PHILADELPHIA, MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1861.

THE FIRE IN CHARLESTON, S. C.,

SHOWING THE BURNT DISTRICT, DECEMBER 10TH AND 11TH, 1861

THE FIRE IN CHARLESTON.

Charleston is the largest city in South Carolina, and is built on a peninsula or tongue of land between the Ashley and Cooper rivers, which unite below the town and form a spacious harbor, communicating with the ocean at Sullivan's Island, seven miles distant. Cooper and Ashley rivers are from thirty to forty feet deep—Cooper being 1400 yards wide, and Ashley 2100. The city is regularly built, and extends nearly two miles in length and a mile and a half in breadth. Some of the streets are from sixty to seventy feet broad, and some are narrow—for instance, King street, the Broadway of Charleston. Many of the houses are built of brick and in a style of elegance, particularly around the Battery; but a large number are of wood, some of them neatly painted, but more of them very dingy, and inhabited by the negroes.

The streets run mostly parallel to each other, running across from river to river, and intersected longitudinally nearly at right angles. They are shaded with the Pride of India and other beautiful trees. Several of the houses are embowered in a profusion of foliage and flowers. Many of the dwellings have piazzas and are ornamented with vines and creepers, while the gardens attached to them bloom with the orange, the peach and other trees, and shrubs in great variety.

The population in 1860 was 42,985, of which 14,002 were slaves.

The chief exports are cotton and rice. The average crop of Sea Island cotton in South Carolina is 22,000 to 23,000 bales, about two-thirds of which come to Charleston, the remainder to Savannah

The rice crop of the State is 120,000 tierces, of which Charleston receives nearly all. In 1854 Charleston exported 24,701 bales of Sea Island cotton, 403,278 bales of upland cotton, 225,054 bushels of rough rice, about as much cleaned rice and 32,844,600 feet of lumber. Charleston exported more rice than any other city in the Union, and was surpassed only by New Orleans and Mobile in the exportation of cotton.

The great extent of railroads that open communication with the interior afford Charleston superior advantages for inland trade.

The city of Charleston is one of the oldest in the United States, having been founded in 1672. Its population was recruited some years afterward[illegible] Huguenot refugees who emigrated from F[illegible]ce and settled in considerable numbers in So[illegible]th Carolina. From this stock many of the fi[illegible] families of the region now claim to be de[illegible]. It was not till 1783 that it was inco[illegible]orated as a city. Fifty two years previously [illegible] in 1731, it contained six hundred houses and [illegible]ve churches, and a thriving business [illegible]one in its port. During the Revolutionary war the possession of the harbor of Charleston was the object of more than one British expedition. A garrison of 500 on Sullivan's Island, under command of Colonel Moultrie, achieved great distinction by the repulse, on 28th June, 1776, of a British squadron of nine ships of war.

On the 12th of May, 1780, the city was surrendered to Sir Henry Clinton by General Lincoln, the Corporation and principal inhabitants refusing to cooperate in its defence and offering to acknowledge the sovereignty of Great Britain. The British held it till May, 1782. It contains some thirty churches, a theatre, several excellent hotels, cotton presses and factories, engine and machine factories, ship-yards and a large dry dock. It has suffered greater disasters by fire than almost any other city in the United States. In 1778, there were 242 houses consumed; in 1796, nearly a third of the city was destroyed, involving loss of property to the amount of $2,500,000. Again, in the great fire of 1838, the loss was estimated at $6,000,000.

THE BURNT DISTRICT.

This portion of Charleston comprises the most compact and all the business parts of the city, except some wholesale houses northward. Nearly all the public buildings were consumed; and, should the fire extend in the direction in which it was moving at last accounts, it would sweep all the fashionable residences down to Ashley river. It appears that the docks and warehouses along the Cooper river had not been touched, owing to the wind blowing from that direction. But the fire had crossed the eastern side of Broad street, and should it proceed in that direction the destruction would be immense, as very many of the buildings are frame in that quarter.

The city generally contains so many frame buildings as to partly account for the extensive nature of the conflagration. The high wind did the rest—Among the buildings included in the burnt district are *two iron foundries, one of them lately employed in the manufacture of cannon, and the other in making cannon balls and shells.* Several churches and nearly all the public buildings, banks and insurance offices became a prey to the flames. King street is the chief street of the city, and was the Broadway of Charleston, though not much improved in its buildings. Broad street was a very important street, containing newspaper offices, banks, insurance offices, stores, &c. There is no evidence of the fire having extended south of the Post Office, on Broad street.

East Bay street contained all the offices of the cotton factors and leading commission merchants. It is the nearest street to Cooper river, running parallel with it. The short streets which run down from it to the docks also contain important offices and warehouses. Meeting street contains the Mills House, Charleston Hotel, Institute Hall, the Market and the Theatre. The new or Charleston Theatre is simple and unpretending in its appearance, but quite commodious and well adapted to theatrical purposes. Meeting street presents many other fine public and private edifices, interspersed among many buildings of early date. Meeting and King are the longest streets in the city, running from the South Battery, north and northwesterly, through the entire length of Charleston.

