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Gasolene the Culprit. The explosion of tanks of gasolene stored in the Hurst building, Baltimore, where the great fire originated, is stated to have been the cause of it spreading so rapidly to other buildings. Most of the buildings burnt are said to have been old and out of date in construction, so they offered no resistance, but merely fuel to the flames.

Great Fires in United States. The following schedule showing location, date and extent of the principal conflagrations in the United States, since 1800, appears in "The Standard:"

New York City	Dec. 16, 1835	530 buildings	\$15,000,000
Charleston, S.C.	April 27, 1838	1,158 buildings	5,000,000
New York City	June 20, 1845	300 buildings	6,000,000
Pittsburg, Pa.	April 10, 1845	1,100 buildings	10,000,000
San Francisco, Cal.	May 3, 1851	2,500 buildings	5,000,000
Sacramento, Cal.	Nov. 12, 1862	general	10,000,000
Charleston, S.C.	Dec. 11, 1861	general	7,000,000
Portland, Me.	July 4, 1866	1,743 buildings	10,000,000
Chicago, Ill.	Oct. 8, 1871	2,124 acres	190,000,000
Boston, Mass.	Nov. 9, 1872	65 acres	80,000,000
Seattle, Wash.	June 6, 1889	general	6,600,000
Spokane, Wash.	Aug. 4, 1889	general	5,000,000
Lynn, Mass.	Nov. 26, 1889	factories, etc.	5,000,000
Milwaukee, Wis.	Oct. 28, 1892	230 buildings	5,000,000
Hoboken, N.J.	June 30, 1900	vessels and docks	5,000,000
Jacksonville, Fla.	May 3, 1901	130 blocks	10,000,000
Paterson, N.J.	Feb. 9, 1902	400 buildings	10,000,000
Baltimore, Md.	Feb. 7, 1904	140 acres	40,000,000

An Ungenerous and Uncalled-for Slur on British Companies. An American fire insurance company has published an advertisement, in which it says, in display type: "The— Company does not have to cable to any foreign company for assistance in times of trouble."

The New York "Commercial Bulletin" censures this announcement as showing "a lack of consideration." Under existing circumstances, and remem-

bering what British companies have done in the past to protect American property-owners from loss by conflagrations, the above slur upon them is very ungenerous and uncalled for. The company in question might also have reflected that when a foreign company cables its representatives on this side, there must be the necessary funds here, or credit equal to the funds required to honour the cable.

Fire-proof Buildings at Baltimore.

The conflagration at Baltimore is the first of any magnitude since the system of steel, skeleton construction came into general use.

How did this class of building withstand the intense heat is a question of intense interest. Several of our American contemporaries report that on the steel girders and uprights being tested in a number of wrecked structures, they were found to have suffered so little that they are to be retained, and again built upon and around. The "Spectator" says:—

"So-called 'fire-proof' buildings received a severe test at Baltimore, and several of them emerged from the trial practically uninjured. A few so successfully resisted the fire that the only internal evidence that they had been attacked was an accumulation of dust. Others had yielded an entrance to the fire, but are still believed to be structurally intact. The experience at Baltimore does not depreciate the value of so-called fire-proof construction, but merely emphasizes the necessity for all buildings being built upon the best fire-resisting principles; for, if this had been the case at Baltimore, the fire might have been restricted to the building in which it started, or would have soon died for lack of material outside of that building."

Our contemporary states that Baltimore was inadequately provided with fire-fighting apparatus, and was compelled to call for assistance from other cities."