs.

The tumult attracted an immense crowd from surrounding houses who tried to gain entrance to the theater, thus adding to the confusion. A dozen policemen who surrounded by the shrieks of the frightened crowd, hurried to the scene, passed through the crowd and to the writhing mass on the floor.

Amongst first to reach them was Officer E. J. Kelly. Forcing his way through the main door he grasped a pair of arms, and pulling with all his might, dragged a woman from under the feet of the mass. She was shot at her heart, and was dead, dead, dead.

Again he reached into the mass of humanity and pulled out a boy about four years old. He, too, was dead, also from suffocation with scores of brains to his teeth. The officer, by this time reinforced by a dozen or more officers, dragged out the press of men, passing them to those on the sidewalk.

Ambulances carried the dead to the morgue and the wounded to the city hospital. However, in many cases, the most serious, the slightly injured, and in a few cases those who were badly hurt, were taken to their homes by friends.

When the mass on the landing had been cleared, the frightened multitude were gathered in a sufficient number to call for police to clear the theater. Then it was found that there had been no danger and not a soul would have been injured had the audience remained in their seats.

The theater was first opened to the public in 1860, and has been in continuous use ever since. The present structure is in place, Jenny Lind, Maudsley, Charlotte Cushman, and many other celebrities performed there, and in 1861 it was the scene of the Republican national convention which nominated Abraham Lincoln for president. George and Andrew Johnson for the second place on the ticket. The convention at which the Democrats nominated Stephen A. Douglas, after adjourning from Charleston, S. C., in 1860, was held here. In 1861, during its session a piano was started by the giving away of the floor, which had been built over the pit. Incidentally, however, no one was seriously injured, though after this a portion of the galleries, window from the front entrance, and roof, collapsed, causing the Mayfield Linen Company, John G. Harkness, and Joseph Lane for president and vice-president of the United States.

NOT NATURALIZED.

No State Can Give Citizenship to a Citizen.

NEW YORK, Dec. 27.—Judge Morrow rendered an important opinion in the United States district court to

day on the writ of habeas corpus filed by one Roy, a Chinaman, who arrived from Pekin three months ago and demanded permission to land, although he had no papers showing that he had been naturalized in a New Jersey court. Commissioner Tracy, who took evidence in the case, recommended that one Roy be remanded "on the reason that there was no law requiring the right of naturalization upon Mongolian subjects." It was decided that the judgment of the court of naturalization of New Jersey naturalizing one Roy was absolutely null and void for want of jurisdiction, and that the Chinese man was and is not a citizen of the United States, as claimed by him, and cannot be permitted to land in this country."

"In this conclusion," Judge Morrow said, "I heartily agree. The matter of naturalization is exclusively within the control of the government of the United States, and not of the states."

Boundary Dispute.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 27.—Representative Barrett of Massachusetts introduced in the House today a joint resolution authorizing the President to negotiate a boundary between the United States and Canada, the question being the same as that presented to the commissioners for the settlement of boundary disputes. The President is invited to negotiate to join the United States to a conference to be held in Washington in 1897, to agree, if possible, upon all boundaries in dispute between such nations.

Three Sentences in the Senate.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 27.—The Republians' senders have devoted considerable time during the past few days to internal difficulties concerning the election of their candidate for Vice-president. It is generally admitted that both sides will encounter very serious obstacles in the Senate, largely on account of the silver amendment in that body. The sentiment is so strong that it has been suggested that the silver bill should be voted down, and it is proposed that there be at least 3,000 people within the walls when the vote is taken.

As the capacity of the Senate is less than 2,000, the density of the crowd may be imagined.

The minutes after the explosion, when the spectators were with difficulty getting out, and it was supposed that they were at least 3,000 people within the walls when the vote was taken, the bill was voted down.

The Cuban revolution was brought before the committee through a resolution for recognition of the insurgents.

Mr. Blaine of Pennsylvania, in the name of the committee, moved to adjourn.

After a short debate, the bill was voted down.

The case of ex-Congress Waller was brought up again, and the resolution of Mr. Miller of Kansas, asking the state department for the records of the trial and the correspondence with the French government, was referred to the House.

DR. HUMELBAUGH.

The Case of the Government Sides with the United States.

BOSTON, Dec. 27.—A dispatch from St. Petersburg to the Tagabolsky says the United States government has been sending troops regarding the dispute with England. Said it is to have received the most favorable reply. It is declared the Russian government share President Cleveland's views on the Venezuelan question, and is prepared to support them, as any reasonable course.

The dispatch adds that the United States has received the statement of the present financial trouble.

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New York, Dec. 27.—Mr. L. Townsend Burton, of Newark, N. J., who has been spending seven weeks in the benefit of his daughter's health, left Washington last night. The sophomore of his departure, equipped with the fact that a few days ago it was his intention to remain here several weeks longer, said that he had been here but has now decided to return home. Venezuela's boundary commission, which he left for Washington in response to a telegram from the President.

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