

A DESCRIPTION OF THE BURNING

their wives and families got together at the street sides their portable possessions. All efforts were of no avail. William Campbell's builders' supply store caught fire early in the evening. It was a wooden building erected as a shed after the great fire of '46, and, being filled with inflammable materials—paints, oils, tar, &c.,—did not stand above a few minutes. One after another the houses and stores on Water-street took fire from the burning brands which were flying through the air. Before nine o'clock the walls of James Baird's liquor and grocery store tumbled in and just after, the extensive warehouses of George Knowling were seized by the devouring flames. The first part of this premises to take fire was a warehouse at the rear, which Mr. Knowling was having enlarged to meet the growing requirements of his trade. Carpenters had been working there that day and had left their tools in the building, little thinking, that when they returned in the morning, the whole place would be a smoking ruin. The flames spread rapidly from the burning warehouses to the dry goods store fronting on Water-street when it was seen that the whole premises were doomed. Costly silks, and satins were regarded no more than the cheapest cottons, and people rushed to take freely what they pleased. The stock destroyed on this premises alone amounted to over \$160,000. Quicker and quicker the flames advanced gaining strength and power with every foot; the solid masses of flame, sweeping piteously through the streets, soon formed an impassable barrier. With the strength of desperation the unfortunate people fought till the last moment, and it was only by the sacrifice of their burdens that many of them were saved, while the crash of falling chimneys and walls was as the sound of a mighty bombardment.

Like the line of march of a retreating army the thoroughfares were filled with goods, abandoned because of impossibility of conveyance, and fabulous sums were offered for carts and vehicles. All the arteries which led from the water to the higher portions of the town were crowded with the terrorised mob, and the screams and cries of the women mingled, with the wailing of children, the shouts of men and the trampling of animals, the whole being intensified by the ever-freshening mass of livid fire and the glare of the burning buildings, contributed to make a scene, the like of which it is not often given to the lot of