FATAL PARISIAN FIRE.

The Opera Comique Takes Fire During a Performance.

GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAGEDY.

Two Hundred Persons Cremated in the Parisian Fire.

Extraordinarily Exciting Scenes — The Theatre Previously Condemned.

A last (Wednesday) night's Paris despatch says: The Opera Comique took fire this evening, and the whole building is now wrapped in flames. Several persons have been injured. Fourteen persons who jumped from the windows are dead and 43 were injured. It is probable that many were crushed to death in the galleries, but at present this is uncertain. The fire broke out during the first act of the opera "Mignonne." One of the wings caught fire from a gas jet, and the entire stage was immediately enveloped in flames. The fire soon spread to the whole house. Madame Mergvillier and Messrs Tasquin and Boquard were on the stage when the fire broke out. All the actors ran out in their stage costumes. The audience got out easily, but the gas was turned off before all had left the building and it is feared some were left in the upper tiers. The roof soon fell in, sending showers of sparks around. With the exception of Madame Sellier, who perished in the flames, all the actors escaped, though several of the supernumeraries were injured severely.

Five bodies, terribly burned, were conveyed to the National Library. Among them was the body of a woman grasping a little boy in her arms.

The money receipts were saved.

The firemen showed the greatest courage. Messrs. Goblet, Thibaudin and Gagnon were on the spot soon after the fire started, and they remained throughout with the fire officials. The Military Club rendered great assistance in the work of rescuing the people. Nineteen persons are now known to be dead. Many of these were supers.

An artificial fire apparatus, which had been placed in position in readiness for the burning of the place in the second act, rolled down from its place near the roof and exploded below. Women, half-clad and carrying their costumes, fled from the stage screaming. The supers and members of the chorus were terrified, and some of the latter fled with nothing on but tights. The flames spread with such rapidity that in fifteen minutes the stage was a vast furnace.

Several actors escaped by climbing to the roof on the side of the Rue Marivanta, where they were rescued. The audience was delayed a few minutes by a dense smoke and insufficient light. The director of the *Soleil*, his wife and two children, escaped without injury. The killed included four firemen. There was not a frantic rush in the theatre, but it is believed that the staircase became blocked. M. Tasquin implored the audience to remain seated until the exits were opened, which they did. If they had made a rush for the doors the loss of life would have been terrible. The police outside were unable to restrain the crowd, who besieged the building, inquiring for their friends inside, until a military cordon was called. One man, who wanted to rescue his brother and sister, raved and tore his hair and menaced with a stick the people who stopped him from rushing into the blazing building.

The scene outside was one of wildest excitement. Falling embers struck horses in the surrounding streets, causing them to plunge and rear. Flames shot out of every window, forcing the crowd into the narrow streets, where the crush was terrific.

A figurante says there were 150 persons on the stage when the fire broke out. She heard the glass falling like a hailstorm, but told the other girls not to mind it. But while she was speaking a column of flame burst through the wings with a roar, and all rushed pell-mell from the stage.

It is still unknown how many persons were unable to escape from the doomed building.

Only a fortnight ago M. Stenackors called attention in the Chamber of Deputies to the dangerous condition of the Opera Comique, which was the oldest theatre in Paris. The *Figaro* also called attention to the same thing after a recent twelve-hour benefit performance.

A last (Thursday) night's Paris cable says: The greatest excitement prevails in the city to-day over last night's terrible accident. At first it was thought the loss of life was small, and that only professionals were burned, but every hour adds to the number of the dead, and not alone ballet girls and stage hands fell victims to the cruel flames, but also many well known in the best Paris society.

