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BY R. H. TYSON.

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DETAILS OF THE TERRIBLE FIRE AT PESHTEGO.

The sharp air of early October had sent
the people in from the church
services more promptly than usual,
although numbers delayed to speculate
on a great noise and ado which set in
ominously from the West. The house-
wives looked tremblingly at the fires
and lights within, and the men took a
last look at the possibilities without—
for many it was truly a last glimpse.
The noise grew in volume, and came
nearer and nearer with terrific
crackling and detonations. The forest
rocked and tossed tumultuously;
a dire alarm fell upon the imprisoned
village, for the swirling blasts came now
from every side. In one awful instant,
before expectation could give shape to
the horror, a great flame shot up in the
western heavens, and in countless fiery
tongues struck downward into the vil-
lage, piercing every object that stood
in the town like a red hot bolt. A
deafening roar, mingled with blasts of
electric flame filled the air, and paral-
yzed every soul in the place. There was
no beginning to the work of ruin; the
flaming whirlwind swayed in an instant
through the town. There is no diver-
sity in the general experience; all
heard the first inexplicable roar; some
saw that the earth shook, while a
credulous few avow that the heavens
opened, and the fire rained down from
above. Moved by a common instinct,
every habitation was deserted to the
flames, and the gasping multitude
flocked to the river. On the west the
mad horde saw the bridge in flames in a
score of places, and, turning sharply to
the left, with one accord, plunged into
the water. Three hundred people
wedged themselves in between the roll-
ing booms, swayed to and fro by the
current, where they roasted, in the hot
breath of flame that hovered above
them, and singed the hair on each head
momentarily exposed above the water.
Here, despairing men and women held
their children till the cold water came
as an ally to the flames, and deprived
them of strength.

Meantime the eastern bank was
densely crowded by the dying and the
dead. Rushing to the river in this
direction, the swirling blasts met them
full in the face, and mowed a swath
through the fleeing throng. Inhalation
was annihilation. Scorns fell before
the fire blast. A few were able to
crawl to the pebbly flats, but so desper-
ately disfigured that death must have
been preferable. All could not reach
the river; even the groups that fell on
the grateful damp flats suffered excru-
ciating agony. The fierce blaze playing
in tremendous counter currents above
them on the higher ground, was suffi-
ciently strong to set the clothes afire,
and the flying sand, heated as by a
furnace, blistered the flesh wherever it
fell. All that could break through the
stifling smog had come to the river.
In the red glare they could see the
sloping bank covered with the bodies of
those who had fallen by the way. Few
living on the back streets could reach
the river, the hot breath of the fire cut-
ting them down as they ran. But here

a new danger befel them. The cattle,
terrified by the smoke and flame, rushed
in a great lowing drove to the river
bank. Women and children were
trampled by the frightened brutes, and
many losing their hold on the friendly
logs, were swept under the waters.

This was the situation above the
bridge; below, a no less harrowing
thing happened. The burning timbers
of the mill, built at the edge of the
bridge, blew and floated down upon the
multitude assembled near the flats, and
inflicted the most lamentable sufferings.
The men fought this new death biterly;
those who were fortunate enough
to have coats, flung them over the heads
of wives and children, and dipped water
with their hats on the improvised shel-
ter. Scores had every hair burnt off in
the battle, and many lost their lives in
protecting others. The firemen had
made an effort to save some of the
buildings, and the hose was run from
the river to some important edifice.
The heat instantly stopped the attempt,
but not before the hose, swollen with
water, had been burned through in a
hundred places. Although the on-
slaught of fire and wind had been in-
stantaneous, and the destruction almost
instantaneous, the fierce, stifling current
of intense heat careered through the
air for hours. These currents were
more fatal than the flames of the burn-
ing village. Ignorant of the extent of
the fire and the frightful combination
of wind and flame, many of the com-
pany's workmen, some with wives and
children, shut themselves up in the
great brick building, and perished in
the raging heat of the next half hour.
Others on the remote streets broke for
the clearing beyond the woods, but few
ever passed the burning barrier. With-
in the boundaries of the town and ac-
cessible to the multitude the river ac-
commodation was rather limited, and
when the animals had crowded in, the
situation was full of despair. The flats
were covered with prone figures with
backs ablaze and faces pressed rigidly
into the cooling moist earth. The flames
played about and above all with an in-
cessant and deafening roar.

