LINTHICUM RICHARD, FALLOWS SAMUEL, WHITE TRUMBULL

COMPLETE STORY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO HORROR

Samuel Fallows

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Fallows S.

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Содержание

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PREFACE

IN PRESENTING this history of the San Francisco Earthquake Horror and Conflagration to the public, the publishers can assure the reader that it is the most complete and authentic history of the great disaster published.

The publishers set out with the determination to produce a work that would leave no room for any other history on this subject, a task for which they had the best facilities and the most perfect equipment.

The question of cost was not taken into consideration. The publishers wanted the best writers, the best illustrations, the best paper, printing and binding and proceeded immediately to get them. The services of the two best historical writers in the United States were secured within an hour after the first news of the catastrophe was received. The names and historical works of Richard Linthicum and Trumbull White are known in every household in the United States where current history is read. They are the authors of many standard works, including histories of recent wars and books of permanent reference, and rank among the world's greatest descriptive writers.

A large staff of photographers have supplied illustrations for this great historical work depicting every phase of the catastrophe from the first shock of earthquake to the final work of relief. These illustrations have special interest and value because they are made from actual photographs taken by trained and skilled photographers. This history of the most recent of the world's great disasters is beyond all comparison the most sumptuously and completely illustrated of any publication on this subject. So numerous are the illustrations and so accurately do they portray every detail of the quake and fire that they constitute in themselves a complete, graphic and comprehensive pictorial history of the great catastrophe.

The story as told by the authors, however, is one of absorbing interest that thrills the reader with emotion and depicts the scenes of terror, destruction, misery and suffering as vividly as if the reader were an eye-witness to all the details of the stupendous disaster.

The history of the Earthquake and Fire Horror is told consecutively and systematically from beginning to end.

"The Doomed City" is a pen picture of San Francisco while its destruction was impending.

The four days of the conflagration are described each in separate chapters in such a way that the reader can follow the progress of the fire from the time of the first alarm until it was conquered by the dynamite squad of heroes.

A great amount of space has been devoted to "Thrilling Personal Experiences" and "Scenes of Death and Terror," so that the reader has a thousand and one phases of the horror as witnessed by those who passed through the awful experience of the earthquake shock and the ordeal of the conflagration.

For purposes of comparison a chapter has been devoted to a magnificent description of San Francisco before the fire, "The City of a Hundred Hills," the Mecca of sight-seers and pleasure loving travelers.

The descriptions of the Refuge Camps established in Golden Gate Park, the Presidio and other open spaces depict the sorrow and the suffering of the stricken people in words that appeal to the heart.

The magnificent manner in which the whole nation responded with aid and the conduct of the relief work are told in a way that brings a thrill of pride to every American heart.

"Fighting the Fire with Dynamite" is a thrilling chapter of personal bravery and heroism, and the work of the "Boys in Blue" who patrolled the city and guarded life and property is adequately narrated.

Chinatown in San Francisco was one of the sights of the world and was visited by practically every tourist that passed through the Golden Gate. That odd corner of Cathay which was converted into a roaring furnace and completely consumed is described with breathless interest.

The "Ruin and Havoc in Other Coast Cities" describes the destruction of the great Leland Stanford, Jr., University, the scenes of horror and death at the State Asylum which collapsed, and in other ruined cities of the Pacific coast.

"The Earthquake as Viewed by Scientists" is a valuable addition to the seismology of the world – a science that is too little known, but which possesses tremendous interest for everyone.

The threatened destruction of Naples by the volcano of Vesuvius preceding the San Francisco disaster is fully described. The chapters on Vesuvius are especially valuable and interesting, by reason of the scientific belief that the two disasters are intimately related.

Altogether this volume is the best and most complete history of all the great disasters of the world and one that should be in the hands of every intelligent citizen, both as a historical and reference volume.

THE PUBLISHERS.

INTRODUCTION

By the RT. REV. SAMUEL FALLOWS, D. D., LL. D

A BRIGHT, intelligent unbeliever in the Providential government of the world has just said to me in discussing this greatest of calamities which has occurred in our nation's history, "Where is your benevolent God?" I answered "He still lives and guides the affairs of men." Another said, "The preachers would do well not to meddle with the subject." But the reply was made, "It is precisely the subject with which they, more than others, should concern themselves."

It is for them, when the hearts of men are failing to confidently proclaim that God has not abdicated his throne, and that man is not the sport of malign and lawless forces.

All events are ordered for the best; and the evils which we suffer are parts of a great movement conducted by Almighty power, under the direction of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. God's creation is a perfect work. The world in which we live is the best possible world on the whole; not the best possible to the individual at any given moment, but the best possible on the whole, all creatures considered and all the ages of man taken into the account. This is the affirmation of a triumphant optimism.

John Stuart Mill averred that a better world could have been made and more favorable conditions for man devised. But before this hypothesis can be sustained, the skeptic from the beginning of time must have scanned the history of every individual and studied it in its minutest details. He must have explored every rill and river of influence entering into his character. He must have understood every relation of the individual to every other person through all the ages. He must have mastered all the facts and laws of our earth. And as it sustains a vital connection with the solar system, he must have grasped all the mysteries which are involved in it.

As this system is related to the still grander one of which it is a part, he must have known the law and workings of its every star and sun. Still more, he must have gone from system to system with their millions of worlds and become familiar with every part of the vast stupendous whole. He must have learned every secret of all Nature's forces, and have penetrated into the interior recesses of the Divine Being. He must have taken the place of God Himself.

A Divine Providence

Amid all our doubts and distresses we must hold fast to the belief that there is a God who maketh the clouds His chariot and walketh upon the wings of the wind – a God who is present in every summer breath and every wintry blast, in every budding leaf, and every opening flower, in the fall of every sparrow and the wheeling of every world. His Providence is in every swinging of the tides, in every circulation of the air, in all attractions and repulsions, in all cohesions and gravitations. These, and the varied phenomena of nature are the direct expressions of the Divine Energy, the modes of operation of the Divine Mind, the manifestations of the Divine Wisdom and the expressions of the Divine Love.

The very thunderbolt that rives the oak and by its shock sunders the soul from the body of some unfortunate one purifies the air that millions may breathe the breath of life.

The very earthquake which shakes the earth to its center and shatters cities into ruin, prevents by that very concussion the graver catastrophes which bury continents out of sight.

The very hurricane which comes sweeping down and on, prostrating forests, hurling mighty tidal waves on the shore and sending down many a gallant ship with all its crew, bears on its destructive wings, “the incense of the sea,” to remotest parts, that there may be the blooming of flowers, the upspringing of grass, the waving of all the banners of green, and the carrying away of the vapors of death that spring from decaying mold.

Man the Conqueror

Pascal said “man is but a reed, the feeblest thing in nature, but he is a reed that thinks.” The elemental forces break loose and for the time being he cannot control them. Amid nature’s convulsions he is utterly helpless and insignificant.

It is but for a moment, however, that he yields. He knows that he is the central figure in the universe of worlds. “He is not one part of the furniture of this planet, not the highest merely in the scale of its creatures but the lord of all.” He is not a parasite but the paragon of the globe. He has faith in the unchangeableness of the laws he is mastering while suffering from them. He confidently declares there is nothing fitful, nothing capricious, nothing irregular in their action. The greater the calamity the more earnest his effort to ascertain its causes and learn the lessons it teaches.

Fearlessly man must meet the events of life as they come. Speculations as to future cataclysms and fearful forebodings as to the immediate end of the world must all be given to the winds. There will be at some time an end to our globe. It may be frozen out, or burned out, or scattered into impalpable dust by the terrific explosion of steam generated by an ocean of water precipitated into an ocean of fire. But cycles of millenniums will intervene before such an apocalypse takes place.

In the spirit of Campbell’s “Last Man” we must live, and act;

“Go sun, while mercy holds me up
On nature’s awful waste
To taste the last and bitter cup
Of death, that man must taste:
Go, say thou saw’st the last of Adam’s race
On earth’s sepulchral clod,
The darkening Universe defy,
To quench his immortality
Or shake his trust in God.”

Wickedness not the Cause of Destruction

There are among us men who seem to suppose that they have been let into the counsels of the Almighty and have the right to aver that this calamity so colossal in its proportions and awful in its character is a judgment upon our sister city for its great wickedness. I heard similar declarations when Chicago was swept by its tornado of flame. Neither Chicago nor San Francisco could claim to be pre-eminent in righteousness, but, that Divine Providence should visit the vials of His wrath in an especial manner upon them because of their iniquity, is utterly repugnant both to reason and Holy Scripture. Only by a special revelation from the Most High, accompanied with evidence corresponding to that which substantiates the claims of an Old Testament prophet can any warrant be given to any man to declare that a great catastrophe is the consequence of the moral sins of a given community.

The Book of Job gives the emphatic denial to the claim that specific human misery and suffering are the sure signs of the retribution for specific guilt or sin. The Great Teacher and Divine Savior of men reaffirmed the truth of the teachings of that ancient poem by asserting that the man born blind was not thus grievously afflicted because he himself or his parents had been guilty of some peculiar iniquity. He declared that the eighteen persons who had been killed by the falling of the Tower of Siloam (probably from an earthquake shock), were not greater sinners than those who were hearing him speak.

The Unity of Humanity

This great disaster has given a new emphasis to our National Unity. Congress for the first time has voted to aid directly a city in distress within the bounds of our country. State Legislatures have followed its example, while municipal organizations by the score have poured out their benefactions.

From all quarters of the civilized globe expressions of sympathy have come and tenders of help made, without parallel in the annals of time.

All this has revealed the essential oneness of Humanity. It has shown that beneath all the artificial distinctions of society man is the equal of his fellow man. All the barriers of nationality, creed, color, social position, riches, poverty have been broken down in the common sufferings of the stricken people on our Western Coast. The chord of brotherhood is vibrating in all our hearts. Its divine melodies are heard above the roar and rush of business in our streets. We have been amassing wealth too often selfishly, and madly. We have been making money our god; and now we see how vain a thing it is in which to put our trust. Now we feel "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Now, kindness and tenderness melt the hardness of our natures. Now, as we stretch the helping hand and witness the joy and gratitude evoked, by our God-like deeds, we feel in every fiber of our being the thrill of the poet's rapt exclamation:

"O, if there be an Elysium on earth
It is this, it is this."

Recovery from Earthquakes

Earthquakes throughout the world have not disturbed the ultimate confidence of man in the stability of this old and often seemingly wayward earth. All Greece was convulsed centuries ago from center to circumference and Constantinople for the second time was overturned with the loss of tens of thousands of lives. Five hundred years afterwards the city was again shaken and a large number of its buildings destroyed with an appalling loss of life. Again and again was the ancient city of Antioch shattered in almost every portion but each time she arose stronger than before. Fifteen hundred years ago one mighty shock cost the lives of 250,000 of its people, but Antioch remains, although its grandeur from other causes has departed. Twice at least has Naples been partly destroyed along with its neighboring towns and more than 100,000 people have perished. But Naples is still on the map of the earth.

Lisbon, one hundred and fifty years ago lost 50,000 of its inhabitants and had a part of its territory suddenly submerged under 600 feet of water. For 5,000 miles the earthquake extended and shook Scotland itself, alarming the English people and causing fasting and prayer and special sermons in the Scotch and Anglican churches.

Two hundred years ago Tokio was almost entirely destroyed. Every building was practically in ruins and more than 200,000 were numbered among its mangled dead. Again in 1855 it nearly suffered a similar fate with a decreased though very large loss of life. But Tokio has helped Japan play its dramatic part in the recent history of the world.