At exactly a quarter before 9, just as the curtain was about to fall at the end of the first act of "Mignon," Mlle. Merguillier, who, as *Philene*, was singing the waltz song to the chorus accompaniment, suddenly ceased singing and disappeared. She had stood in front of the cottage at the right of the stage, which was overhung with trees, when showers of glowing cinders began falling about her. The instant she vanished M. Taskin, who sang Lothario, stepped to the front amid the falling embers and said: "Don't move! It's nothing." In the stalls and the pit, where the danger was most evident, the audience began rapidly but quietly to leave the house. In the galleries, where the magnitude of the fire was not visible, people remained seated. By the time the stalls were emptied the house was full of smoke and the entire stage ablaze. Scenes of terror followed. The screams of the ladies mingled with the shouts of the people upon the stage. A frantic crowd came tumbling over each other. Pretty women in full evening dress and delicious toilets from Worth, Felix and Rouff, rushing pell-mell with shop girls and *cocottes*, came pouring out like an avalanche into the Place Boieldieu. Cloaks and wraps, of course, were left behind. A cold rain came down steadily, but luckily there was not a breath of wind. Other scenes of panic occurred in the Rue Favart, where from the stage entrance bevies of *figurantes* and half dressed ballet girls came tearing down, followed by chorus singers, the scene shifters and the carpenters.

No one knew as yet whether there were any casualties. There were hundreds of people in the galleries, but the police and the firemen declared that the most of them escaped. The official report, however, states that there are 17 dead and 110 wounded. I saw one scene shifter—a young-looking man, with bushy black beard—dragged out of the flames, suffocated and bleeding from a bad gash in the head, and brought into the ultra fashionable Cafe Anglais, at the corner of the Boulevard des Italiens and the Rue Marivaux, where he was placed on the dining table, and died in about five minutes. Six stout firemen made a gallant charge, axes in hand, through the flames, and rescued an iron safe containing the receipts of the evening, which they carried to the editorial rooms of the *Gaulois*, near by.

The consternation of the boulevards reached its climax at about 10 o'clock, when at least a hundred thousand people blocked all the streets leading to the burning theatre, while the firemen, in brazen helmets, aided by a battalion of the 31st regiment of the line, kept back the crowd and helped to take the wounded to the police station of the Rue Rechlieu, where military ambulances stood in readiness to convey them to their homes in cots.

At the police station I saw three *figurantes*, pretty young girls, lying dead. Their clothing was burned off them, and their chests and arms were black with the flames. The number of dead in this police station is eleven and the wounded twenty-eight. Men and women were lying about groaning with pain from burns, while the doctors are hard at work doing their best to resuscitate those who are but partially suffocated.

Mlle. Merguillier, who played *Philene*, gives the following graphic account of her experience: "Ah! my poor theatre! I loved it so!" she exclaimed, tragically. "It seemed a part of me. I was in the scene with the choristers when the fire began. I had finished the *duo* with M. Soulacroix, '*Il faut Savior*,' when he said to me, raising his eyes, 'Look! we are afire! Save yourself without delay.' I left the stage in the midst of the scene, but, notwithstanding, cast my eyes over the auditorium, where already the people were springing to their feet, climbing over the stalls and rushing rearward with cries of terror. I hurried to the green-room, where I hoped to find comrades whom I could accompany to the stage entrance, but it was deserted and almost dark. The loneliness terrified me, but I tried to collect my thoughts. I remembered that a corridor running parallel with Rue Marivaux ended in an exit reserved for the administration. In two seconds I was face to face with that door. It was fast. I knocked violently with bleeding knuckles, but without answer. At that moment I was filled with a terrible anguish. I was caught in a trap. I was lost. My retreat across the stage was cut off. I felt that behind me were unknown horrors. I knew not where to turn for aid Already the corridor was full of smoke, which choked me. Then, in sheer hopelessness and despair, I shrieked. A voice without answered, 'We wil save you!' The door was burst in, and I fainted. I came to in a cafe on the Rue Marivaux. Then after a little time I came home. I am sure that many unfortunate people have been lost. Oh! I am so sorry!"

At 2 p.m. twenty bodies, in a terribly mutilated condition, have been recovered from the ruins. The remains are principally those of ballet girls, choristers and machinists. Five of the bodies are those of elderly ladies, and one of them is that of a child. The firemen are lowering some of the bodies from the fourth story of the theatre by means of ropes.

At 4 p.m. twenty more bodies were recovered from the ruins of the Theatre Comique. The search for victims continues.

The remains of three men and two women were found in the stage box, where the victims had taken refuge from the flames. It is ascertained that many bodies lie buried in the *debris* in the upper galleries, from which escape was exceedingly difficult. Late this afternoon the bodies of eighteen ladies, all in full dress, were found lying together at the bottom of the staircase leading from the second story. These ladies all had escorts to the theatre, but no remains of men were found anywhere near where the women were burned to death.

