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THE BALTIMORE FIRE

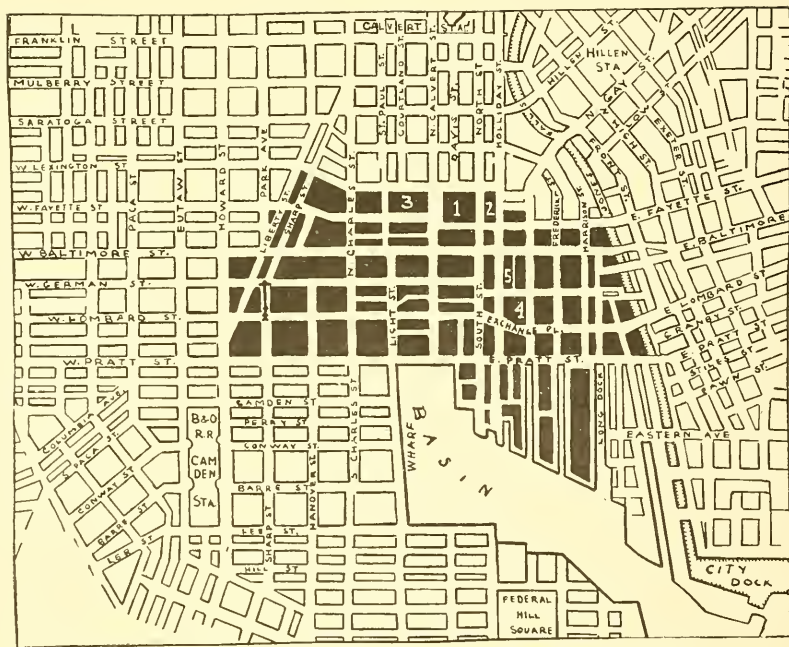
THROUGH A CAMERA

FEBRUARY 7TH, 8TH & 9TH 1904.



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Charles W. R. Ruseell
Baltimore, Md.

May 19, 1935



MAP SHOWING THE PORTION OF BALTIMORE DEVASTATED BY THE FIRE

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THE BALTIMORE FIRE

February 7th, 8th and 9th, 1904.

AS SEEN THROUGH A CAMERA.

By JACK HEMENT

The Famous Newspaper Artist and War Correspondent,

Designed and Published for the

ILLUSTRATED PRESS SYNDICATE, NEW YORK.

BY

THE A. B. BENESCH Co.,

Publishers, 116 Nassau Street, New York City.

JACK HEMENT.

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INTRODUCTORY.

EVENTS swift and portentous, marked the early portion of 1904. If a forecast may be made from the past and present happenings which have been crowded into the opening months of the year, it would appear there are still storms ahead. It is to be hoped, however, the period of stress has been passed and a season of bright days is to come.

War, pestilence, famine, fire, flood and destruction generally have of late ruled the world ruthlessly. Merciless have been the elements apparently to all humanity at large. And science, despite her wondrous march to a point where she stands awestruck at her own disclosures of the marvels of Nature's realms, finds herself still helpless, still unable to rule the elements of Fire, Air and Water. Yet science has pointed proudly to her achievements, to prove her sovereignty over these same elements. It is true that science has, to a degree, made Fire, Air and Water our servants, but, "lest we forget," we are taught now and again that science is not omnipotent and that our servants may become our masters.

One of these stern lessons was given us on Sunday, February 7th, when the City of Baltimore was desolated by fire. At this time, the City of Baltimore, its business section, presents a scene of ruin. Charred remnants of what were once goodly buildings, a confused mass of wreckage, lie piled high in gigantic heaps. All beauty of architecture blotted out, all identity lost; even though here and there may be seen portions of blackened walls rising above the chaos. One or two tall iron columns, once the supports of a noble structure, stand lonely and dismal. They are in the midst of destruction, as if

pointing upward, mute signals, that the fiery ordeal through which they have passed was due to causes beyond the ken of man. Baltimore is known as the Monumental City, but never in her history have her people gazed on monuments calling forth sadder memories than these relics of the fire that ravaged this fair southern city on Sunday, February 7th, 1904.

Many Lenten seasons has Baltimore passed thro', but none more gloomy than the one approaching. Seared deeply, her business interests lie in the ashes of her ruins. But her civic life has not been harmed, and tho' cast down Baltimore looks forward to her joyous Easter, to her hour of resurrection. She will emerge from the darkness and the shadows will disperse in the glorious light of an evening sun. She will wear a more beautiful aspect than before. From the ashes of a dead commercial centre will arise a more magnificent one.

The object of this book is to present in as sharp a form as possible what the Baltimore fire actually was; to make each reader also a spectator. This brief preface is written with a view of suggesting that salutary lessons can be drawn from the recent disaster. But it is not our province to make more than the passing reference already made concerning them. The pictures will point the moral to adorn the tale far better than any written words. It may not, however, be out of place to state, as briefly as may be, the cause and extent of the fire.

Flames were discovered shortly before 11 o'clock on the morning of Sunday, in the store of John E. Hurst & Co. at the southwest corner of Hopkins Place and German street. Before they were subdued nearly forty

city squares, including nearly 2,000 buildings had been crushed to ashes. Where large commercial enterprises occupied costly structures nothing remains but a mass of burnt and blistered brick, stone and marble, and a maze of tangled iron, steel and wire. A property loss estimated at over one hundred million dollars had resulted, and the business of the city was at a standstill. A sharp wind carried the fire south, east and west. Before midnight the local fire department had admitted its helplessness despite heroic effort, and appeals were made to Washington, Wilmington, Philadelphia, New York and the smaller cities nearer by. All those places responded promptly, but it was not until the fire had raged more than forty hours that the firemen were able to report it under control. During all those hours five thousand uniformed firemen, with from ten to twenty thousand volunteers, had done their best, but the flames were not to be denied. In twelve hours they had eaten a path through German street to Baltimore and Calvert streets, the Custom House was afire and the "Baltimore Sun" and the "Baltimore American" Buildings were in ruins. On went the flames, razing the squares bounded by Charles, Lexington, Lombard, Light, St. Paul and Howard streets. The firemen used dynamite freely in their attempts to check the progress of the defying element. The course of the sweeping flames was toward the warehouses and docks near Jones' Falls and the Basin. Hourly they spread, and hourly the catastrophe assumed greater proportion, as building after building crumbled in the heat.