Graphic descriptions have been left us by eye witnesses of the tremendous upheaval in the great Mississippi Valley in 1811, when the flow of the mighty river was stopped, and the land on its banks for vast distances from its current was sunk for a stretch of nearly 300 miles. But the Father of Waters still goes on unvexed to the sea.

Charleston was sadly shaken twenty years ago, but her streets are not deserted. Senator Tillman still speaks vigorously as the representative of her wide-awake and increasing population.

Some of us have not forgotten when we saw Chicago burning in 1871, the doubts and fears of our own hearts regarding the future of our city. Jeremiads were oracularly and dolefully uttered by many a prophetic pessimist that Chicago would never be rebuilt, that it would be burned again if it should rise from its ashes. Well! it did rise. It was again sadly burned. It again arose. It has been rising and growing ever since. And it is now ready to send its millions of dollars and more if needed to the stricken cities on our Pacific coast.

Not in fear then, but in hope, must our homes, our churches, our schools, our manufactories, our marts of trade, our bank buildings, our office buildings and other needed structures be established.

San Francisco will be Rebuilt

The prophets of evil may croak as dismally as they may desire and predict that the earth will again shudder and quake and imperil if not destroy any city man may attempt to create on the now dismantled and disfigured site. But San Francisco will as surely be rebuilt as the sun rises in heaven. No earthquake upheaval can shake the determined will of the unconquerable American to recover from disaster. It will simply serve to make him more rock-rooted and firm in his purpose to pluck victory from defeat. No fiery blasts can burn up the asbestos of his unconsumable energy. No disaster, however seemingly overwhelming, can daunt his faith or dim his hope, or prevent his progress.

San Francisco occupies the imperial gateway of the Pacific. Her harbor, one of the best in the world, still preserves its contour and extends its protecting arms as when Francis Drake found his way into it nearly four hundred years ago. The finger of Providence still points to it amid wreck and ruin and smoldering ashes as the place where a teeming city with every mark of a splendid civilization shall be the pride of our Western shores. Her wailing Miserere shall be turned into a joyful Te Deum.

Not for a moment after the temporary paralysis is past will the work of reconstruction be delayed. We know not when another shock may come or whether it will come again at all. No matter. The city shall rise again. And with it, shall the other cities that have suffered from the earth's commotion rise again into newness of life. California will not cease to be the land of fruits and flowers, of beauty and bounty, of sunshine and splendor from this temporary disturbance. It will continue to maintain its just reputation for all that is admirable in the American character, of pluck and perseverance, of vigor and versatility, and above all of the royal hospitality of its homes and of the welcome it always extends to every new and inspiring thought.

CHAPTER I.
THE DOOMED CITY

Earthquake Begins the Wreck of San Francisco and a Conflagration without Parallel Completes the Awful Work of Destruction – Tremendous Loss of life in Quake and Fire – Property Loss $200,000,000.

AFTER four days and three nights that have no parallel outside of Dante's Inferno, the city of San Francisco, the American metropolis by the Golden Gate, was a mass of glowing embers fast resolving into heaps and winrows of grey ashes emblematic of devastation and death.

Where on the morning of April 18, 1906, stood a city of magnificent splendor, wealthier and more prosperous than Tyre and Sidon of antiquity, enriched by the mines of Ophir, there lay but a scene of desolation. The proud and beautiful city had been shorn of its manifold glories, its palaces and vast commercial emporiums levelled to the earth and its wide area of homes, where dwelt a happy and a prosperous people, lay prostrate in thin ashes. Here and there in the charred ruins and the streets lately blackened by waves of flame, lay crushed or charred corpses, unheeded by the survivors, some of whom were fighting desperately for their lives and property, while others were panic stricken and paralyzed by fear. Thousands of lives had been sacrificed and millions upon millions of dollars in property utterly destroyed.

The beginning of the unparalleled catastrophe was on the morning of April 18, 1906. In the grey dawn, when but few had arisen for the day, a shock of earthquake rocked the foundations of the city and precipitated scenes of panic and terror throughout the business and residence districts.

It was 5:15 o'clock in the morning when the terrific earthquake shook San Francisco and the surrounding country. One shock apparently lasted two minutes and there was an almost immediate collapse of flimsy structures all over the former city. The water supply was cut off and when fires broke out in various sections there was nothing to do but to let the buildings burn. Telegraphic and telephone communication was shut off. Electric light and gas plants were rendered useless and the city was left without water, light or power. Street car tracks were twisted out of shape and even the ferry-boats ceased to run.

The dreadful earthquake shock came without warning, its motion apparently being from east to west. At first the upheaval of the earth was gradual, but in a few seconds it increased in intensity. Chimneys began to fall and buildings to crack, tottering on their foundations.

People became panic stricken and rushed into the streets, most of them in their night attire. They were met by showers of falling buildings, bricks, cornices and walls. Many were instantly crushed to death, while others were dreadfully mangled. Those who remained indoors generally escaped with their lives, though scores were hit by detached plaster, pictures and articles thrown to the floor by the shock.

Scarcely had the earth ceased to shake when fires broke out simultaneously in many places. The fire department promptly responded to the first calls for aid, but it was found that the water mains had been rendered useless by the underground movement. Fanned by a light breeze, the flames quickly spread and soon many blocks were seen to be doomed.

Then dynamite was resorted to and the sound of frequent explosions added to the terror of the people. All efforts to stay the progress of the fire, however, proved futile. The south side of Market street from Ninth street to the bay was soon ablaze, the fire covering a belt two blocks wide. On this, the main thoroughfare of the city, are located many of the finest edifices in the city, including the Grant, Parrott, Flood, Call, Examiner and Monadnock buildings, the Palace and Grand hotels and numerous wholesale houses.

At the same time the commercial establishments and banks north of Market street were burning. The burning district in this section extended from Sansome street to the water front and from Market street to Broadway. Fires also broke out in the mission and the entire city seemed to be in flames.

The fire swept down the streets so rapidly that it was practically impossible to save anything in its way. It reached the Grand Opera House on Mission street and in a moment had burned through the roof. The Metropolitan opera company from New York had just opened its season there and all the expensive scenery and costumes were soon reduced to ashes. From the opera house the fire leaped from building to building, leveling them almost to the ground in quick succession.

The Call editorial and mechanical departments were totally destroyed in a few minutes and the flames leaped across Stevenson street toward the fine fifteen-story stone and iron Claus Spreckels building, which with its lofty dome is the most notable edifice in San Francisco. Two small wooden buildings furnished fuel to ignite the splendid pile.

Thousands of people watched the hungry tongues of flame licking the stone walls. At first no impression was made, but suddenly there was a cracking of glass and an entrance was affected. The interior furnishings of the fourth floor were the first to go. Then as though by magic, smoke issued from the top of the dome.

This was followed by a most spectacular illumination. The round windows of the dome shone like so many full moons; they burst and gave vent to long, waving streamers of flame. The crowd watched the spectacle with bated breath. One woman wrung her hands and burst into a torrent of tears.

“It is so terrible!” she sobbed. The tall and slender structure which had withstood the forces of the earth appeared doomed to fall a prey to fire. After a while, however, the light grew less intense and the flames, finding nothing more to consume, gradually went, leaving the building standing but completely burned out.

The Palace Hotel, the rear of which was constantly threatened, was the scene of much excitement, the guests leaving in haste, many only with the clothing they wore. Finding that the hotel, being surrounded on all sides by streets, was likely to remain immune, many returned and made arrangements for the removal of their belongings, though little could be taken away owing to the utter absence of transportation facilities. The fire broke out anew and the building was soon a mass of ruins.

The Parrott building, in which were located the chambers of the state supreme court, the lower floors being devoted to an immense department store, was ruined, though its massive walls were not all destroyed.

A little farther down Market street the Academy of Sciences and the Jennie Flood building and the History building kindled and burned like tinder. Sparks carried across the wide street ignited the Phelan building and the army headquarters of the department of California, General Funston commanding, were burned.

Still nearing the bay, the waters of which did the firemen good service, along the docks, the fire took the Rialto building, a handsome skyscraper, and converted scores of solid business blocks into smoldering piles of brick.

Banks and commercial houses, supposed to be fireproof though not of modern build, burned quickly and the roar of the flames could be heard even on the hills, which were out of the danger zone. Here many thousands of people congregated and witnessed the awful scene. Great sheets of flame rose high in the heavens or rushed down some narrow street, joining midway between the sidewalks and making a horizontal chimney of the former passage ways.

The dense smoke that arose from the entire business spread out like an immense funnel and could have been seen for miles out at sea. Occasionally, as some drug house or place stored with chemicals was reached, most fantastic effects were produced by the colored flames and smoke which rolled out against the darker background.

When the first shock occurred at 5:15 a. m. most of the population were in bed and many lodging houses collapsed with every occupant. There was no warning of the awful catastrophe. First

came a slight shock, followed almost immediately by a second and then the great shock that sent buildings swaying and tumbling. Fire broke out immediately. Every able-bodied man who could be pressed into service was put to work rescuing the victims.

Panic seized most of the people and they rushed frantically about. Toward the ferry building there was a rush of those fleeing to cross the bay. Few carried any effects and some were hardly dressed. The streets were filled immediately with panic-stricken people and the frequently occurring shocks sent them into unreasoning panic. Fires lighted up the sky in every direction in the breaking dawn. In the business district devastation met the eye on every hand.

The area bounded by Washington, Mission and Montgomery streets and extending to the bay front was quickly devastated. That represented the heart of the handsome business section.

The greatest destruction on the first day occurred in that part of the city which was reclaimed from San Francisco Bay. Much of the devastated district was at one time low marshy ground entirely covered by water at high tide. As the city grew it became necessary to fill in many acres of this low ground in order to reach deep water. The Merchants' Exchange building, a fourteen-story steel structure, was situated on the edge of this reclaimed ground. It had just been completed and the executive offices of the Southern Pacific Company occupied the greater part of the building.

The damage by the earthquake to the residence portion of the city, the finest part of which was on Nob Hill and Pacific Heights, was slight but the fire completely destroyed that section on the following day.

To the westward, on Pacific Heights, were many fine, new residences, but little injury was done to any of them by the quake.

The Palace Hotel, a seven-story building about 300 feet square, was built thirty years ago by the late Senator Sharon, whose estate was in the courts for many years. At the time it was erected the Palace was considered the best equipped hotel in the west.

The offices of the three morning papers, the Chronicle, the Call and the Examiner, were located within 100 feet of each other. The Chronicle, situated at the corner of Market and Kearney streets, was a ten-story steel frame building and was one of the finest buildings of its character put up in San Francisco.

The Spreckels building, in which were located the business office of the Call, was sixteen stories high and very narrow. The editorial rooms, composing room and pressroom were in a small three-story building immediately in the rear of the Spreckels building.

Just across Third street was the home of the Examiner, seven stories high, with a frontage of 100 feet on Market street.

The postoffice was a fine, grey stone structure and had been completed less than two years. It covered half a block on Mission street between Sixth and Seventh streets. The ground on which the building stood was of a swampy character and some difficulty was experienced in obtaining a solid foundation.

The City Hall, which was badly wrecked by the quake and afterwards swept by the fire, was a mile and a half from the water front. It was an imposing structure with a dome 150 feet high. The building covered about three acres and cost more than $7,000,000.

The Grand Opera House, where the Metropolitan Opera Company opened a two weeks' engagement the previous Monday night, was one of the oldest theaters in San Francisco. It was located on Mission street between Third and Fourth streets and for a number of years was the leading playhouse of the city.