This theatre was first opened in 1838, it being built upon the site of the Favart Hall, which was also destroyed by fire. The theatre was situated alongside of the Boulevard des Italiens, facing on the Rue Favart, the Rue de Marivaux and the Place Boieldien, and one of the landmarks of the period of Louis Phillippe. The interior construction was in every way defective, and it has been often remarked that should a fire ever break out a terrible catastrophe would result. The seating capacity of the house was about eighteen hundred. The main exit from the Opera Comique was on the Rue Boieldien.

The walls of the theatre began falling this evening and the search for the bodies had to be abandoned for the day.

The library attached to the theatre was entirely destroyed, with all its contents, including many valuable scores.

Six thousand costumes were burned in the wardrobe.

The Government propose to close several of the theatres because of their deficiency in exit.

The work of searching for the bodies of the victims of last night's fire was resumed to-night, and a number more were exhumed.

The official statement says fifty bodies have already been recovered.

M. Reveillon, a Deputy, speaking in the Chamber of Deputies this afternoon, estimates that at least 200 persons lost their lives in the fire.

The Chamber of Deputies has voted a credit of 200,000 francs for the relief of the sufferers by the Opera Comique fire.

The Opera Comique was insured for one million francs.

To-day 156 missing persons have been inquired for by relatives. They are supposed to have perished in the flames.

The bottom of the theatre is flooded with water to a depth of five feet and sixty bodies have been found floating in the water by the firemen.

The finding of charred remains continue. The remains can be identified only by means of trinkets.

A Paris cable says: The roll call of the attaches of the Opera Comique made to-day shows that seventeen actors and employees are missing, exclusive of the supernumeraries, who were engaged nightly as they were needed, and of whom no record was kept.

There are one hundred missing; that is to say, there are that many whose relatives and friends have reported them to the police as having gone to the Opera Comique on Wednesday night, but who have not turned up. This brings the total list of casualties up to 226. Crowds stand around the police stations eagerly gazing at the face of each newly unearthed victim, in the hope of finding a lost father, brother, mother or sister. The streets are filled with women in tears. Nearly all the bodies are those of well-dressed persons. Almost all still have on their gloves. Many of the bodies are twisted into strange, weird shapes. Some seemed broiled, as if on a gridiron.

Under the debris of a narrow staircase I saw a group of seven corpses, whose charred and blackened members were intertwined in almost Laocoon coils. One of these was that of a woman whose face was literally roasted like an overdone piece of beef. In her ears glistened a pair of large solitaire diamond earrings. Her right arm was fractured; her left arm was wound about a smaller corpse—apparently that of a girl 12 years old—probably her daughter. Other corpses in this group were so black and so mangled that it was almost impossible to say whether they were the remains of human beings or of animals.

A few yards distant were the remains of a young ballet girl. Her limbs were still clothed in rose-colored tricots that made her look as if still living. No part of her body was burned, nor did it bear any traces of wounds. Her death was evidently caused by suffocation, for the poor girl had torn from her skirts a handful of gauze which she had crammed into her mouth in her vain efforts to keep out the smoke.

REMARKABLE RESCUE.

A Child Pulled 160 Feet Up a Well Hole With a Hook.

A San Antonio, Texas, despatch says: The story of a singular and serious accident comes from a German settlement near New Braunfels, fifty miles north of this city. One of the farmers in that vicinity recently started boring an artesian well in his back yard. After going 160 feet without signs of water he abandoned the project and removed the framework around the well hole, which was eleven inches in diameter. From time to time neighbors examined the well and by this means the hole was left uncovered. One day this week the farmer's 2-year-old child was playing in the vicinity of the well and when its mother came to look for the little fellow he had disappeared. Becoming alarmed she searched the yard, and going to the well heard from its dark bottom the plaintive cry of "Papa! papa! papa!" When the woman realized the truth she was frantic, and running to the field called her husband and his helpers. The news quickly spread among the neighbors, who congregated to offer assistance. At first the parents could think of no way to rescue the child. A rope was dropped down, but the child could not grasp it. The cry grew fainter and fainter, and at the end of the first six hours a stout iron hook was lowered; and after many fruitless attempts, occupying two days and nights, the distracted parents succeeded in dragging the child to the surface more dead than alive. The little fellow now lies in a very critical condition, its body fearfully lacerated by the hoop and greatly exhausted from its long immurement.

