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THE GREAT HORROR.

Eye-Witnesses Tell Their Stories in the Oregonian.

The first refugees from devastated San Francisco arrived over the Southern Pacific delayed train last night. The four who were lucky enough to escape the horrible scenes which followed the great earthquake told enough of the disaster after the first shocks to turn one to horror.

Henry Hahn, manager of Wadhams & Co., occupied a room on the second floor of the Palace. He was awakened by the first shock and found himself covered with plaster and broken glass, but escaped without a scratch.

I will never forget that horrible grating sound when the building swayed and rocked like a tall tree in a storm. It was something awful, and I can hear it yet. I was awakened by the first shock and immediately the plaster began to fall. The bureau and bed were shifted almost to the middle of the room, and while I did not seem to realize that I was in great danger, I got out of the room when the second, third and fourth shocks followed, although they were less severe. Everything was excitement in the corridors, and the darkness made it difficult to find the exits.

"The damage in the building, however, was nothing compared to the scenes that met our eyes upon reaching the street. Great heaps of bricks and timbers were strewn about to the middle of the pavements, and it was impossible to get away except by taking the middle of the streets. The firemen responded promptly and were in the midst of the business district almost as quickly as we got out of the hotel, but it soon became apparent that they were helpless, the water-mains having burst from the sway of the ground. In some places the streets had sunk to a depth of a foot or more. Some water was pumped from the bay, but it availed nothing against the many fires that were springing up everywhere. I am certain that within half an hour 20 of the fallen structures were ablaze and that was only so far as I could see.

"I saw only two bodies, one was lying on the sidewalk and another under timbers in a fallen building. Many maimed and crippled were rushing about the streets, apparently dazed and not knowing in what direction to seek relief.

"The most salient features have been told, but one thing proved was that the modern steel structures stood the strain well, and I do not believe the result would have been so terrible had it not been for the large number of small and old structures in the business district. They could not withstand the terrible rocking and fell like so many card houses. The immense Monadnock building was rent in two from top to bottom, but it remained standing.

"I do not believe that the loss of life will be so great as has been estimated, although they may have found many pinioned under the debris after the flames got in their work. There were any number of dead horses on the streets when we tried to reach the ferry. They belonged to hawkers, who are out early in the mornings and they had been crushed by the crumbling walls. What became of their owners I do not know, but I suppose they saw the danger and escaped.

"We had an awful time getting to the ferry. The streets were soon blocked and the only way to reach Washington-street pier was by taking a circuitous route. I crossed on the first boat and the rush was not as frantic

as later on. With no water on hand it soon became apparent that the firemen were incapable of checking the fire and they resorted to dynamite while we were waiting for the departure of the ferry boat. The situation looked very gloomy, and I began to realize that San Francisco's great commercial district was doomed."

H. K. Dent, a traveling man from Seattle, formerly of Portland, one fortunate enough to get out of San Francisco, occupied a room in the now destroyed Palace Hotel. He said last night: "I was awakened from a sound sleep by the most terrific shock that could be imagined. Plaster from the ceiling fell like rain and it seemed as if the entire building would collapse. Oh, the entire scene beggars description," he continued.

"People rushed to the great corridor below, some scantily attired, some in pajamas, and even others not that well clothed. In the lobby everything was confusion. Women and children, who carried wearing apparel in their arms, commenced to clothe themselves, but hardly any attention was paid to any of them. It looked like everyone for himself. After the first few minutes everyone was apparently aware of what had happened and the wildest confusion followed.

"Among the hundreds that were quartered in the Palace Hotel were members of the Concord Opera Company, all of whom seemed more panic-stricken than others. I could not understand exactly what was said, as they spoke in French, but if gesticulations could speak I could come pretty near guessing every word that passed between them. The men and women of the company were rushing about the lobby in their night clothing, gesticulating wildly, rushing up to first one and the other, apparently not knowing which way to turn or what to do.

"When I had got a few personal possessions together and reached the streets the sight was horrible. Several of the dead were stretched out on the streets, the sidewalks were torn up in places, the streets seemed to be barricaded with huge piles of debris, and live electric wires were hanging down everywhere.

"A regular panic seemed to have taken hold of every one, and men and women were wandering around, disregarding the falling stones, in a dazed manner. The greatest amount of damage at that time appeared to be in the downtown districts and along the water front. I believe that hundreds of people lost their lives, especially those who lived in the tenement district. These buildings collapsed like eggshells. I noticed one woman apparently more than 80 years old, crawling along the sidewalk with blood streaming from her head and her clothing almost torn from her body. This is only one of the numerous scenes that I observed while on my way to the ferry.

"Policemen, however, worked like beavers. Automobiles could be seen on every hand, conveying injured persons to the hospitals. Every sort of vehicle was pressed into service to carry the dead and injured away. At many places I had to pick my way over heaps of rubbish, over uprooted poles and around live wires, in order to get to the ferry. I reached the ferry when the third and last load of passengers was crossing to Oakland. I learned that the first boat crossed contained more than 50 persons,

the second not more than 200, but the third and last boat that was allowed by the authorities to leave for Oakland was loaded to the rails. When the extent of the catastrophe was realized, people by the hundreds tried to get out of the city, but their escape was shut off.

