

have them burn up before their eyes. A few saved a little bedding and some clothes, but the majority escaped only with what they had on or could carry in their arms.

Within three hours after the fire started the whole town was a mass of flames. The fire burned fiercely against the wind and spread in every direction until only seven houses were left standing.

I had been out of town for a few days, but returned shortly after the fire began. I had been planning to spend the night at the home of some friends near the station. To my surprise I found the house still standing although in imminent danger of catching at any moment. Without delay I went to work fighting fire. For three hours we worked steadily, carrying water and pouring it upon the sides of both house and barn; running inside at intervals to extinguish a fire here and there, and tearing up planks at different corners of the house from which smoke would persist in coming. So exciting was the work that we lost all track of time and did not even know that we were tired. It seemed as though all the interest in that part of the town was centered around that one house. Being nearest the fire it was in the greatest danger of catching; could we have saved it, doubtless all the houses on the back street would have been saved.

A man from one of the back settlements had driven into town with a load of hay. He heard that the bar-rooms in town were giving away their stock to all who would take it, so he drove into a yard just back of where we were working, and unharnessed his horse, leaving the load of hay in the yard. Just at the time we thought we were free from danger a spark dropped in the hay and it burned like powder. Great bunches of it were carried everywhere by the wind, and we saw that it was impossible to save the house. So we made an effort to save some of the furniture, and succeeded in saving the greater part.

Finally we were warned to leave before the fire hemmed us in. As I was leaving I noticed a light in the carriage-shed and ran in with a pail of water; when I started out I found that the wind had closed the big door and a loose plank had sprung up from the outside, fastening the door in such a manner that it could not be opened from the inside. All the other doors were fastened on the outside with wooden buttons. The building was a long one and the fire soon burned through one end. Gradually it spread up the side until it reached a door. By this time the smoke was suffocating; the heat was intense; my coat was scorched in several places; on every side the lapping tongues of fire