DYING OFF LIKE SHEEP.

Frightful Ravages of Cholera at Buenos Ayres.

A Philadelphia telegram says: Chief Officer Gray, of the barque McLeod, of St. John, N.B., which arrived at this port to-day from Buenos Ayres, tells a frightful story of death from cholera in that portion of the Argentine Republic. He says that while his vessel was lying in the harbor of Buenos Ayres the people of that city and the suburbs were dying off like sheep, and the disease seemed to spread like wild fire. The wife of the captain of the barque Golden Rule, the chief mate and one man of the barque Bremen, and four men of the barque Wylower, were stricken down with the disease while the McLeod was in port. As fast as cases were discovered the patients were removed to a hospital in the city, and when death relieved the victims from their suffering they were at once removed, and their bodies burned. It was only after earnest efforts and appeals that the body of the wife of the Golden Rule was saved from cremation.

O'Brien at Montreal.

A Montreal despatch says: The demonstration in honor of O'Brien last evening was most enthusiastic. There were about 1,500 torches in the procession, in which were four bands. As they passed along the streets O'Brien and Kilbride were loudly cheered. Chaboillez square, where the meeting took place, was filled with people. In his speech Mr. O'Brien strongly denounced his assailants in the west and inveighed against Lord Lansdowne. Resolutions were passed condemning the attacks on Mr. O'Brien in the west and Lord Lansdowne's treatment of his tenants. After the meeting O'Brien was banquetted at the St. Lawrence Hall by the local branch of the National League. From 100 to 150 persons sat down, representatives being present from Ottawa and other places.

The Common Council of Utica, N. Y., has passed an ordinance which requires farmers who sell their products from house to house or on the streets to pay a license fee of $5.

John W. Keely, having, as he says, completed his great motor, is at work on an improved telephone. But where is the motor moting?

Probably the largest vineyard in the world is that owned by Senator Stanford, near Vina, Cal. On a 30,000-acre ranch he has 3,500 acres planted in bearing vines. The vineyard is divided into 500-acre tracts, and most of the work is done by Chinese.

A prominent nurseryman says that nursery practices in peach propagation and culture have weakened the vital power of the tree, which is unable to resist as depressing influences as formerly when the trees from seeding grew well and lived to old age.

DISASTROUS CONFLAGRATION.

A Million Dollars' Worth of Property Destroyed in New York.

HUNDREDS OF HORSES ROASTED ALIVE.

A last (Friday) night's New York despatch says: The Belt Line car stables, extending from 10th avenue between 53rd and 54th streets westward to about the middle of the long block, took fire about 1.30 o'clock this morning. The hay made a brilliant blaze at first, but soon clouded a large part of the neighborhood in dense smoke. The general call for all engines was sounded. The flames leaped across 10th avenue, 53rd and 54th streets, and set many frame dwellings and stables on fire. These were all destroyed. The police reserves from all the adjoining precincts were called out. The stables, which were of brick, were entirely destroyed. The rapid spread of the flames was due chiefly to the fact that a strong wind was blowing. The inflammable character of the building, divided up as it was into stalls with loose wooden partitions, and the great amount of hay and straw stored in it, contributed to make the spread of the flames almost irresistible. There were very few watchmen or stablemen on duty and the flames were so fierce and spread so rapidly that only 25 out of the 1,300 horses in the stable were got out before the smoke and flames drove the men from the vicinity. The houses on the east of 10th avenue were two story frame structures and burned fiercely. the inhabitants being forced to rush from their rooms to the street in their nightclothes in order to save their lives. In the rear of the tenements was a large coal yard, which caught fire. A six-story tenement house on Fifty-fourth street, opposite the stables, was next seen to be in flames. As far as is known all the tenants escaped with their lives and without serious injury, but none of them were able to save much furniture or clothing. The streets were filled with

THE PANIC-STRICKEN OCCUPANTS

of the tenement houses, not only those whose houses had been burned over their heads, but others who feared that in so tremendous a conflagration their homes also would be destroyed. Notwithstanding the kindness of neighbors, the night was a hard one for many who were thus rudely driven from their homes. Two policemen and a number of firemen were overcome by the heat, but they soon recovered. In the first few minutes the fire had gained headway the horses screamed terribly, but the dense, black smoke from the burning hay and straw soon did its work. At a quarter to 3 the fire was burning in four separate blocks, and on the west side it was spreading toward 11th avenue, the firemen being so closely occupied that they could not check it in this direction. The rear of the houses on 55th street to the north were also catching on fire. By 3 o'clock the fire was rapidly spreading southward and threatened to entirely consume the block bounded by 10th and 11th avenues and 53rd and 52nd streets.