The tornado was but momentary, but
was succeeded by waucstroms of fire,
smoke, cinders and red hot sand.
Wherever a building seemed to resist
the fire, the roof would be sent whirl-
ing in the air, breaking into clouds of
flames as it fell. The showers of cin-
ders, sparks and hot sand fell in con-
tinuous and prodigious force, and did as
much in killing the people as the first
terrific sirocco that succeeded the fire.
The wretched throng, neck deep in the
water, and the still more helpless beings
stretched on the heated sands, were
pierced and blistered by these burning
particles. They seemed like lancets of
red hot steel, penetrating the thickest
covering. The evidence now remains
to attest the incredible force of the
slenderest pencils of darting flame.
Hard ironwood plow handles still re-
main, perforated as though by minnie
balls, and for the main part unburnt.
When the hapless dwellers in remote
streets saw themselves cut off from the
river, groups broke in all directions in
a wild panic of flight and terror. A few
took refuge in a clear field bordering on
the town. Here, flat upon the ground,
with faces pressed in the sand, the
helpless sufferers lay and roasted. But
few survived the dreadful agony.

The next day revealed a picture exceed-
ing in horror any battle field. Mothers
with children hugged closely lay in
rigid groups, the clothes burned off,
and the poor flesh seared to a crisp.
One mother, solicitous only for her
babe, embalms her unutterable love in
the terrible picture left on these woe-
ful sands. With her bare fingers she had
scraped out a pit, as the soldiers did
before Petersburg, and pressing the
little one into this, she put her own
body above it as a shield, and when the
daylight came, both were dead—the
little baby's face unscarred, but the
mother burnt almost to cinders.

Thankful to the Lelpless, a stout
woodman carried out on his shoulders
one dead sick of fever. He burrowed
for the helpless body a sandy sepulchre,
and then began the struggle for his own
life. He had lingered too long, and his
sacred body was found near the refuge
of the man his heroism had preserved.
The tornado played through the des-
olated streets, and swept the river and
the low land adjoining. The timber of
the mill floating down among the
people, made additional labor and dan-
ger, and daylight broke terribly on the
saturated survivors before they dared
drag their cramped limbs from the icy
waters. The mingled crowd of men,
women, children, cows and swine had
held this watery refuge since ten
o'clock of the night before. Of the
hundreds of human beings that entered

the water, not all escaped; the fright-
ened cows trampled many under the
waters; the blistering heat blinded
many who groped hopelessly about in
the current, and finally sunk. To this
day none can tell how great was the
slaughter in the waters. After the
burning heat of the night, a numbing
chill followed, and the water-soaked
group crawled over dead bodies and hot
sands to the only blazing building in all
the waste about them. Groups of dead
bodies were found within a stone's
throw of the water. Families rushing
downward for breathing place had been
blown upon by the rushing blasts and
struck lifeless. The ghastly throng
huddled, shrieking and bewailing, about
the flaring embers, and the terrible
roll of the missing was soon called from
end to end of the ashen waste. No
vestige of human habitation remained,
and the steaming, freezing, wretched
group, crazed by the unutterable terror
and despair, plead with each other
to restore the lost ones. The hot blasts
of the night had blinded them, and they
could but vaguely recognize one another
in the murky light of the new day.

Some, in the immeasurable anguish
of the moment, had dashed themselves
against the sands and let out the life
with their own hands that the licking
flames coveted. Men, too distant from
the river to hope for rescue or safety,
had cut the throats of their choking
children, and were found in groups
sometimes unscarred by the flames. In
the streets, full twenty corpses were
found with no apparent injury or abra-
sion. Fatuous tradesmen, in the sudden
rush of flame, had thrown their valu-
ables into wells for security; every well
in the city was turned into a flaming
pit, and the very waters half evaporated
by the heat. Survivors attest that
women and children, cut off from the
river, were put into wells and covered
with bedding. I have looked into every
well in the ash covered clearing, and
there is no possibility that a living thing
could have endured the flames which
boiled and seethed in them.

For hours the unreasoning search
was continued by the famished-dying
remnants, but to little avail; the dead,
when recognizable, lay where they had
fallen in the streets; where the houses
had stood the ground was whipped as
clean as a carpet, and all hope of identi-
fying human ashes was idle. The next
night the long prayed for rain came,
gratefully to the living, and kindly to
the fleeting ashes of the dead. The
greatest dread which hovered over
the bay cities and towns was allayed,
and the threatened danger nearly gone.
Before dark, help came to the perishing
sufferers from the neighboring villages.
The wounded were taken by boat to
Green Bay, whence some were forward-
ed to Milwaukee.

There are 400 dead authentically ac-
counted for; there are beside half as
many missing who cannot be accounted
for, and probably never will be. Many
of the mill hands and company's em-
ployees were utter strangers in the
place, and the majority of them, about
100, trusting to the stout walls of the
company's building, perished en masse.
—N. Y. Tribune.

Wrong Roads.