In fact these and the adjoining streets comprised the very heart of the city, which is now burned out.

THE PROPERTY DESTROYED.

The following is a partial list of the buildings reported destroyed, with the names of the firms and merchants occupying the business portion of them:

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Charleston Theatre, Meeting street; Institute Hall, Meeting street; Hibernian Hall, Meeting street; St. Andrew's Hall, Broad street; Market Buildings, Market street; Catholic Cathedral, Broad street; Circular Church, Meeting street.

BANKS, SAVINGS INSTITUTIONS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES

Bank of Charleston, Broad street; Bank of South Carolina, Broad street; Union Bank, East Bay; Planters' and Mechanics' Bank, East Bay; South-western Railroad Bank, Broad street; Farmers' and Exchange Bank, East Bay; Bank of the State of South Carolina, Broad street; Charleston Savings Institution, Meeting street; Palmetto Savings Institution, Meeting street; Charleston Insurance and Trust Company, Broad street; South Carolina Insurance Company, East Bay; Fire Insurance Company, Broad street; Ashley Insurance Company, Broad street.

HOTELS.

Mills House, Meeting street; Charleston Hotel, Meeting street; Planters' Hotel, State street.

NEWSPAPER OFFICES.

Charleston *Mercury* office, Broad street; Charleston Courier office, East Bay.

MERCANTILE HOUSES.

Stevenson & Co., drugs, No. 23 Hayne street; W. N. Hughes, books, 67 Meeting street; S. G. Courtney, stationery, 3 Broad street; J. Asmussen & Co., drugs, Hayne street; Williams & Price, hardware, Hayne street; Courtney & Tennent, hardware, Hayne street; Egleston & Co., clothing, Hayne street; J. S. & L. Rowe & Co., dry goods, Meeting street; James H. Taylor, insurance, Broad street; Crane, Burgheim & Co., dry goods, Meeting street; Hamilton & Smith, groceries, Market street; T. M. Coter, groceries, Vendue range; Tobias & Co., commission merchants, East Bay; J. E. Adger & Co., hardware, East Bay; Horsey, Aiken & Co., hats, Hayne street; Street & Wheat, groceries, East Bay; Chafee, Cegill & Chafee, grocers, East Bay; Jeffords & Co., groceries, East Bay; Hayne & Tate, West India goods, East Bay; C. W. Williams & Co., groceries, Hayne street; Z. B. Oakes, groceries, State street; Webb & Sage, crockery, Meeting street; A. S. Hull & Co., tailors, Meeting street; E. B. Stoddard & Co., shoes, Meeting street; Horton & Shepherd, stoves, Meeting street; Adams & Damon, stoves, Broad street; Cadow, McKenzie & Co., dry goods, East Bay; Pierson, Smith & Co., clothing, Hayne street; Cameron & Co., iron founders, Hazel street; Blunck, Wickenberg & Co., groceries, Broad street; Hyde, Gragg & Day, & Co., groceries, Broad street; Dupuis, Tait & Co., hardware, Meeting street; Dewing, Weaver & Co., fancy goods, Meeting street; Bowen, Porter & Co., straw goods, Meeting street; Jennings, Tomlinson & Co., clothing, Meeting street; D. F. Fleming & Co. hats, Hayne st; Hyatt, Mulvaine & Co., dry goods, Hayne st; D. Fanning & Co., hats, Hayne street; Wildron, Egleston & Co., clothing, Hayne street; Force & Mitchell, shoes, Hayne street; Nelson, Carter, drugs, Hayne street; Gilliland, Howell & Co., dry goods, Hayne street; Hamilton & Walton, shoes, Meeting street; H. T. Strobecker, hardware, Meeting street; Marshall, Burge & Co., fancy goods, Meeting street; Farrar, Birx & Co., groceries, East Bay; Edgerton, Richards & Co., tailors, Broad street; C. D. Carr & Co., tailors, Broad street; Chamberlin, Miller & Co., dry goods, Hayne street; R. Douglass & Co., stables, Pritchey street; G. Pellin, groceries, Meeting street; Johnston, Crews & Co., dry goods, Hayne street; McCarter & Dussom, books, Meeting street; Walker, Evans & Co., stationery, Broad street.

MISCELLANEOUS SKETCHES.

The public market was situated in Market street, through the centre of which it extended from Meeting street to the river, a distance of about one-fourth of a mile. In its construction it resembles the famous market of Philadelphia, and was built with brick piers at intervals, over which the roof was thrown.

Institute Hall, or as it was familiarly known in Charleston, Seceders' Hall, was located in Meeting street, and was the headquarters of the Democratic Presidential Convention which met in that city in May, 1860.

St. Andrew's Hall was situated in Broad street, and was the head-quarters of Fernando Wood's secession in the days of the Convention.