"Before I left the city I believe that I could have counted more than a score of fires, which seemed to break out in every direction. A small blaze, not larger than a hat, would appear in the lower floor of a frame building, and in an instant the structure would be a mass of fire. Everything appeared to burn like tinder and I am not surprised to learn that fire devastated the entire city.

Fred A. Kribs, the well-known lumberman, was in San Francisco the night before the earthquake, but went up to Sacramento, and was there when the series of shocks occurred that wrought such havoc. He caught the northbound train at Davisville, and reached here last night.

"I was at the Capital Hotel in Sacramento," said Mr. Kribs, in describing the matter after his arrival, "and was aroused from my slumbers by the awful din and confusion incident to the shocks. Of course it was no comparison to what they experienced in San Francisco, but it was certainly bad enough.

"The Federal building, at Seventh and K streets, in which are located the post-office, land office and internal revenue office, was badly damaged, and other structures throughout the city were more or less injured. The dome of the Catholic Cathedral, which looms up above that of the State Capital building, swayed and shook like a reed, and everybody expected it to fall at any moment.

"The reports from San Francisco aroused intense excitement in Sacramento, the two places being closely identified by commercial and social ties. When I left in the afternoon of Wednesday they were already discussing the feasibility of circulating a regular petition, and I know they will come through all right in that respect. I feel proud of Portland for what she has done in this direction, and you can count on me for a good subscription.

"On the train coming up I met several persons who were in the midst of the earthquake in San Francisco, all of whom gave graphic accounts of their experiences. A traveling man named Wilkinson told me that looking up Market street from the ferry building it seemed as if the car tracks had been twisted by some gigantic human process, and practically every building on each side of thoroughfare as far as the eye could reach was out of plumb in some way.

"Along Kearney street, he said the ground appeared sunken in spots, indicating that it must have settled badly, although far-removed from the filled-in district."

"I am sure the building rocked several feet," said John Bentley, who with his wife and two children were staying in the Winchester Hotel, on Third near Market street. "We were almost thrown out of our beds, and then there came a shower of plaster and window glass. We rushed out after having dressed hurriedly and found things in a terrible condition. Debris everywhere. Dead horses here and corpses of men there. The police called every passing vehicle into service and we saw wagon loads of dead being hauled away. One automobile had bodies piled up like cordwood.

"We were on the last ferry to leave the city, and it nearly careened on account of the throng. In reaching the other side of the bay, some women were pushed into the water, but I believe they were rescued.

"The excitement was terrible.

We arrived in San Francisco the night before from Iowa, and knew little about the city.

"Hundreds upon hundreds must have been killed in San Francisco by the falling buildings and I do not think the report that full 2000 persons lost their lives is exaggerated."

Such was the statement by E. S. Brayman arrived at the Hotel Portland and when it became known that he had passed through part of the terrible catastrophe which has befallen the unfortunate city he was immediately surrounded by a large crowd of San Franciscans, who listened several hours to his narration of the frightful scenes that were enacted.

"I saw only two bodies, but I saw on my way to the ferry acres of frame tenement buildings which had collapsed, undoubtedly killing hundreds of persons," said he. "The horror of the scene is indescribable. I was in San Francisco less than an hour after the first shock, but I must have seen a hundred or more fires which were raging in every part of the city.

"I had a room on the fourth floor of the Occidental Hotel, and was lying in bed awake when the first shock came. When I felt the building tremble I jumped from my bed and opened the door of the room. I stood in the open door, where I was sheltered from the falling plaster. The shock lasted fully two minutes, and I only managed to remain on my feet by holding on with all my strength to the sides of the doorway. Later other guests told me that they were thrown to the floor several times during the shock, and that it was absolutely impossible for them to remain on their feet without holding on to something."

San Francisco, April 20—Fourteen men were killed last night while attempting to rob the vaults of the Mint. The ruins of the treasure house were being guarded by soldiers. A mob tried to reach the vaults containing millions of dollars, and were shot down by the soldiers. In the midst of the battle, which drew up soldiers and policemen, Officer Joseph Myers was run through the body with a bayonet.

Before the fire Wednesday was half a dozen hours old Mayor Schmitz gave explicit instructions to every person doing guard or patrol duty to shoot without warning whoever they might see robbing or looting. Prior to last night's bloody work, four men had been shot down in their tracks. The attempt last evening to rob the Mint was well planned beforehand. The building is a mass of wreckage, and the monster vaults stood out in bold relief in the mass of debris.

The knowledge that the steel strong boxes contained millions in coin and bullion was the incentive of the mob to try and rob them, but the soldiers were true to their duty, and shot down the would-be robbers without mercy.

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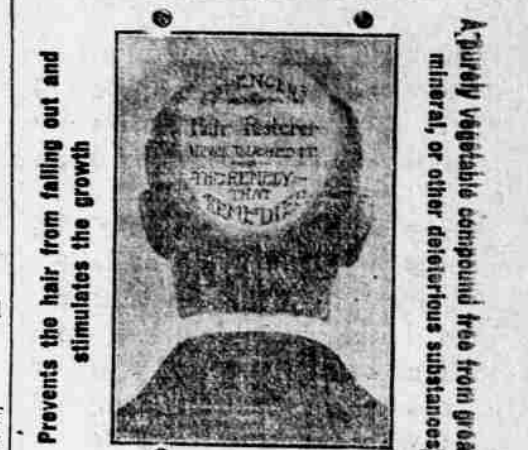
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