In 1885 when business began to move off of Mission street and to seek modern structures this playhouse was closed for some time and later devoted to vaudeville. Within the past four years, however, numerous fine buildings had been erected on Mission street and the Grand Opera house had been used by many of the leading independent theatrical companies.

All efforts to prevent the fire from reaching the Palace and Grand hotels were unsuccessful and both were completely destroyed together with all their contents.

All of San Francisco's best playhouses, including the Majestic, Columbia, Orpheum and Grand Opera house were soon a mass of ruins. The earthquake demolished them for all practical purposes and the fire completed the work of demolition. The handsome Rialto and Casserly buildings were burned to the ground, as was everything in that district.

The scene at the Mechanics' Pavilion during the early hours of the morning and up until noon, when all the injured and dead were removed because of the threatened destruction of the building by fire, was one of indescribable sadness. Sisters, brothers, wives and sweethearts searched eagerly for some missing dear one.

Thousands of persons hurriedly went through the building inspecting the cots on which the sufferers lay in the hope that they would locate some loved one that was missing.

The dead were placed in one portion of the building and the remainder was devoted to hospital purposes. The fire forced the nurses and physicians to desert the building; the eager crowds followed them to the Presidio and the Children's hospital, where they renewed their search for missing relatives.

The experience of the first day of the fire was a great testimonial to the modern steel building. A score of those structures were in course of erection and not one of them suffered. The completed modern buildings were also immune from harm by earthquake. The buildings that collapsed were all flimsy, wooden and old-fashioned brick structures.

On the evening of Wednesday, April 18, the first day of the fire, an area of thickly covered ground of eight square miles had been burned over and it was apparent that the entire city was doomed to destruction.

Nearly every famous landmark that had made San Francisco famous over the world had been laid in ruins or burned to the ground in the dire catastrophe. Never was the fate of a city more disastrous.

For three miles along the water front buildings had been swept clean and the blackened beams and great skeletons of factories and offices stood silhouetted against a background of flame that was slowly spreading over the entire city.

The whole commercial and office section of the city on the north side of Market street from the ferry building to Tenth street had been consumed in the hell of flame, while hardly a building was standing in the district south of Market street. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon, despite the heroic work of the firemen and the troops of dynamiters, who razed building after building and blew up property valued at millions, the flames spread across Market street to the north side and swept up Montgomery street, practically to Washington street. Along Montgomery street were some of the richest banks and commercial houses in San Francisco.

The famous Mills building and the new Merchants Exchange were still standing, but the Mutual Life Insurance building and scores of bank and office buildings were on fire, while blocks of other houses were in the path of the flames and nothing seemed to be at hand to stay their progress.

Nearly every big factory building had been wiped out of existence and a complete enumeration of them would look like a copy of the city directory.

Many of the finest buildings in the city had been leveled to dust by the terrific charges of dynamite in hopeless effort to stay the horror of fire. In this work many heroic soldiers, policemen and firemen were maimed or killed outright.

At 10 o'clock at night the fire was unabated and thousands of people were fleeing to the hills and clamoring for places on the ferry boats at the ferry landing.

From the Cliff House came word that the great pleasure resort and show place of the city, which stood upon a foundation of solid rock, had been swept into the sea. This report proved to be unfounded, but it was not until three days later that any one got close enough to the Cliff House to discover that it was still safe.

One of the big losses of the day was the destruction of St. Ignatius' church and college at Van Ness avenue and Hayes street. This was the greatest Jesuitical institution in the west and built at a cost of $2,000,000.

By 7 o'clock at night the fire had swept from the south side of the town across Market street into the district called the Western addition and was burning houses at Golden Gate avenue and Octavia. This result was reached after almost the entire southern district from Ninth street to the eastern water front had been converted into a blackened waste. In this section were hundreds of factories, wholesale houses and many business firms, in addition to thousands of homes.

CHAPTER II.
SAN FRANCISCO A ROARING FURNACE

Flames Spread in a Hundred Directions and the Fire Becomes the Greatest Conflagration of Modern Times – Entire Business Section and Fairest Part of Residence District Wiped Off the Map – Palaces of Millionaires Vanish in Flames or are Blown Up by Dynamite – The Worst Day of the Catastrophe.

MARIUS sitting among the ruins of Carthage saw not such a sight as presented itself to the afflicted people of San Francisco in the dim haze of the smoke pall at the end of the second day. Ruins stark naked, yawning at fearful angles and pinnacled into a thousand fearsome shapes, marked the site of what was three-fourths of the total area of the city.

Only the outer fringe of the city was left, and the flames which swept unimpeded in a hundred directions were swiftly obliterating what remained.

Nothing worthy of the name of building in the business district and not more than half of the residence district had escaped. Of its population of 400,000 nearly 300,000 were homeless.

Gutted throughout its entire magnificent financial quarters by the swift work of thirty hours and with a black ruin covering more than seven square miles out into her very heart, the city waited in a stupor the inevitable struggle with privation and hardship.

All the hospitals except the free city hospital had been destroyed, and the authorities were dragging the injured, sick and dying from place to place for safety.

All day the fire, sweeping in a dozen directions, irresistibly completed the desolation of the city. Nob Hill district, in which were situated the home of Mrs. Stanford, the priceless Hopkins Art Institute, the Fairmount hotel, a marble palace that cost millions of dollars and homes of a hundred millionaires, was destroyed.

It was not without a struggle that Mayor Schmitz and his aides let this, the fairest section of the city, suffer obliteration. Before noon when the flames were marching swiftly on Nob Hill, but were still far off, dynamite was dragged up the steep debris laden streets. For a distance of a mile every residence on the east side of Van Ness avenue was swept away in a vain hope to stay the progress of the fire.

After sucking dry even the sewers the fire engines were either abandoned or moved to the outlying districts.

There was no help. Water was gone, powder was gone, hope even was a fiction. The fair city by the Golden Gate was doomed to be blotted from the sight of man.

The stricken people who wandered through the streets in pathetic helplessness and sat upon their scattered belongings in cooling ruins reached the stage of dumb, uncaring despair, the city dissolving before their eyes had no significance longer.

There was no business quarter; it was gone. There was no longer a hotel district, a theater route, a place where Night beckoned to Pleasure. Everything was gone.

But a portion of the residence domain of the city remained, and the jaws of the disaster were closing down on that with relentless determination.

All of the city south of Market street, even down to Islais creek and out as far as Valencia street, was a smouldering ruin. Into the western addition and the Pacific avenue heights three broad fingers of fire were feeling their way with a speed that foretold the destruction of all the palace sites of the city before the night would be over.

There was no longer a downtown district. A blot of black spread from East street to Octavia, bounded on the south and north by Broadway and Washington streets and Islais creek respectively.

Not a bank stood. There were no longer any exchanges, insurance offices, brokerages, real estate offices, all that once represented the financial heart of the city and its industrial strength.

Up Market street from the Ferry building to Valfira street nothing but the black fingers of jagged ruins pointed to the smoke blanket that pressed low overhead. What was once California, Sansome, and Montgomery streets was a labyrinth of grim blackened walls.

Chinatown was no more. Union square was a barren waste.

The Call building stood proudly erect, lifting its whited head above the ruin like some leprous thing and with all its windows, dead, staring eyes that looked upon nothing but a wilderness. The proud Flood building was a hollow shell.

The St. Francis Hotel, one time a place of luxury, was naught but a box of stone and steel.

Yet the flames leaped on exultantly. They leapt chasms like a waterfall taking a precipice. Now they are here, now there, always pressing on into the west and through to the end of the city.

It was supposed that the fire had eaten itself out in the wholesale district below Sansome street, and that the main body of the flames was confined to the district south of Market street, where the oil works, the furniture factories, and the vast lumber yards had given fodder into the mouth of the fire fiend.

Yet, suddenly, as if by perverse devilishness, a fierce wind from the west swept over the crest of Nob Hill and was answered by leaping tongues of flames from out of the heart of the ruins.

By 8:30 o'clock Montgomery street had been spanned and the great Merchants' Exchange building on California street flamed out like the beacon torch of a falling star. From the dark fringe of humanity, watching on the crest of the California street hill, there sprang the noise of a sudden catching of the breath – not a sigh, not a groan – just a sharp gasp, betraying a stress of despair near to the insanity point.

Nine o'clock and the great Crocker building shot sparks and added tongues of fire to the high heavens. Immediately the fire jumped to Kearney street, licking at the fat provender that shaped itself for consuming.

Then began the mournful procession of Japanese and poor whites occupying the rookeries about Dupont street and along Pine. Tugging at heavy ropes, they rasped trunks up the steep pavements of California and Pine streets to places of temporary safety.

It was a motley crew. Women laden with bundles and dragging reluctant children by the hands panted up the steep slope with terror stamped on their faces.

Men with household furniture heaped camelwise on their shoulders trudged stoically over the rough cobbles, with the flame of the fire bronzing their faces into the outlines of a gargoyle. One patriotic son of Nippon labored painfully up Dupont street with the crayon portrait of the emperor of Japan on his back.

While this zone of fire was swiftly gnawing its way through Kearney street and up the hill, another and even more terrible segment of the conflagration was being stubbornly fought at the corner of Golden Gate avenue and Polk street. There exhausted firemen directed the feeble streams from two hoses upon a solid block of streaming flame.

The engines pumped the supply from the sewers. Notwithstanding this desperate stand, the flames progressed until they had reached Octavia street.

Like a sickle set to a field of grain the fiery crescent spread around the southerly end of the west addition up to Oak and Fell streets, along Octavia. There one puny engine puffed a single stream of water upon the burning mass, but its efforts were like the stabbing of a pigmy at a giant.

All the district bounded by Octavia, Golden Gate avenue, and Market street was a blackened ruin. One picked his way through the fallen walls on Van Ness avenue as he would cross an Arizona mesa. It was an absolute ruin, gaunt and flame lighted.

From the midst rose the great square wall of St. Ignatius college, standing like another ruined Acropolis in dead Athens.

Behind the gaunt specter of what had once been the city hall a blizzard of flame swept back into the gore between Turk and Market streets. Peeled of its heavy stone facing like a young leek that is stripped of its wrappings, the dome of the city hall rose spectral against the nebulous background of sparks.

From its summit looked down the goddess of justice, who had kept her pedestal even while the ones of masonry below her feet had been toppled to the earth in huge blocks the size of a freight car.

Through the gaunt iron ribs and the dome the red glare suffusing the whole northern sky glinted like the color of blood in a hand held to the sun.

At midnight the Hibernian bank was doomed, for from the frame buildings west of it there was being swept a veritable maelstrom of sheet flame that leaped toward it in giant strides. Not a fireman was in sight.

Across the street amid the smoke stood the new postoffice, one of the few buildings saved. Turk street was the northern boundary of this V shaped zone of the flames, but at 2 o'clock this street also was crossed and the triumphant march onward continued.

At midnight another fire, which had started in front of Fisher's Music Hall, on O'Farrell street, had gouged its terrible way through to Market street, carrying away what the morning's blaze across the street had left miraculously undestroyed.

Into Eddy and Turk streets the flames plunged, and soon the magnificent Flood building was doomed.

The firemen made an ineffectual attempt to check the ravages of the advancing phalanx of flames, but their efforts were absolutely without avail. First from across the street shot tongues of flames which cracked the glass in one of the Flood building's upper story windows. Then a shower of sparks was sent driving at a lace curtain which fluttered out in the draft. The flimsy whipping rag caught, a tongue of flame crept up its length and into the window casement.

"My God, let me get out of this," said a man below who had watched the massive shape of the huge pile arise defiant before the flames. "I can't stand to see that go, too."