Hibernian Hall was situated in Meeting street, and is famous as the spot where the South Carolina ordinance of secession was passed, in December, 1860. As the fountain head of the present rebellion, its destruction seems ominous to the Rebel cause.

The hotels destroyed were of brick, with stucco facings in imitation of stone. The Mills House—the largest in the State—was situated on Meeting street, and kept by Messrs. Stevenson & Pinckney. The Charleston Hotel, next in importance, was also in Meeting street, and kept by George G. Mixon. The Planters' Hotel (second class) was on State street.

The Catholic Cathedral, on Broad street, was a handsome edifice of brown stone.

The Circular Church, on Meeting street, was of brick, with stone front.

The Theatre was on Broad street, built of brick, and under the management of G. F. Manchart.

The iron foundry of Cameron & Co., recently used for the manufacture of shot, shell, &c., was on Hazel street, near its junction with East Bay, and was among the first buildings destroyed.

The Post Office and Custom House are located at the foot of Broad street, and on the eastern side of East Bay, so that it is probable they have escaped the fire, if not without damage, perhaps, from the house tops.

The City Hall and Court House are located at the corner of Meeting and Broad streets in a small park, similar to the City Hall Park of New York, and have most probably for that reason escaped destruction.

The office of Menendez & Co., agents of the Havana line of steamships, located at East Bay, and therefore escaped the flames without doubt. Menendez, it will be remembered, contributed the sum of $10,000 to the Rebel war finances.

In extent, the fire, so far as known, embraced a district of the city over one half a mile long by one-fourth wide.

We, the undersigned, employees of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company, do hereby agree to subscribe monthly the sums opposite our respective names hereunto of one dollar and upwards, to be invested in Government 7-30 per cent. Loan, during the continuance of the war, the interest which may accrue to be re-invested in the said loan; the whole investment—principal and interest—to be sold as soon after the termination of the war as a majority in interest of the subscribers shall desire to do, and the proceeds to be divided among us in proportion to the amounts and dates of our original subscriptions.

And we hereby direct that the same sums, so subscribed, shall be retained from our monthly pay to be paid over to the above Company, and that the President and Treasurer shall be the trustees thereof.

GOD SAVE THE UNION!

But give the signal, and the sun [illegible] heaven, and the powers of the Heavens shall be shaken."

That is our case to-day. The Almighty Empire shakes with the commotion of civil war—the sun of our national prosperity is darkened, the moon of social and civil peace has withdrawn her light, and our stars are falling from heaven. Secessionists and Rebels both betray and traverse—and the land is filled with wars and rumors of wars.

Our people are divided into two hosts, insurgents and loyalists, we the loyalists did not seek this war, for we knew what it would cost. They the insurgents forced it upon us—we had to accept it or stand supinely by and see the Government of our fathers destroyed—and see freedom throttled by the despotism—we are fighting for freedom—the insurgents are fighting in madness and hatred for the recognition of human bondage as the chief corner stone of civilization. That is their position in the world to-day. They may call it by what name they will, that is their principle when stripped of all disguise.

Can such an enormity finally succeed? Not if there is a God in heaven who governs the nations upon earth. Not till the distinctions of right and wrong have been wholly blotted from the face of the universe and God's divine law graven on the soul of man has been entirely obliterated. Were the whole army and all the munitions of the Government to be consumed to-day—nay, were the generation to be wasted in this conflict, another would immediately rise from its ashes to continue the contest. When Christ says "think not that I am come to send peace on earth—for it shall not be peace, but a sword, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." He foresaws us of the struggle between liberty and oppression, between light and darkness. When Christianity reigns, light and liberty prevail; when Christianity wanes, or is lost in any country, there will be darkness and despotism. In the South it does really begin to seem that the light of a pure Christianity is beginning to wane. The whole nation has been involved in its guilt, and therefore the whole nation suffers in its punishment.

It is said that the judgments of God are poured upon us for our sins. I acknowledge it. I believe it to be fearfully true. But I do not confess that the punishment of this people for our transgressions is the only, or even the chief object of the divine purpose in this war. I believe the object is to purify the nation, and to give the death blow to American Slavery on the American continent. I believe the object is to set more firmly and broadly than ever in this land the everlasting principles of truth and justice—of righteousness and peace—of law and order—of freedom and religion. And as God taught our fathers in the trials of the revolution the value and the cost of good government, so He is now teaching us and our children the same lesson on a grander scale and upon a higher platform. He is teaching us this lesson in the storms and convulsions of our political heavens. He is writing it for us in our blood. He is spelling it out letter by letter in our falling stars. The value and cost of good Government, Oh! what blood and treasure are demanded to preserve it to the generations. What noble and dear lives must be sacrificed, and yet there is nothing more noble, or more sacred than to die in a just cause for our country. To die bravely is far better than to live ignobly. Death is not half so dreadful to a generous and daunless spirit as a life of dishonor and degradation. Let us imbue ourselves with this spirit, and may God, the Giver of all good, baptize the mind of the whole nation into the sentiment which has borne martyrs and heroes through