The fire was finally got under control at 4 o'clock this morning. The stables with contents and the frame houses on the opposite side of 10th avenue and down 54th street were destroyed. The loss will be over $1,000,000. Elizabeth Walsh, aged 76, one of the occupants of house 540 west 54th street which was burned, was sick in her bed. The police rescued her and brought her to the sidewalk, where she expired from fright and the shock.

JUMPED FROM A WINDOW.

A Detroit Hotel Boarder Throws Himself from a Fourth Story Window and is Dashed to Death.

A Detroit despatch says: Chas. M. Haslett, who arrived at Detroit about a week ago, and for the last few days was stopping at the Brunswick Hotel, at 1 o'clock yesterday morning jumped from the window of his room in the fourth story and struck upon the stone pavement beneath. He was frightfully crushed and died almost immediately. The coroner was summoned and began an investigation and took charge of his effects, which consisted principally of a gold watch and some $70 in money. From a letter found in Haslett's satchel it appears that he was a druggist, and had come to Detroit to negotiate for the purchase of a drug store. A letter was also found, evidently from a lady friend in Three Rivers, dated May 2nd and signed "Hattie." In it she urges him to beware of his failing, hopes for the best, but fears the worst, saying, "But if you do as I think you will do, then God help you." The dead man was about 35 years of age, with dark brown hair and short side whiskers, and presented the appearance of a thorough business man. He had been drinking heavily for the past few days.

Canada's Salt Fish Trade with Spain.

A London cable says: The English Consul at Cadiz says the Canadian salt fish trade with Spain has for years been heavily handicapped. The anticipation that the Dominion would secure a fair portion of the trade as a result of the commercial convention between Great Britain and Spain proved fallacious. The Government bounty enables the French colonies to undersell ours, the difference in price amounting to eight or nine shillings per fifty kilos. The state of affairs is peculiarly hard to our colonies, for while taking on an average 150 cargoes of salt yearly from Cadiz we do not sell a single cargo of fish.

Tragedy at a Revival Meeting.

A Charlottetown, P. E. I., despatch says: At O'Leary Station, a school teacher and singing master named Mackinnon got into an altercation with one Currie at the close of a meeting held by Blue, the evangelist. Currie took off his coat to fight. They clinched, and Currie was heard to exclaim, "My God, I am stabbed." The fight was stopped, and it was found that Currie was stabbed through the left lung. Currie cannot live. Mackinnon was arrested and committed for trial. He says he acted in self-defence.

A span of mules drawing a plow near Montgomery, Ala., were attacked by a swarm of bees a few days ago and stung to death. The driver saved his life by running away after a vain effort to drive the bees from the mules.

HATE AND JEALOUSY

Result in an Extraordinary Poisoning Tragedy in Austria.

A last (Thursday) night's Vienna cable says: Five thrilling acts might easily be made out of a peasant tragedy just reported from Galicia. In a little village with an unpronounceable name lived a happy family, consisting of an old man called Dackof, his wife, Maruncka, and two sons, Josef and Peter. Some time ago Josef was married, and in due course his wife presented him with two children. The extraordinary fondness of old Dackof for his grandchildren awakened the jealousy of Maruncka, who, after watching her husband, came to the conclusion that he was carrying on an intrigue with his daughter-in-law. Meanwhile Peter Dackof, the unmarried son, had grown suspicious that his brother was trying to cheat him out of his inheritance. Jealousy soon turned to hate, and, after talking matters over, mother and son resolved on vengeance. The next Sunday they asked Josef's wife and children to dinner and set a hearty meal before them, with a toothsome cake to crown the feast. Nobody touched the cake that day, however, which was lucky, for it was poisoned. The Sunday following Maruncka renewed the experiment on a more elaborate scale. This time she made two similar cakes—one poisoned, the other harmless—and to induce the victims to eat she herself took a piece of one cake. A few hours later she expired, having eaten of the wrong cake. Peter Dackof now tried his hand and succeeded better than his mother. One day he contrived to put some poison into the soup of his sister-in-law and her children. The children both died in convulsions, but their mother, having taken very little soup, recovered after a terrible illness. The murderer, happily, did not escape. Having been arrested on suspicion, he was tried and condemned to death. His appeal against this sentence has just been rejected, and Peter will shortly be handed over to the hangman.