Shortly after midnight the streets about Union Square were barred by the red stripes of the fire. First Cordes Furniture Company's store went, then Brennor's. Next a tongue of flames crept stealthily into the rear of the City of Paris store, on the corner of Geary and Stockton streets.

Eager spectators watched for the first red streamers to appear from the windows of the great dry goods stores. Smoke eddied from under window sills and through cracks made by the earthquake in the cornices. Then the cloud grew denser. A puff of hot wind came from the west, and as if from the signal there streamed flamboyantly from every window in the top floor of the structure billowing banners, as a poppy colored silk that jumped skyward in curling, snapping breadths, a fearful heraldry of the pomp of destruction.

From the copper minarets on the Hebrew synagogue behind Union square tiny green, coppery flames next began to shoot forth. They grew quickly larger, and as the heat increased in intensity there shone from the two great bulbs of metal sheathing an iridescence that blinded like a sight into a blast furnace.

With a roar the minarets exploded almost simultaneously, and the sparks shot up to mingle with the dulled stars overhead. The Union League and Pacific Union clubs next shone red with the fire that was glutting them.

On three sides ringed with sheets of flame rose the Dewey memorial in the midst of Union square. Victory tiptoeing on the apex of the column glowed red with the flames. It was as if the goddess of battle had suddenly become apostate and a fiend linked in sympathy with the devils of the blaze.

On the first day of the catastrophe the St. Francis escaped. On the second it fell. In the space of two hours the flames had blotted it out, and by night only the charred skeleton remained.

As a prelude to the destruction of the St. Francis the fire swept the homes of the Bohemian, Pacific, Union, and Family clubs, the best in San Francisco.

With them were obliterated the huge retail stores along Post street; St. Luke's Church, the biggest Episcopal church on the Pacific coast, and the priceless Hopkins Art Institute.

From Union square to Chinatown it is only a pistol shot. By noon all Chinatown was a blazing furnace, the rickety wooden hives, where the largest Chinese colony in this country lived, was perfect fuel for the fire.

Then Nob Hill, the charmed circle of the city, the residential district of its millionaires and of those whose names have made it famous, went with the rest of the city into oblivion. The Fairmount Hotel, marble palace built by Mrs. Oelrichs, crowned this district.

Grouped around it were the residences of Mrs. Stanford, and a score of millionaires' homes on Van Ness avenue. One by one they were buried in the onrushing flames, and when the fire was passed they were gone.

Here the most desperate effort of the fight to save the city was made. Nothing was spared. There was no discrimination, no sentiment. Rich men aided willingly in the destruction of their own homes that some of the city might be saved.

But the sacrifice and the labor went for nothing. No human power could stay the flames. As darkness was falling the fire was eating its way through the heart of this residential district. The mayor was forced to announce that the last hope had been dashed.

All the district bounded by Union, Van Ness, Golden Gate, to Octavia, Hayes, and Fillmore to Market was doomed. The fire fighters, troops, citizens, and city officials left the scene, powerless to do more.

On the morning of the second day when the fire reached the municipal building on Portsmouth square, the nurses, helped by soldiers, got out fifty bodies in the temporary morgue and a number of patients in the receiving hospital. Just after they reached the street a building was blown up and the flying bricks and splinters hurt a number of the soldiers, who had to be taken to the out of doors Presidio Hospital with the patients.

Mechanics' pavilion, which, after housing prize fights, conventions, and great balls, found its last use as an emergency hospital. When it was seen that it could not last every vehicle in sight was impressed by the troops, and the wounded, some of them frightfully mangled, were taken to the Presidio, where they were out of danger and found comfort in tents.

The physicians worked without sleep and almost without food. There was food, however, for the injured; the soldiers saw to that. Even the soldiers flagged, and kept guard in relays, while the relieved men slept on the ground where they dropped.

The troops shut down with iron hands on the city, for where one man was homeless the first night five were homeless the second night. With the fire running all along the water front, few managed to make their way over to Oakland. The people for the most part were prisoners on the peninsula.

The soldiers enforced the rule against moving about except to escape the flames, and absolutely no one could enter the city who once had left.

The seat of city government and of military authority shifted with every shift of the flames. Mayor Schmitz and General Funston stuck close together and kept in touch with the firemen and police, the volunteer aids, and the committee of safety through couriers.

There were loud reverberations along the fire line at night. Supplies of gun cotton and cordite from the Presidio were commandeered and the troops and the few remaining firemen made another futile effort to check the fiery advance.

Along the wharves the fire tugs saved most of the docks. But the Pacific mail dock had been reached and was out of control; and finally China basin, which was filled in for a freight yard at the

expense of millions of dollars, had sunk into the bay and the water was over the tracks. This was one of the greatest single losses in the whole disaster.

Without sleep and without food, crowds watched all night Wednesday and all day Thursday from the hills, looking off toward that veil of fire and smoke that hid the city which had become a hell.

Back of that sheet of fire, and retreating backward every hour, were most of the people of the city, forced toward the Pacific by the advance of the flames. The open space of the Presidio and Golden Gate park was their only haven and so the night of the second day found them.

CHAPTER III.
THIRD DAY ADDS TO HORROR

Fire Spreads North and South Attended by Many Spectacular Features – Heroic Work of Soldiers Under General Funston – Explosions of Gas Add to General Terror.

THE third day of the fire was attended by many spectacular features, many scenes of disaster and many acts of daring heroism.

When night came the fire was raging over fifty acres of the water front lying between Bay street and the end of Meiggs and Fisherman's wharf. To the eastward it extended down to the sea wall, but had not reached the piers, which lay a quarter of a mile toward the east.

The cannery and warehouses of the Central California Canneries Company, together with 20,000 cases of canned fruit, was totally destroyed, as also was the Simpson and other lumber companies' yards.

The flames reached the tanks of the San Francisco Gas Company, which had previously been pumped out, and had burned the ends of the grain sheds, five in number, which extended further out toward the point.

Flame and smoke hid from view the vessels that lay off shore vainly attempting to check the fire. No water was available except from the waterside and it was not until almost dark that the department was able to turn its attention to this point.

At dusk the fire had been checked at Van Ness avenue and Filbert street. The buildings on a high slope between Van Ness and Polk, Union and Filbert streets were blazing fiercely, fanned by a high wind, but the blocks were so sparsely settled that the fire had but a slender chance of crossing Van Ness at that point.

Mayor Schmitz, who directed operations at that point, conferred with the military authorities and decided that it was not necessary to dynamite the buildings on the west side of Van Ness. As much of the fire department as could be collected was assembled to make a stand at that point.

To add to the horrors of the general situation and the general alarm of many people who ascribed the cause of the subterranean trouble to another convulsion of nature, explosions of sewer gas have ribboned and ribbed many streets. A Vesuvius in miniature was created by such an upheaval at Bryant and Eighth streets. Cobblestones were hurled twenty feet upward and dirt vomited out of the ground. This situation added to the calamity, as it was feared the sewer gas would breed disease.

Thousands were roaming the streets famishing for food and water and while supplies were coming in by the train loads the system of distribution was not in complete working order.

Many thousands had not tasted food or water for two and three days. They were on the verge of starvation.

The flames were checked north of Telegraph hill, the western boundary being along Franklin street and California street southeast to Market street. The firemen checked the advance of flames by dynamiting two large residences and then backfiring. Many times before had the firemen made such an effort, but always previously had they met defeat.

But success at that hour meant little for San Francisco.

The flames still burned fitfully about the city, but the spread of fire had been checked.

A three-story lodging house at Fifth and Minna streets collapsed and over seventy-five dead bodies were taken out. There were at least fifty other dead bodies exposed. This building was one of the first to take fire on Fifth street. At least 100 people were lost in the Cosmopolitan on Fourth street.

The only building standing between Mission, Howard, East and Stewart streets was the San Pablo hotel. The shot tower at First and Howard streets was gone. This landmark was built forty years

ago. The Risdon Iron works were partially destroyed. The Great Western Smelting and Refining works escaped damages, also the Mutual Electric Light works, with slight damage to the American Rubber Company, Vietagas Engine Company, Folger Brothers' coffee and spice house was also uninjured and the firm gave away large quantities of bread and milk.

Over 150 people were lost in the Brunswick hotel, Seventh and Mission streets.

The soldiers who rendered such heroic aid took the cue from General Funston. He had not slept. He was the real ruler of San Francisco. All the military tents available were set up in the Presidio and the troops were turned out of the barracks to bivouac on the ground.

In the shelter tents they placed first the sick, second the more delicate of the women, and third, the nursing mothers, and in the afternoon he ordered all the dead buried at once in a temporary cemetery in the Presidio grounds. The recovered bodies were carted about the city ahead of the flames.

Many lay in the city morgue until the fire reached that; then it was Portsmouth square until it grew too hot; afterwards they were taken to the Presidio. There was another stream of bodies which had lain in Mechanics' pavilion at first, and had then been laid out in Columbia square, in the heart of a district devastated first by the earthquake and then by fire.

The condition of the bodies was becoming a great danger. Yet the troops had no men to spare to dig graves, and the young and able bodied men were mainly fighting on the fire line or utterly exhausted.

It was Funston who ordered that the old men and the weaklings should take this work in hand. They did it willingly enough, but had they refused the troops on guard would have forced them. It was ruled that every man physically capable of handling a spade or a pick should dig for an hour. When the first shallow graves were ready the men, under the direction of the troops, lowered the bodies several in a grave, and a strange burial began.

The women gathered about crying; many of them knelt while a Catholic priest read the burial service and pronounced absolution. All the afternoon this went on.

Representatives of the city authorities took the names of as many of the dead as could be identified and the descriptions of the others. Many, of course, will never be identified.

So confident were the authorities that they had the situation in control at the end of the third day that Mayor Schmitz issued the following proclamation:

> "To the Citizens of San Francisco: The fire is now under control and all danger is passed. The only fear is that other fires may start should the people build fires in their stoves and I therefore warn all citizens not to build fires in their homes until the chimneys have been inspected and repaired properly. All citizens are urged to discountenance the building of fires. I congratulate the citizens of San Francisco upon the fortitude they have displayed and I urge upon them the necessity of aiding the authorities in the work of relieving the destitute and suffering. For the relief of those persons who are encamped in the various sections of the city everything possible is being done. In Golden Gate park, where there are approximately 200,000 homeless persons, relief stations have been established. The Spring Valley Water Company has informed me that the Mission district will be supplied with water this afternoon, between 10,000 and 12,000 gallons daily being available. Lake Merced will be taken by the federal troops and that supply protected.
> *"Eugene E. Schmitz, Mayor."*

Although the third day of San Francisco's desolation dawned with hope, it ended in despair.

In the early hours of the day the flames, which had raged for thirty-six hours, seemed to be checked.

Then late in the afternoon a fierce gale of wind from the northwest set in and by 7 o'clock the conflagration, with its energy restored, was sweeping over fifty acres of the water front.

The darkness and the wind, which at times amounted to a gale, added fresh terrors to the situation. The authorities considered conditions so grave that it was decided to swear in immediately 1,000 special policemen armed with rifles furnished by the federal government.

In addition to this force, companies of the national guard arrived from many interior points.

In the forenoon, when it was believed the fire had been checked, the full extent of the destitution and suffering of the people was seen for the first time in near perspective. While the whole city was burning there was no thought of food or shelter, death, injury, privation, or loss. The dead were left unburied and the living were left to find food and a place to sleep where they could.

On the morning of the third day, however, the indescribable destitution and suffering were borne in upon the authorities with crushing force. Dawn found a line of men, women, and children, numbering thousands, awaiting morsels of food at the street bakeries. The police and military were present in force, and each person was allowed only one loaf.