Many a man is on the wrong road
altogether with respect to his profession.
We have known an artist, whose voca-
tion was a linen-drafter, and more than
one tradesman with all his head and
heart in art, a very bad bargainer, but
a good judge of colors, and a capital
hand in dressing out a window; a so-
licitor, ground down to a desk, whose
native road laid along the seaboard,
and between the storm and the flood;
a clergyman, who would have been more
at home in a carpenter's shop, than in
the pulpit; and an actress, whose beau
ideal of human life was a farm-house
down in the country, where she might
feed her ducks and chickens herself,
and superintend the dairy and the
baking. Now all these people were on
the wrong road in life, consequently
they could never cultivate their hedge
side properly, but were forced to be con-
tent with pignuts and blackberries, and
anything else that came handy by the
grace of nature; never able to raise a
bushel of grain for Harvest time, or to
gather their own apples for storage. If
they had been on the right track for
each, they might have cultivated every
square foot of their portions and then
the world would have had so much ad-
ded harmony between character and
circumstance, and so much more faith-
ful work heartily performed.

Russia has issued an order reorgan-
izing her army, which in substance
enrols as soldiers all her adult male
population capable of bearing arms.

THE WOOL TRADE.

Some time ago Donald McLennan,
the Manager of the San Francisco
Mission Woolen Mills, and of the Pa-
cific Knitting Factory, went to Aus-
tralia to buy wool for manufacturing
uses, and recent dispatches state that
he, and others who went upon a simi-
lar mission, lately returned, after
having brought over a million dollars
worth of the article in that market.
This is a matter which must force
itself upon the consideration of wool
growers and manufacturers and dealers
in the staple in Oregon as well as Cali-
fornia. It is of especial interest to
Oregon in the particular case before
us, for we learn that of this great quan-
tity of Australian wool now on the
way, fifty thousand pounds is destined
for the Oregon City Woolen Mills.

When we come to investigate the
subject, it seems more surprising than
on first view that wool can be imported
from so distant a port as Australia to a
new country like this Pacific Coast,
where sheep thrive so very well, and
where the wool is of such general good
quality, with advantage or profit to the
importers. In the first place, the duty
on raw wool is excessive. The quality
of wool now on the way from Australia
has to pay a specific duty of ten cents
per pound, and also an ad valorem duty
of eleven per cent. [on the value at the
place of export], and in addition to this
there are freight and other expenses.

Wool is now quoted at from twenty-
eight to thirty cents per pound in this
market. Of course to import wool from
Australia here, the importer must have
in his favor such a buying price in that
market as will enable him to make a
profit over and above duties, freight,
and charges of every kind. He must
likewise be assured that his imported
wool is as good as the home product, or
better, if possible. To make an estimate
on this basis, we will compute the
duty on wool from Australia at say
twelve cents per pound, and for freight-
age and expenses of every kind say two
cents per pound, or a total of fourteen
cents. Accept the lowest wool quota-
tion in the home market as the safest
for an estimate—twenty eight cents per
pound—and from this deduct the sum
of duties and other charges on the im-
ported wool, and we have just fourteen
cents per pound left as the highest
possible rate the importer could have
paid for it in the Australian market.

But these figures will give barely, if
any, margin for profit, to say nothing of
risks and some other incidental matters
not computed in the estimate we have
just made. The likelihood is that the
parties who have made these large pur-
chases of wool in Australia had first
ascertained that they could purchase
there at a figure so much below the
price here as to warrant them in all
they have undertaken in connection
with this operation. We hear from a
source entitled to credence that good
wool can be bought there at from eight
to eleven cents per pound, and the
finer qualities at from ten to fifteen
cents per pound. At such prices it is
easy to discern that the importer in
either California or Oregon can buy in
Australia rather than at home, and re-
alize quite handsomely by the transac-
tion. The question with our wool
growers must therefore be, whether
they can or cannot compete with the
wool growers of Australia—in price, as
well as the quality of the wool. It is
the question which they will have to
decide, and the sooner the better.

We have it from a large dealer in
wool that one cause for the importa-
tion of this wool from Australia is the
lack of wool sufficiently fine in the
home market. Our informant says that
the Oregon wool is becoming so graded
down into coarseness, that much of it
is unsuited to the manufacturing wants
of the State, and hence it has to be
culled and sent to the Atlantic mar-
kets, where the coarsest qualities are
worked to a much better advantage
than here. The grade known as comb-
ing wool is not wrought up in the Ore-
gon factories, and too much of the Ore-
gon wool is of this grade. A finer wool
is here required, and as the home mar-
ket fails to furnish it, the factory own-
ers have to send abroad for it, and the
Australian wool is the best and cheap-
est for this purpose.

Whatever may be the causes for this
condition of things we shall not un-
dertake to say—whether it is true that our
wool growers cannot successfully com-
pete with the wool growers of Aus-
tralia, or whether that wool is better
suited to the requirements of our fac-
tories than the Oregon wool. These
are questions, we say, for the wool
growers of this State to determine for
themselves. It is important, however,
that they should give the matter their
earnest attention.—Bulletin.

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