A PRISON ROMANCE.

A Hardened Criminal Reformed by the Wife He Married in His Cell.

A Wilmington, Del., despatch says: Charles Blake, a once hard criminal, was released from Newcastle jail to-day, after finishing a three years' sentence for burglary. When he began his term of imprisonment he was required to stand in the pillory an hour, and was to have received thirty lashes; but, through the pleading of Blake's sister, Governor Stockley remitted the lashing. He escaped from jail three times while serving his sentence, but was as often recaptured. A glamor of romance surrounded Blake during his entire term at Newcastle. Women admirers kept him supplied with flowers, fruits and dainty trappings for his cell; and in September, 1884, Sheriff Martin permitted him to be married to the woman of his choice. The bride was Miss Gussie Turner, of Philadelphia, and the wedding took place in his cell. She has since been very assiduous in her attentions to him, and was at the jail when he was released, so they left Newcastle together. Blake recently signed a pledge to abstain from all intoxicating liquors, and declared to the Sheriff and others at the jail his intention of leading a respectable life. It will not be the fault of his devoted wife if he fails to adhere to this laudable determination.

KILLED BY A SPIDER.

Death of an Infant in New York After Twenty-Four Hours' Agony.

A New York despatch says: Fritz Kibitz, 1 year and 8 months old, was playing about the floor of his home at 650 Fifth street, about 4 o'clock on Saturday afternoon, when suddenly he began screaming. His mother ran to him and saw a big spider on his left hand. The little fellow held the hand up and acted as though he was in great pain. Mrs. Kibitz killed the spider, and observing a small red mark on the child's hand, concluded that the spider had bitten it. She applied some lotion, but the child still continued its cries. A few hours later a small red lump appeared on the hand, which kept spreading until the swelling extended to the arm. A physician was called in, and measures were taken to stop the spread of the poison. His efforts were unsuccessful, and on Sunday the child's arm almost to the shoulder was badly swollen. The little fellow suffered great agony, and cried incessantly until Sunday night, when he died. The spider was described as having a small drab body.

Late Scottish News.

Mr. William Watson, late Sheriff-Substitute of Aberdeenshire, the pioneer of the movement which resulted in the introduction of industrial schools into Scotland, died in Edinburgh on the 12th of May.

A committee of gentlemen has been appointed to receive competitive designs for a statue of Burns for Ayr. Sir John McDowall, Athens, has generously offered a block of marble for the pedestal of the statue.

Mrs. Andrew Carnegie, New York, has, through Dr. Charles Rogers, of Edinburgh, requested to be allowed the privilege of contributing a bust of Sir Walter Scott to the Statuary Hall of the National Wallace Monument.

Mr. Thomas Stevenson, C.E., son of the builder of the Bell Rock Lighthouse and father of the distinguished essayist and story-teller, Mr. Louis Stevenson, died on the 8th of May at his residence in Heriot row, Edinburgh, in his 69th year.

The Original Ragged School, founded by the late Dr. Guthrie in 1847, was on the 6th of May removed from Ramsay lane, Castle hill, Edinburgh, to new and commodious premises at Liberton, which have been erected at a cost of about £10,000.

Rev. Dr. Story has resigned his charge as minister of the parish of Roseneath. Dr. Story was recently appointed Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the Glasgow University, and in consequence he has been obliged to sever his long connection with that parish.

In Pittsburg, Pa., a few nights ago a somnambulist walked off a balcony, fell about twenty feet, was picked up and carried into the house, and after a time he awoke. The shock of the fall, which sprained his foot and bruised him generally, did not rouse him from his sound sleep.