A big bakery was started early in the morning in the outskirts of the city, with the announcement that it would turn out 50,000 loaves of bread before night. The news spread and thousands of hungry persons crowded before its doors before the first deliveries were hot from the oven. Here again police and soldiers kept order and permitted each person to take only one loaf. The loaves were given out without cost.

These precautions were necessary, for earlier in the day bread had sold as high as $1 a loaf and two loaves and a can of sardines brought in one instance $3.50.

Mayor Schmitz took prompt and drastic steps to stop this extortion. By his order all grocery and provision stores in the outlying districts which had escaped the flames were entered by the police and their goods confiscated.

Next to the need for food there was a cry for water, which until Friday morning the authorities could not answer.

In spite of all efforts to relieve distress there was indescribable suffering.

Women and children who had comfortable, happy homes a few days before slept that night – if sleep came at all – on hay on the wharves, on the sand lots near North beach, some of them under the little tents made of sheeting, which poorly protected them from the chilling ocean winds. The people in the parks were better provided in the matter of shelter, for they left their homes better prepared.

Thousands of members of families were separated, ignorant of one another's whereabouts and without means of ascertaining. The police on Friday opened up a bureau of registration to bring relatives together.

The work of burying the dead was begun Friday for the first time. Out at the Presidio soldiers pressed into service all men who came near and forced them to labor at burying the dead. So thick were the corpses piled up that they were becoming a menace, and early in the day the order was issued to bury them at any cost. The soldiers were needed for other work, so, at the point of rifles, the citizens were compelled to take the work of burying. Some objected at first, but the troops stood no trifling, and every man who came in reach was forced to work at least one hour. Rich men who had never done such work labored by the side of the workingmen digging trenches in the sand for the sepulcher of those who fell in the awful calamity. At the present writing many still remain unburied and the soldiers are still pressing men into service.

The Folsom street dock was turned into a temporary hospital, the harbor hospital being unable to accommodate all the injured who were brought there.

About 100 patients were stretched on the dock at one time. In the evening tugs conveyed them to Goat Island, where they were lodged in the hospital. The docks from Howard street to Folsom street had been saved, and the fire at this point was not permitted to creep farther east than Main street.

The work of clearing up the wrecked city has already begun at the water front in the business section of the town. A force of 100 men were employed under the direction of the street department clearing up the debris and putting the streets in proper condition.

It was impossible to secure a vehicle except at extortionate prices. One merchant engaged a teamster and horse and wagon, agreeing to pay $50 an hour. Charges of $20 for carrying trunks a few blocks were common. The police and military seized teams wherever they required them, their wishes being enforced at revolver point if the owner proved indisposed to comply with the demands.

Up and down the broad avenues of the parks the troops patrolled, keeping order. This was difficult at times, for the second hysterical stage had succeeded the paralysis of the first day and people were doing strange things. A man, running half naked, tearing at his clothes, and crying, “The end of all things has come!” was caught by the soldiers and placed under arrest.

Under a tree on the broad lawn of the children’s playground a baby was born. By good luck there was a doctor there, and the women helped out, so that the mother appeared to be safe. They carried her later to the children’s building in the park and did their best to make her comfortable.

All night wagons mounted with barrels and guarded by soldiers drove through the park doling out water. There was always a crush about these wagons and but one drink was allowed to a person.

Separate supplies were sent to the sick in the tents. The troops allowed no camp fires, fearing that the trees of the park might catch and drive the people out of this refuge to the open and windswept sands by the ocean.

The wind which had saved the heights came cold across the park, driving a damp fog, and for those who had no blankets it was a terrible night, for many of them were exhausted and must sleep, even in the cold. They threw themselves down in the wet grass and fell asleep.

When the morning came the people even prepared to make the camp permanent. An ingenious man hung up before his little blanket shelter a sign on a stick giving his name and address before the fire wiped him out. This became a fashion, and it was taken to mean that the space was preempted.

Toward midnight a black, staggering body of men began to weave through the entrance. They were volunteer fire fighters, looking for a place to throw themselves down and sleep. These men dropped out all along the line and were rolled out of the driveways by the troops.

There was much splendid unselfishness there. Women gave up their blankets and sat up or walked about all night to cover exhausted men who had fought fire until there was no more fight in them.

CHAPTER IV.
TWENTY SQUARE MILES OF WRECK AND RUIN

Fierce Battle to Save the Famous Ferry Station, the Chief Inlet to and Egress from San Francisco – Fire Tugs and Vessels in the Bay Aid in Heroic Fight – Fort Mason, General Funston's Temporary Headquarters, has Narrow Escape – A Survey of the Scene of Desolation.

WHEN darkness fell over the desolate city at the end of the fourth day of terror, the heroic men who had borne the burden of the fight with the flames breathed their first sigh of relief, for what remained of the proud metropolis of the Pacific coast was safe.

This was but a semi-circular fringe, however, for San Francisco was a city desolate with twenty square miles of its best area in ashes. In that blackened territory lay the ruins of sixty thousand buildings, once worth many millions of dollars and containing many millions more.

The fourth and last day of the world's greatest conflagration had been one of dire calamity and in some respects was the most spectacular of all. On the evening of the third day (Friday) a gale swept over the city from the west, fanned the glowing embers into fierce flames and again started them upon a path of terrible destruction.

The fire which had practically burnt itself out north of Telegraph Hill was revived by the wind and bursting into a blaze crept toward the East, threatening the destruction of the entire water front, including the Union ferry depot, the only means of egress from the devastated city.

The weary firemen still at work in other quarters of the city were hastily summoned to combat the new danger. Hundreds of sailors from United States warships and hundreds of soldiers joined in the battle, and from midnight until dawn men fought fire as never fire had been fought before. Fire tugs drew up along the water front and threw immense streams of water on to the flames of burning factories, warehouses and sheds.

Blocks of buildings were blown up with powder, guncotton, and dynamite, or torn down by men armed with axes and ropes. All night long the struggle continued. Mayor Schmitz and Chief of Police Dinan, although without sleep for forty-eight hours, remained on the scene all night to assist army and navy officers in directing the fight.

At 7 o'clock Saturday morning, April 21, the battle was won. At that hour the fire was burning grain sheds on the water front about half a mile north of the Ferry station, but was confined to a comparatively small area, and with the work of the fireboats on the bay and the firemen on shore, who were using salt water pumped from the bay, prevented the flames from reaching the Ferry building and the docks in that immediate vicinity.

On the north beach the fire did not reach that part of the water front lying west of the foot of Powell street. The fire on the water front was the only one burning. The entire western addition to the city lying west of Van Ness avenue, which escaped the sweep of flame on Friday, was absolutely safe.

Forty carloads of supplies, which had been run upon the belt line tracks near one of the burned wharves, were destroyed during the night.

A survey of the water front Saturday morning showed that everything except four docks had been swept clean from Fisherman's wharf, at the foot of Powell street, to a point around westerly, almost to the Ferry building.

This means that nearly a mile of grain sheds, docks and wharves were added to the general destruction. In the section north of Market street the ruined district was practically bounded on the west by Van Ness avenue, although in many blocks the flames destroyed squares to the west of that thoroughfare. The Van Ness avenue burned line runs northerly to Greenwich street, which is a few blocks from the bay. Then the boundary was up over Telegraph Hill and down to that portion of

the shore that faces Oakland. Practically everything included between Market, Van Ness avenue, Greenwich, and the bay was in ashes.

On the east side of Hyde street hill the fire burned down to Bay street and Montgomery avenue and stopped at that intersection.

Fort Mason was saved only by the most strenuous efforts of soldiers and firemen. It stands just north of the edge of the burned district, the flames having been checked only three blocks away at Greenwich street.

All south of Market street except in the vicinity of the Pacific Mail dock, was gone. This section is bounded on the north by Market street and runs out to Guerrero street, goes out that street two blocks, turns west to Dolores, runs west six blocks to about Twenty-second, taking in four blocks on the other side of Dolores. The fire then took an irregular course southward, spreading out as far as Twenty-fifth street and went down that way to the southerly bay shore.

Maj. C. A. Devol, depot quartermaster and superintendent of the transport service, graphically described the conquering of the fire on the water front, in which he played an important part:

"This fire, which ate its way down to the water front early Friday afternoon, was the climax of the whole situation.

"We realized at once that were the water front to go, San Francisco would be shut off from the world, thus paralyzing all transportation faculties for bringing in food and water to the thousands of refugees huddled on the hillsides from Fort Mason to Golden Gate Park. It would have been impossible to either come in or go out of the city save by row boats and floats, or by the blocked passage overland southward.

"This all-important section of the city first broke into flames in a hollow near Meiggs wharf, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The tugs of our service were all busy transporting provisions from Oakland, but the gravity of the situation made it necessary for all of them to turn to fire-fighting.

"The flames ate down into the extensive lumber district, but had not caught the dock line. Behind the dock, adjacent to the Spreckels sugar warehouse and wharf, were hundreds of freight cars. Had these been allowed to catch fire, the flames would have swept down the entire water front to South San Francisco.

"The climax came at Pier No. 9, and it was here that all energies were focused. A large tug from Mare Island, two fire patrol boats, the Spreckels tugs and ten or twelve more, had lines of hose laid into the heart of the roaring furnace and were pumping from the bay to the limit of their capacities.

"About 5 o'clock I was told that the tugs were just about holding their own and that more help would be needed. The Slocum and the McDowell were at once ordered to the spot. I was on board the former and at one time the heat of the fire was so great that it was necessary to play minor streams on the cabin and sides of the vessel to keep it from taking fire. We were in a slip surrounded by flames.

"Our lines of hose once laid to the dockage, we found willing hands of volunteers waiting to carry the hose forward. I saw pale, hungry men, who probably had not slept for two days, hang on to the nozzle and play the stream until they fell from exhaustion. Others took their places and only with a very few exceptions was it necessary to use force to command the assistance of citizens or onlookers.

"All night the flames raged through the lumber district, and the fire reached its worst about 3:30 o'clock Saturday morning. Daylight found it under control."

All that was left of the proud Argonaut city was like a Crescent moon set about a black disk of shadow. A Saharan desolation of blackened, ash covered, twisted debris was all that remained of three-fifths of the city that four days ago stood like a sentinel in glittering, jeweled armor, guarding the Golden Gate to the Pacific.

Men who had numbered their fortunes in the tens of thousands camped on the ruins of their homes, eating as primitive men ate – gnawing; thinking as primitive men thought. Ashes and the dull pain of despair were their portions. They did not have the volition to help themselves, childlike as the men of the stone age, they awaited quiescent what the next hour might bring them.

Fear they had none, because they had known the shape of fear for forty-eight hours and to them it had no more terrors. Men overworked to the breaking point and women unnerved by hysteria dropped down on the cooling ashes and slept where they lay, for had they not seen the tall steel skyscrapers burn like a torch? Had they not beheld the cataracts of flame fleeting unhindered up the broad avenues, and over the solid blocks of the city?

Fire had become a commonplace. Fear of fire had been blunted by their terrible suffering, and although the soldiers roused the sleepers and warned them against possible approaching flames, they would only yawn, wrap their blanket about them and stolidly move on to find some other place where they might drop and again slumber like men dead.

As the work of clearing away the debris progressed it was found that an overwhelming portion of the fatalities occurred in the cheap rooming house section of the city, where the frail hotels were crowded at the time of the catastrophe.

