

ST. JOHNS, Newfoundland, Nov. 25.

Another Dreadful Fire!!

We have this day to discharge the melancholy office of presenting to our readers an account of another dreadful Fire with which this Town has been again afflicted.—The ruins left by the fire of the 7th inst. were still smoking; and the minds of the public were not yet recovered from their extreme agitation, when they beheld the Town again enveloped in the same destructive element, the ravages of which they had so lately witnessed.—Soon after three o'clock on Friday morning last the Inhabitants were roused from their slumbers by the dreadful alarm of Fire.—The effect of such an alarm (rendered more serious by our having so recently experienced it) may perhaps be conceived, but cannot be adequately described. It was soon discovered that the premises of Messrs. Huie, Reed, & Co. were in one entire blaze—they were indeed nearly consumed before the Engines could be brought into action.—In the mean time the flames made dreadful progress.—Although there was but little wind, yet the narrowness of the street in front, the combustible matter in the rear, and the close connexion of the houses right and left, not only made the destruction of the range inevitable, but threatened to reduce the whole western part of the town to one general mass of ruins. The flames ascending with a strength and steadiness not easily overpowered, seemed to defy all the powerful exertions of the Engines, with every means used to check their progress.

It was with extreme satisfaction that we beheld all ranks laudibly active in direction and personal exertion, by which means the ravages of the fire were most providentially prevented from extending beyond the premises of Messrs. Murphy & Gleeson.—From these premises the Fire pursuing its way to the Eastward, has left nothing standing as far as the Governor's wharf, on the lower side of Water street; and from Mr. Benjamin Bowring's to the house of Messrs. Perkins & Winter, on the upper side.—Fifty-five dwelling-houses are thus consumed, together with the extensive pile of Buildings belonging to Messrs. Cunningham, Bell & Co.—the Stores of Huie, Reed & Co. Ryan & Sons. Daniel Ryan. Geo. Lilly. John Burke. Robert Nevins, (late Murphy & Gleeson's), James Clift, and all the intermediate houses. Upwards of five hundred persons are reduced to the necessity of seeking shelter in some other quarter from the inclemency of an approaching winter.

It is in vain to attempt a description of the scenes of horror with which our eyes were assailed—a broad glare of light

shining over the town—the cracking of the flames—the falling of the roofs—the cries and lamentations of the sufferers—all combined to present an awfully magnificent spectacle. The rising sun itself, cheering as its beams usually are, seemed, when viewed through the clouds of smoke, to present an aspect, rather terrific and melancholy, than enlivening. The morning was beautifully clear and serene, but perhaps, never before did such a day dawn on St. John's.

It was by the most unremitting and strenuous exertion, aided by a happy shift of the wind, that about ten o'clock in the forenoon the premises of Messrs. Perkins & Winter, with the buildings leading up the Church-hill, were preserved. No less great, and happily as successful, were the exertions used in saving that part of the premises of Messrs. Trimmings & Co. which so narrowly escaped the fire of the 7th.

When we observe it is calculated that by the Fire of the 21st, Property to the amount of not less than One hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds is destroyed; that this catastrophe occurred in the short space of a fortnight after a still more destructive conflagration, we shall be believed when we state, that a great proportion of the community must be involved in extreme distress!—whilst, however, we lament the recent melancholy events, we earnestly hope, that the most decisive precautionary measures will be adopted to guard against their recurrence. As public Journalists, it is perhaps rather our duty to record than to advise—yet we cannot refrain from most earnestly beseeching all masters of families to be extremely vigilant in watching over the different fires and lights in their premises. Between mere accident and even culpable carelessness, we would wish to preserve the distinction, and yet we may be permitted to say, that that carelessness cannot be otherwise than censurable which endangers the property, the habitations, the very lives of hundreds. Watchfulness, regular and ceaseless watchfulness is loudly called for from the inhabitants of a town like this, constructed of wood, and in which a fire produces such terrible effects.—Old proverbs are sometimes mere common-place expressions; but there is one which the inhabitants of St. John's ought never to forget, the recollection of which ought to produce extreme vigilance in every family—that *though fire is a good servant, it is a bad master.*

About ten o'clock this forenoon, we were again alarmed by the cry of Fire, which had nearly proved of as serious import as either of the others which have so recently occurred. It was however fortunately discovered in sufficient time

to prevent those consequences which otherwise might have ensued. On investigation it appeared to proceed from a room in the lower part of a house situated between Duckworth and Water Streets, opposite the upper premises of Messrs. Dunscomb & Co.—A quantity of shavings were in the room, apparently intended to answer the purpose of a bed. Part of the ceiling and a bedstead in the room were on fire when first discovered; and as some small brands were found among the shavings, strong suspicions of designs were excited. In consequence of which a woman who was making her way through one of the windows, was immediately apprehended, and with a man who appeared to be her companion, is now in custody. A close investigation will no doubt be instituted, the result of which we shall take an early opportunity of laying before the public.

The late Fire!

It is perhaps needless to inform our readers, that various conjectures have been entertained relative to the cause of the Fire of the 21st. The public has certainly been full of anxiety on the subject. The situation of the place, in which the flames originated—the hour at which they were first discovered—the short interval of time which had elapsed since the conflagration of the 7th, with other circumstances, had combined to excite in the minds of many persons the most unpleasant suspicion that the dreadful causes of our late alarm, was the result of *design*.—In consequence the Grand Jury was convened, and after a long and full investigation into the subject, came to the following resolution, which we lay before our readers with the most lively emotions of satisfaction, in hopes that it will remove every unfavorable impression, by which their minds may have been hitherto agitated.

Court-House, St. Johns,

November 24th, 1817.

The Grand Jury having duly considered the Evidence laid before them respecting the late Fire, which happened on the morning of the 21st inst. have the satisfaction to state, that they are unanimously of opinion, that the Fire originated solely through accident, and therefore, they beg to recommend that publicity may be given to the result of this Investigation, in order that every unfavorable impression on the subject, may be removed from the Public mind.

DAVID TASKER, Foreman.

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