The three million dollar Court House at Calvert and Fayette streets was saved, but the buildings of the Western Union, of the Baltimore & Ohio R.R., the Carrollton Hotel, the "Baltimore Herald" and the Custom House went down:—but the pictures will show the

destruction wrought in that forty hours of flame. A merciful dispensation of Providence had chosen Sunday, when the business buildings were practically unoccupied for the hour of devastation. But three lives were lost, and two of those were from accidents that might have occurred at any time. In the Iroquois Theatre fire in Chicago, where the fire lasted less than half an hour, more than six hundred lives were sacrificed.

The fire was subdued—its fury expended and its work done—at the triangular jut of land bordered on the east by Jones' Falls, and on the south and southwest by the Harbor Basin. When the smoke had cleared away and men were sufficiently calm to mark the damage done, it was seen that the flames, which had started at Hopkins Place, had been fanned north and northeast to West Lexington street by Sunday's southwest wind, and been carried back along and to the east of its path by the northwest winds of Sunday night and Monday morning. They had licked up square after square of the financial section, and then swung out toward the great wharfs of the Basin and the lumber yards along the Jones' Creek, two conditions alone governing:—the direction of the wind and the sustaining qualities of the buildings in their path.

An insurance map of the fire's progress shows the fire-swept section to be bounded on the north by West Lexington street and the north side of Lexington street; on the south by West Pratt street, the Basin and Eastern avenues; on the east by Liberty and North Howard streets; on the west by Jones' Falls, South High street, Albemarle street and East Falls avenue. An estimate made by the National Board of Fire underwriters gives seventy-two million dollars as the amount of the insurance loss.



Holiday street and Water street looking from Gay street, Chamber of Commerce Building in center.

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View from German and Hanover streets, wholesale business district, all buildings and contents totally destroyed for several blocks.



General view from corner of South Lombard street looking West, showing several very fine office and bank buildings completely destroyed.



General view from Gay street to St. Paul, showing all that remained of several large office and bank buildings.



Gener



Corner of Pratt and Light street, showing the firemen playing hose on a warehouse containing gun powder, and soldiers and police guarding the lines.



Savings Bank of Baltimore. Nothing left of building except the outside walls.



Harrison and Baltimore streets looking south. Remains in centre of picture was the Maryland Institute—School of Art and Design.





View along the water front and city wharfs.



Corner of Frederick and Water streets.



Looking from Gay street, southwest Calvert street. Continental Trust Company Building, "German Correspondent" and several bank buildings.





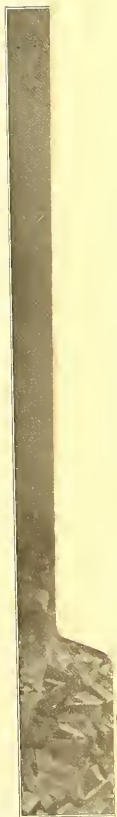
View from top of Monumental Theatre, corner Baltimore St. and Jones Falls Bridge, overlooking part of burned district.



Showing corners of German and Liberty streets and Hopkins place. All that is left of the large store of John E. Hurst & Co., the place where the fire started.



Exchange Place and Gay street looking North.



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From Hopkins Place looking southeast—Hopkins Savings Bank, National Exchange Bank, wholesale dry goods, shoe and clothing district.



Hopkins Place and Lombard street, the early seat of the fire.



From top of Monumental Theatre, corner of Baltimore street and Jones Falls bridge, overlooking burned district.





Looking northwest, Frederick, Water and Gay streets. New U. S. Custom House in right hand corner.



Looking southwest from South and Baltimore streets, "Baltimore Sun" building in center.



"The Baltimore American" and American Fire Insurance Company buildings.



Looking northwest from South street and Exchange Place towards Water street.



Looking West on Baltimore street from Jones Falls bridge, showing point where fire was stopped.



Church of the Messiah, corner of Gay and Fayette streets.





Looking north from Light and Lombard streets.



View from northeast corner Baltimore and South streets.



Interior view First National Bank, nothing left but the large vaults, which were proof against the intense heat, all securities were found in perfect condition.



Looking northwest from German and Light streets, bonded warehouses and wholesale whiskey district. All buildings totally destroyed.



Looking towards Baltimore and St. Paul streets. Carleton Hotel and several bank buildings, all totally destroyed.



First National, Continental and Farmers' National Bank.



View taken from Continental Trust Company Building, from South street looking northeast.



Banking house of Hambleton & Co. looking towards Baltimore & Ohio Central building.



National Bank of Commerce building and Firemen's Insurance building.



Corner of Hopkins Place and Lombard street, center of wholesale dry goods district. Everything destroyed for several blocks around.



From corner of Light and Pratt streets, police officers, secret service men and firemen guarding the line.



Wine Alley, looking north from German street.
View from Calvert and German streets.

Baltimore & Ohio Central Building.
North Brothers & Strauss factory.



View from corner of German and South streets looking Southwest.



Scenes during the fire showing the firemen at work, soldiers guarding the lines and fireman receiving hot coffee.

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