In one of these hotels alone, the five-story Brunswick rooming-house at Sixth and Howard streets, it is believed that 300 people perished. The building had 300 rooms filled with guests. It collapsed to the ground entirely and fire started amidst the ruins scarcely five minutes later.

South of Market street, where the loss of life was greatest, was located many cheap and crowded lodging houses. Among others the caving in of the Royal, corner Fourth and Minna streets, added to the horror of the situation by the shrieks of its many scores of victims imbedded in the ruins.

The collapsing of the Porter House on Sixth street, between Mission and Market, came about in a similar manner. Fully sixty persons were entombed midst the crash. Many of these were saved before the fire eventually crept to the scene.

Part of the large Cosmopolitan House, corner Fifth and Mission streets, collapsed at the very first tremble. Many of the sleepers were buried in the ruins; other escaped in their night clothes.

At 775 Mission street the Wilson House, with its four stories and eighty rooms, fell to the ground a mass of ruins. As far as known very few of the inmates were rescued.

The Denver House on lower Third street, with its many rooms, shared the same fate and none may ever know how many were killed, the majority of the inmates being strangers.

A small two-story frame building occupied by a man and wife at 405 Jessie street collapsed without an instant's warning. Both were killed.

To the north of Market street the rooming-house people fared somewhat better. The Luxemburg, corner of Stockton and O'Farrell streets, a three-story affair, suffered severely from the falling of many tons of brick from an adjoining building. The falling mass crashed through the building, killing a man and woman.

At the Sutter street Turkish baths a brick chimney toppled over and crashing through the roof killed one of the occupants as he lay on a cot. Another close by, lying on another cot, escaped.

Two hundred bodies were found in the Potrero district, south of Shannon street in the vicinity of the Union Iron works, were cremated at the Six-Mile House, on Sunday by the order of Coroner Walsh. Some of the dead were the victims of falling buildings from the earthquake shock, some were killed in the fire.

So many dead were found in this limited area that cremation was deemed absolutely necessary to prevent disease. The names of some of the dead were learned, but in the majority of cases identification was impossible owing to the mutilation of the features.

A systematic search for bodies of the victims of the earthquake and fire was made by the coroner and the state board of health inspectors as soon as the ruins cooled sufficiently to permit a search.

The body of an infant was found in the center of Union street, near Dupont street.

Three bodies were found in the ruins of the house on Harrison street between First and Second streets. They had been burned beyond all possibility of identification. They were buried on the north beach at the foot of Van Ness avenue.

The body of a man was found in the middle of Silver street, between Third and Fourth streets. A bit of burned envelope was found in the pocket of the vest bearing the name “A. Houston.”

The total number of bodies recovered and buried up to Sunday night was 500. No complete record can ever be obtained as many bodies were buried without permits from the coroner and the board of health.

Whenever a body was found it was buried immediately without any formality whatever and, as these burials were made at widely separated parts of the city by different bodies of searchers, who did not even make a prompt report to headquarters, considerable confusion resulted in estimating the number of casualties and exaggerated reports resulted.

CHAPTER V.
THE CITY OF A HUNDRED HILLS

A Description of San Francisco, the Metropolis of the Pacific Coast Before the Fire – One of the Most Beautiful and Picturesque Cities in America – Home of the California Bonanza Kings.

SAN FRANCISCO has had many soubriquets. It has been happily called the "City of a Hundred Hills," and its title of the "Metropolis of the Golden Gate" is richly deserved. Its location is particularly attractive, inasmuch as the peninsula it occupies is swept by the Pacific Ocean on the west and the beautiful bay of San Francisco on the north and east. The peninsula itself is thirty miles long and the site of the city is six miles back from the ocean. It rests on the shore of San Francisco Bay, which, with its branches, covers over 600 square miles, and for beauty and convenience for commerce is worthy of its magnificent entrance – the Golden Gate.

San Francisco was originally a mission colony. It is reported that "the site of the mission of San Francisco was selected because of its political and commercial advantages. It was to be the nucleus of a seaport town that should serve to guard the dominion of Spain in its vicinity. Most of the other missions were founded in the midst of fertile valleys, inhabited by large numbers of Indians." Both of these features were notably absent in San Francisco. Even the few Indians there in 1776 left upon the arrival of the friars and dragoons. Later on some of them returned and others were added, the number increasing from 215 in 1783, to 1,205 in 1813. This was the largest number ever reported. Soon after the number began to decrease through epidemics and emigration, until there was only 204 in 1832.

The commercial life of San Francisco dates from 1835, when William A. Richardson, an Englishman, who had been living in Sausalito since 1822, moved to San Francisco. He erected a tent and began the collection of hides and tallow, by the use of two 30-ton schooners leased from the missions, and which plied between San Jose and San Francisco. At that time Mr. Richardson was also captain of the port.

Seventy-five years ago the white adult males, apart from the Mission colony, consisted of sixteen persons. The local census of 1852 showed a population of 36,000, and ten years later 90,000. The last general census of 1900 credits the city with a population of 343,000. The increase in the last six years has been much greater than for the previous five, and it is generally conceded that the population at the time of the fire was about 425,000.

California was declared American territory by Commodore Sleat, at Monterey, on the 7th of July, 1846, who on that day caused the American flag to be raised in that town. On the following day, under instructions from the commodore, Captain Montgomery, of the war sloop Portsmouth, performed a similar service in Yerba Buena, by which name the city afterwards christened San Francisco was then known. This ceremony took place on the plot of ground, afterward set apart as Portsmouth Square, on the west line of Kearney street, between Clay and Washington. At that time and for some years afterwards, the waters of the bay at high tide, came within a block of the spot where this service occurred. This was a great event in the history of the United States, and it has grown in importance and in appreciative remembrance from that day to the present, as the accumulative evidence abundantly shows.

Referring to the change in name from Yerba Buena to San Francisco, in 1847, a writer says: "A site so desirable for a city, formed by nature for a great destiny on one of the finest bays in the world, looking out upon the greatest, the richest, and the most pacific of oceans – in the very track of empire – in the healthiest of latitudes – such a site could not fail to attract the attention of the expanding Saxon race. Commerce hastened it, the discovery of gold consummated it."

Modern San Francisco had its birth following the gold discoveries which led to the construction of the Central Pacific railway, and produced a vast number of very wealthy men known by the general title of California Bonanza Kings. San Francisco became the home and headquarters of these multi-millionaires, and large sums of their immense fortunes were invested in palatial residences and business blocks.

The bonanza king residence section was Nob Hill, an eminence near the business part of the city.

In the early days of San Francisco's growth and soon after the Central Pacific railroad had been built by Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, Mark Hopkins, Collis P. Huntington and the others who devoted the best part of their lives to the project of crossing the mountains by rail this hill was selected as the most desirable spot in the city for the erection of homes for the use of wealthy pioneers.

The eminence is situated northwest of the business section of the city and commands a view of the bay and all adjacent territory with the exception of the Pacific Ocean, Russian Hill, Pacific Heights and several other high spots obscuring the view toward the west.

Far removed above the din and noise of the city Charles Crocker was the first to erect his residence on the top of this historic hill which afterward became known as Nob Hill. The Crocker home was built of brick and wood originally, but in later years granite staircases, pillars and copings were substituted. In its time it was looked upon as the most imposing edifice in the city and for that reason the business associates of the railroad magnate decided to vie with him in the building of their homes.

Directly across from the Crocker residence on California street Leland Stanford caused to be built a residence structure that was intended to be the most ornate in the western metropolis. It was a veritable palace and it was within its walls that the boyhood days of Leland Stanford, Jr., after whom the university is named, were spent in luxurious surroundings. After the death of the younger Stanford a memorial room was set apart and the parents permitted no one to enter this except a trusted man servant who had been in the family for many years.

But the Stanford residence was relegated to the background as an object of architectural beauty when Mark Hopkins invaded the sacred precincts of Nob Hill and erected the residence which he occupied for three or four years. At his death the palatial building was deeded to the California Art Institute and as a tribute to the memory of the sturdy pioneer the building was called the Hopkins Institute of Art. Its spacious rooms were laden with the choicest works of art on the Pacific coast and the building and its contents were at all times a source of interest to the thousands of tourists who visited the city.

The late Collis P. Huntington was the next of the millionaires of San Francisco to locate upon the crest of Nob Hill. Within a block of the Crocker, Stanford and Hopkins palaces this railroad magnate of the west erected a mansion of granite and marble that caused all the others to be thrown in the shade. Its exterior was severe in its simplicity, but to those who were fortunate to gain entrance to the interior the sight was one never to be forgotten. The palaces of Europe could not excel it and for several years Huntington and his wife were its only occupants aside from the army of servants required to keep the house and grounds in order.

Not to be outdone by the railroad magnates of the city the next to acquire property on the crest of the hill was James Flood, the "bonanza king" and partner with William O'Brien, the names of both being closely interwoven with the early history of California and the Comstock lode. After having paid a visit to the east the millionaire mine owner became impressed with the brown stone fronts of New York and outdone his neighbors by erecting the only brown stone structure in San Francisco.

It was in this historic hilltop also that James G. Fair laid the foundation of a residence that was intended to surpass anything in the sacred precincts, but before the foundations had been completed domestic troubles resulted in putting a stop to building operations and it is on this site that Mrs.

Hermann Oelrichs, daughter of the late millionaire mine owner, erected the palatial Fairmont hotel, which was one of the most imposing edifices in San Francisco.

The old San Francisco is dead. The gayest, lightest hearted, most pleasure loving city of this continent, and in many ways the most interesting and romantic, is a horde of huddled refugees living among ruins. But those who have known that peculiar city by the Golden Gate and have caught its flavor of the Arabian Nights feel that it can never be the same. It is as though a pretty, frivolous woman had passed through a great tragedy. She survives, but she is sobered and different. When it rises out of the ashes it will be a modern city, much like other cities and without its old flavor.

The city lay on a series of hills and the lowlands between. These hills are really the end of the Coast Range of mountains which lie between the interior valleys and the ocean to the south. To its rear was the ocean; but the greater part of the town fronted on two sides on San Francisco Bay, a body of water always tinged with gold from the great washings of the mountains, usually overhung with a haze, and of magnificent color changes. Across the bay to the north lies Mount Tamalpais, about 5,000 feet high, and so close that ferries from the water front took one in less than half an hour to the little towns of Sausalito and Belvidere, at its foot.

It is a wooded mountain, with ample slopes, and from it on the north stretch away ridges of forest land, the outposts of the great Northern woods of Sequoia semperrirens. This mountain and the mountainous country to the south brought the real forest closer to San Francisco than to any other American city.

Within the last few years men have killed deer on the slopes of Tamalpais and looked down to see the cable cars crawling up the hills of San Francisco to the north. In the suburbs coyotes still stole and robbed hen roosts by night. The people lived much out of doors. There was no time of the year, except a short part of the rainy season, when the weather kept one from the woods. The slopes of Tamalpais were crowded with little villas dotted through the woods, and those minor estates ran far up into the redwood country. The deep coves of Belvidere, sheltered by the wind from Tamalpais, held a colony of “arks” or houseboats, where people lived in the rather disagreeable summer months, going over to business every day by ferry. Everything invited out of doors.

The climate of California is peculiar; it is hard to give an impression of it. In the first place, all the forces of nature work on laws of their own in that part of California. There is no thunder or lightning; there is no snow, except a flurry once in five or six years; there are perhaps a dozen nights in the winter when the thermometer drops low enough so that there is a little film of ice on exposed water in the morning. Neither is there any hot weather. Yet most Easterners remaining in San Francisco for a few days remember that they were always chilly.

For the Gate is a big funnel, drawing in the winds and the mists which cool off the great, hot interior valleys of the San Joaquin and Sacramento. So the west wind blows steadily ten months of the year and almost all the mornings are foggy. This keeps the temperature steady at about 55 degrees – a little cool for comfort of an unacclimated person, especially indoors. Californians, used to it, hardly ever thought of making fires in their houses except in the few exceptional days of the winter season, and then they relied mainly upon fireplaces. This is like the custom of the Venetians and the Florentines.

But give an Easterner six months of it and he too learns to exist without a chill in a steady temperature a little lower than that to which he is accustomed at home. After that one goes about with perfect indifference to the temperature. Summer and winter San Francisco women wore light tailor-made clothes, and men wore the same fall weight suits all the year around. There is no such thing as a change of clothing for the seasons. And after becoming acclimated these people found the changes from hot to cold in the normal regions of the earth hard to bear. Perhaps once in two or three years there comes a day when there is no fog, no wind and a high temperature in the coast district. Then there is hot weather, perhaps up in the eighties, and Californians grumble, swelter and

rustle for summer clothes. These rare hot days were the only times when one saw on the streets of San Francisco women in light dresses.

Along in early May the rains cease. At that time everything is green and bright and the great golden poppies, as large as the saucer of an after dinner coffee cup, are blossoming everywhere. Tamalpais is green to its top; everything is washed and bright. By late May a yellow tinge is creeping over the hills. This is followed by a golden June and a brown July and August. The hills are burned and dry. The fog comes in heavily, too; and normally this is the most disagreeable season of the year. September brings a day or two of gentle rain; and then a change, as sweet and mysterious as the breaking of spring in the East, comes over the hills. The green grows through the brown and the flowers begin to come out.

As a matter of fact, the unpleasantness of summer is modified by the certainty that one can go anywhere without fear of rain. And in all the coast mountains, especially the seaward slopes, the dews and the shelter of the giant underbrush keep the water so that these areas are green and pleasant all summer.

In a normal year the rains begin to fall heavily in November; there will be three or four days of steady downpour and then a clear and green week. December is also likely to be rainy; and in this month people enjoy the sensation of gathering for Christmas the mistletoe which grows profusely on the live oaks, while the poppies are beginning to blossom at their feet. By the end of January the rains come lighter. In the long spaces between rains there is a temperature and a feeling in the air much like that of Indian summer in the East. January is the month when the roses are at their brightest.

So much for the strange climate, which invites out of doors and which has played its part in making the character of the people. The externals of the city are – or were, for they are no more – just as curious. One usually entered the city by way of San Francisco Bay. Across its yellow flood, covered with the fleets from the strange seas of the Pacific, San Francisco presented itself in a hill panorama. Probably no other city of the world could be so viewed and inspected at first sight. It rose above the passenger, as he reached dockage, in a succession of hill terraces.

At one side was Telegraph Hill, the end of the peninsula, a height so abrupt that it had a 200 foot sheer cliff on its seaward frontage. Further along lay Nob Hill, crowned with the Mark Hopkins mansion, which had the effect of a citadel, and in later years by the great, white Fairmount. Further along was Russian Hill, the highest point. Below was the business district, whose low site caused all the trouble.

Except for the modern buildings, the fruit of the last ten years, the town presented at first sight a disreputable appearance. Most of the buildings were low and of wood. In the middle period of the ’70s, when a great part of San Francisco was building, there was some atrocious architecture perpetrated. In that time, too, every one put bow windows on his house, to catch all of the morning sunlight that was coming through the fog, and those little houses, with bow windows and fancy work all down their fronts, were characteristic of the middle class residence district.

Then the Italians, who tumbled over Telegraph Hill, had built as they listed and with little regard for streets, and their houses hung crazily on a side hill which was little less than a precipice. For the most part, the Chinese, although they occupied an abandoned business district, had remade the houses Chinese fashion, and the Mexicans and Spaniards had added to their houses those little balconies without which life is not life to a Spaniard.

Yet the most characteristic thing after all was the coloring. For the sea fog had a trick of painting every exposed object a sea gray which had a tinge of dull green in it. This, under the leaden sky of a San Francisco morning, had a depressing effect on first sight and afterward became a delight to the eye. For the color was soft, gentle and infinitely attractive in mass.

The hills are steep beyond conception. Where Vallejo street ran up Russian Hill it progressed for four blocks by regular steps like a flight of stairs. It is unnecessary to say that no teams ever came up this street or any other like it, and grass grew long among the paving stones until the Italians who

live thereabouts took advantage of this to pasture a cow or two. At the end of the four blocks, the pavers had given it up and the last stage to the summit was a winding path. On the very top, a colony of artists lived in little villas of houses whose windows got the whole panorama of the bay. Luckily for these people, a cable car climbed the hill on the other side, so that it was not much of a climb to home.

With these hills, with the strangeness of the architecture and with the green gray tinge over everything, the city fell always into vistas and pictures, a setting for the romance which hung over everything, which always hung over life in San Francisco since the padres came and gathered the Indians about Mission Dolores.

And it was a city of romance and a gateway to adventure. It opened out on the mysterious Pacific, the untamed ocean, and most of China, Japan, the South Sea Islands, Lower California, the west coast of Central America, Australia that came to this country passed in through the Golden Gate. There was a sprinkling, too, of Alaska and Siberia. From his windows on Russian Hill one saw always something strange and suggestive creeping through the mists of the bay. It would be a South Sea Island brig, bringing in copra, to take out cottons and idols; a Chinese junk with fanlike sails, back from an expedition after sharks' livers; an old whaler, which seemed to drip oil, back from a year of cruising in the Arctic. Even the tramp windjammers were deep chested craft, capable of rounding the Horn or of circumnavigating the globe; and they came in streaked and picturesque from their long voyaging.

In the orange colored dawn which always comes through the mists of that bay, the fishing fleet would crawl in under triangular lateen sails, for the fishermen of San Francisco Bay were all Neapolitans who brought their customers and their customs and sail with lateen rigs shaped like the ear of a horse when the wind fills them and stained an orange brown.

Along the water front the people of these craft met. "The smelting pot of the races," Stevenson called it; and this was always the city of his soul. There are black Gilbert Islanders, almost indistinguishable from Negroes; lighter Kanakas from Hawaii or Samoa; Lascars in turbans; thickset Russian sailors; wild Chinese with unbraided hair; Italian fishermen in tam o' shanters, loud shirts and blue sashes; Greeks, Alaska Indians, little bay Spanish-Americans, together with men of all the European races. These came in and out from among the queer craft, to lose themselves in the disreputable, tumbledown, but always mysterious shanties and small saloons. In the back rooms of these saloons South Sea Island traders and captains, fresh from the lands of romance, whaling masters, people who were trying to get up treasure expeditions, filibusters, Alaskan miners, used to meet and trade adventures.

There was another element, less picturesque and equally characteristic, along the water front. For San Francisco was the back eddy of European civilization – one end of the world. The drifters came there and stopped, lingered a while to live by their wits in a country where living after a fashion has always been marvellously cheap. These people haunted the water front or lay on the grass on Portsmouth Square.

That square, the old plaza about which the city was built, Spanish fashion, had seen many things. There in the first burst of the early days the vigilance committee used to hold its hangings. There in the time of the sand lot riots Dennis Kearney, who nearly pulled the town down about his ears, used to make his orations which set the unruly to rioting. In these later years Chinatown laid on one side of it and the Latin quarter and the "Barbary Coast" on the other.

On this square men used to lie all day long and tell strange yarns. Stevenson lay there with them in his time and learned the things which he wrote into "The Wrecker" and his South Sea stories, and in the center of the square there stood the beautiful Stevenson monument. In later years the authorities put up a municipal building on one side of this square and prevented the loungers, for decency's sake, from lying on the grass. Since then some of the peculiar character of the old plaza had gone.

The Barbary Coast was a loud bit of hell. No one knows who coined the name. The place was simply three blocks of solid dance halls, there for the delight of the sailors of the world. On a fine busy

night every door blared loud dance music from orchestra, steam pianos and gramophones and the cumulative effect of the sound which reached the street was at least strange. Almost anything might be happening behind the swinging doors. For a fine and picturesque bundle of names characteristic of the place, a police story of three or four years ago is typical. Hell broke out in the Eye Wink Dance Hall. The trouble was started by a sailor known as Kanaka Pete, who lived in the What Cheer House, over a woman known as Iodoform Kate. Kanaka Pete chased the man he had marked to the Little Silver Dollar, where he turned and punctured him. The by-product of his gun made some holes in the front of the Eye Wink, which were proudly kept as souvenirs, and were probably there until it went out in the fire. This was low life, the lowest of the low.

Until the last decade almost anything except the commonplace and the expected might happen to a man on the water front. The cheerful industry of shanghaiing was reduced to a science. A stranger taking a drink in one of the saloons which hung out over the water might be dropped through the floor into a boat, or he might drink with a stranger and wake in the forecastle of a whaler bound for the Arctic. Such an incident is the basis of Frank Norris's novel, "Moran of the Lady Letty," and although the novel draws it pretty strong, it is not exaggerated. Ten years ago the police and the foreign consuls, working together, stopped this.

Kearney street, a wilder and stranger Bowery, was the main thoroughfare of these people. An exiled Californian, mourning over the city of his heart, said recently:

"In a half an hour of Kearney street I could raise a dozen men for any wild adventure, from pulling down a statue to searching for the Cocos Island treasure."

This is hardly an exaggeration.

These are a few of the elements which made the city strange and gave it the glamour of romance which has so strongly attracted such men as Stevenson, Frank Norris and Kipling. This lay apart from the regular life of the city, which was distinctive in itself.

The Californian is the second generation of a picked and mixed stock. The merry, the adventurous, often the desperate, always the brave, deserted the South and New England in 1849 to rush around the Horn or to try the perils of the plains. They found there already grown old in the hands of the Spaniards younger sons of hidalgos and many of them of the proudest blood of Spain. To a great extent the pioneers intermarried with Spanish women; in fact, except for a proud little colony here and there, the old Spanish blood is sunk in that of the conquering race. Then there was an influx of intellectual French people, largely overlooked in the histories of the early days; and this Latin leaven has had its influence.

Brought up in a bountiful country, where no one really has to work very hard to live, nurtured on adventure, scion of a free and merry stock, the real, native Californian is a distinctive type; so far from the Easterner in psychology as the extreme Southerner is from the Yankee. He is easy going, witty, hospitable, lovable, inclined to be unmoral rather than immoral in his personal habits, and above all easy to meet and to know.

Above all there is an art sense all through the populace which sets it off from any other part of the country. This sense is almost Latin in its strength, and the Californian owes it to the leaven of Latin blood. The true Californian lingers in the north; for southern California has been built up by "lungers" from the East and middle West and is Eastern in character and feeling.

With such a people life was always gay. If they did not show it on the streets, as do the people of Paris, it was because the winds made open cafes disagreeable at all seasons of the year. The gayety went on indoors or out on the hundreds of estates that fringed the city. It was noted for its restaurants. Perhaps the very best for people who care not how they spend their money could not be had there, but for a dollar, 75 cents, 50 cents, a quarter or even 15 cents the restaurants afforded the best fare on earth at the price.

If one should tell exactly what could be had at Coppa's for 50 cents or at the Fashion for, say, 35, no New Yorker who has not been there would believe it. The San Francisco French dinner and

the San Francisco free lunch were as the Public Library to Boston or the stock yards to Chicago. A number of causes contributed to this consummation. The country all about produced everything that a cook needed and that in abundance – the bay was an almost untapped fishing pond, the fruit farms came up to the very edge of the town, and the surrounding country produced in abundance fine meats, all cereals and all vegetables.

But the chefs who came from France in the early days and liked this land of plenty were the head and front of it. They passed on their art to other Frenchmen or to the clever Chinese. Most of the French chefs at the biggest restaurants were born in Canton, China. Later the Italians, learning of this country where good food is appreciated, came and brought their own style. Householders always dined out one or two nights of the week, and boarding houses were scarce, for the unattached preferred the restaurants. The eating was usually better than the surroundings.

Meals that were marvels were served in tumbledown little hotels. Most famous of all the restaurants was the Poodle Dog. There have been no less than four restaurants of this name, beginning with a frame shanty where, in the early days, a prince of French cooks used to exchange ragouts for gold dust. Each succeeding restaurant of the name has moved further downtown; and the recent Poodle Dog stood on the edge of the Tenderloin in a modern five story building. And it typified a certain spirit that there was in San Francisco.

For on the ground floor was a public restaurant where there was served the best dollar dinner on earth. It ranked with the best and the others were in San Francisco. Here, especially on Sunday night, almost everybody went to vary the monotony of home cooking. Every one who was any one in the town could be seen there off and on. It was perfectly respectable. A man might take his wife and daughter there.

On the second floor there were private dining rooms, and to dine there, with one or more of the opposite sex, was risque but not especially terrible. But the third floor – and the fourth floor – and the fifth. The elevator man of the Poodle Dog, who had held the job for many years and never spoke unless spoken to, wore diamonds and was a heavy investor in real estate. There were others as famous in their way – the Zinka, where, at one time, every one went after the theatre, and Tate's the Palace Grill, much like the grills of Eastern hotels, except for the price; Delmonico's, which ran the Poodle Dog neck and neck in its own line, and many others, humbler but great at the price.

The city never went to bed. There was no closing law, so that the saloons kept open nights and Sundays, at their own sweet will. Most of them elected to remain open until 3 o'clock in the morning at least. Yet this restaurant life did not exactly express the careless, pleasure loving character of the people. In great part their pleasures were simple, inexpensive and out of doors. No people were fonder of expeditions into the country, of picnics – which might be brought off at almost any season of the year – and often long tours in the great mountains and forests. And hospitality was nearly a vice.

As in the early mining days, if they liked the stranger the people took him in. At the first meeting the local man probably had him put up at the club; at the second, he invited him home to dinner. As long as he stayed he was being invited to week end parties at ranches, to little dinners in this or that restaurant and to the houses of his new acquaintances, until his engagements grew beyond hope of fulfillment. There was rather too much of it. At the end of a fortnight a stranger with a pleasant smile and a good story left the place a wreck. This tendency ran through all grades of society – except, perhaps, the sporting people who kept the tracks and the fighting game alive. These also met the stranger – and also took him in.

Centers of men of hospitality were the clubs, especially the famous Bohemian and the Family. The latter was an offshoot of the Bohemian, which had been growing fast and vieing with the older organization for the honor of entertaining pleasing and distinguished visitors.

The Bohemian Club, whose real founder is said to have been the late Henry George, was formed in the '70s by a number of newspaper writers and men working in the arts or interested in them. It had grown to a membership of 750. It still kept for its nucleus painters, writers, musicians and actors,

amateur and professional. They were a gay group of men, and hospitality was their avocation. Yet the thing which set this club off from all others in the world was the midsummer High Jinks.

The club owns a fine tract of redwood forest fifty miles north of San Francisco, on the Russian River. There are two varieties of big trees in California: the Sequoia gigantea and the Sequoia sempervirens. The great trees of the Mariposa grove belong to the gigantea species. The sempervirens, however, reaches the diameter of 16 feet, and some of the greatest trees of this species are in the Bohemian Club grove. It lies in a cleft of the mountains; and up one hillside there runs a natural out of door stage of remarkable acoustic properties.

In August the whole Bohemian Club, or such as could get away from business, went up to this grove and camp out for two weeks. And on the last night they put on the Jinks proper, a great spectacle with poetic words, music and effects done by the club, in praise of the forest. In late years this had been practically a masque or an opera. It cost about $10,000. It took the spare time of scores of men for weeks; yet these 700 business men, professional men, artists, newspaper workers, struggled for the honor of helping out on the Jinks; and the whole thing was done naturally and with reverence. It would hardly be possible anywhere else in this country; the thing which made it possible is the art spirit which is in the Californian. It runs in the blood.

Some one has been collecting statistics which prove this point. “Who’s Who in America” is long on the arts and on learning and comparatively weak in business and the professions. Now some one who has taken the trouble has found that more persons mentioned in “Who’s Who” by the thousand of the population were born in Massachusetts than in any other State; but that Massachusetts is crowded closely by California, with the rest nowhere. The institutions of learning in Massachusetts account for her pre-eminence; the art spirit does it for California. The really big men nurtured on California influence are few, perhaps; but she has sent out an amazing number of good workers in painting, in authorship, in music and especially in acting.

“High Society” in San Francisco had settled down from the rather wild spirit of the middle period; it had come to be there a good deal as it is elsewhere. There was much wealth; and the hills of the western addition were growing up with fine mansions. Outside of the city, at Burlingame, there was a fine country club centering a region of country estates which stretched out to Menlo Park. This club had a good polo team, which played every year with teams of Englishmen from southern California and even with teams from Honolulu.

The foreign quarters were worth a chapter in themselves. Chief of these was, of course, Chinatown, of which every one has heard who ever heard of San Francisco. A district six blocks long and two blocks wide, when the quarter was full, housed 30,00 °Chinese. The dwellings were old business blocks of the early days; but the Chinese had added to them, rebuilt them, had run out their own balconies and entrances, and had given it that feeling of huddled irregularity which makes all Chinese built dwellings fall naturally into pictures. Not only this, they had burrowed to a depth equal to three stories under the ground, and through this ran passages in which the Chinese transacted their dark and devious affairs – as the smuggling of opium, the traffic in slave girls and the settlement of their difficulties.

There was less of this underground life than formerly, for the Board of Health had a cleanup some time ago; but it was still possible to go from one end of Chinatown to the other through secret underground passages. The Chinese lived there their own life in their own way. The Chinatown of New York is dull beside it. And the tourist, who always included Chinatown in his itinerary, saw little of the real life. The guides gave him a show by actors hired for his benefit. In reality the place had considerable importance in a financial way. There were clothing and cigar factories of importance, and much of the tea and silk importing was in the hands of the merchants, who numbered several millionaires. Mainly, however, it was a Tenderloin for the house servants of the city – for the San Francisco Chinaman was seldom a laundryman; he was too much in demand at fancy prices as a servant.

The Chinese lived their own lives in their own way and settled their own quarrels with the revolvers of their highbinders. There were two theaters in the quarter, a number of rich joss houses, three newspapers and a Chinese telephone exchange. There is a race feeling against the Chinese among the working people of San Francisco, and no white man, except the very lowest outcasts, lived in the quarter.

On the slopes of Telegraph Hill dwelt the Mexicans and Spanish, in low houses, which they had transformed by balconies into a resemblance of Spain. Above, and streaming over the hill, were the Italians. The tenement quarter of San Francisco shone by contrast with that of New York, for while these people lived in old and humble houses they had room to breathe and a high eminence for light and air. Their shanties clung on the side of the hill or hung on the very edge of the precipice overlooking the bay, on the edge of which a wall kept their babies from falling. The effect was picturesque, and this hill was the delight of painters. It was all more like Italy than anything in the Italian quarter of New York and Chicago – the very climate and surroundings, wine country close at hand, the bay for their lateen boats, helped them.

Over by the ocean and surrounded by cemeteries in which there are no more burials, there is an eminence which is topped by two peaks and which the Spanish of the early days named after the breasts of a woman. At its foot was Mission Dolores, the last mission planted by the Spanish padres in their march up the coast, and from these hills the Spanish looked for the first time upon the golden bay.

Many years ago some one set up at the summit of this peak a sixty foot cross of timber. Once a high wind blew it down, and the women of the Fair family then had it restored so firmly that it would resist anything. As it is on a hill it must have stood. It has risen for fifty years above the gay, careless, luxuriant and lovable city, in full view from every eminence and from every alley. It must stand now above the desolation of ruins.

CHAPTER VI.
SCENES OF TERROR, DEATH AND HEROISM

Thrilling Escapes and Deeds of Daring – Sublime Bravery and Self-Sacrifice by Men and Women – How the United States Mint and the Treasuries Were Saved and Protected by Devoted Employes and Soldiers – Pathetic Street Incidents – Soldiers and Police Compel Fashionably Attired to Assist in Cleaning Streets – Italians Drench Homes with Wine.

THE week succeeding the quake was a remarkable one in the history of the country. For a day or two the people had been horror-stricken by the tales of suffering and desolation on the Pacific coast, but as the truth became known they arose equal to the occasion.

And not all the large amounts contributed were confined to those ranked as the great and strong of the nation. The laborers, too, banded together and sent large contributions. The members of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of Indianapolis realized their brethren would be in dire need and they sent $10,000. The United Mineworkers sent $1,000, and several other labor organizations were equally generous.

During even the most awful moments of the catastrophe men and women with sublimest heroism faced the most threatening terrors and dangers to assist, to rescue and to save. Everywhere throughout the city scenes of daring, self-sacrifice and bravery were witnessed and thrilling escapes from imminent death aroused enthusiasm as well as horror.

A landmark of San Francisco which escaped destruction, though every building around it was destroyed, is the United States Mint at the corner of Fifth and Mission streets. Harold French, an employe of the mint, gave a graphic account of how the flames were successfully fought.

“Nearly $200,000,000 in coin and bullion,” said Mr. French, “is stored in the vaults of the mint and for the preservation of this prize a devoted band of employes, re-enforced by regular soldiers, fought until the baffled flames fled to the conquest of stately blocks of so-called fireproof buildings.

“For seven hours a sea of fire surged around this grand old federal edifice, attacking it on all sides with waves of fierce heat. Its little garrison was cut off from retreat for hours at a time, had such a course been thought of by those on guard.

“Iron shutters shielded the lower floors, but the windows of the upper story, on which are located the refinery and assay office, were exposed.

“When the fire leaped Mint avenue in solid masses of flames the refinery men stuck to their windows as long as the glass remained in the frames. Seventy-five feet of an inch hose played a slender stream upon the blazing window sill, while the floor was awash with diluted sulphuric acid. Ankle deep in this soldiers and employes stuck to the floor until the windows shattered. With a roar, the tongues of fire licked greedily the inner walls. Blinding and suffocating smoke necessitated the abandonment of the hose and the fighters retreated to the floor below.

“Then came a lull. There was yet a fighting chance, so back to the upper story the fire-fighters returned, led by Superintendent Leach. At length the mint was pronounced out of danger and a handful of exhausted but exultant employes stumbled out on the hot cobblestone to learn the fate of some of their homes.”

A number of men were killed while attempting to loot the United States Mint, where $39,000,000 was kept, while thirty-four white men were shot and killed by troops in a raid on the ruins of the burned United States Treasury. Several millions of dollars are in the treasury ruins.

Among the many pathetic incidents of the fire was that of a woman who sat at the foot of Van Ness avenue on the hot sands on the hillside overlooking the bay east of Fort Mason with four little children, the youngest a girl of 3, the eldest a boy of 10.

They were destitute of water, food and money. The woman had fled with her children from a home in flames in the Mission street district and tramped to the bay in the hope of sighting the ship, which she said was about due, of which her husband was the captain.

"He would know me anywhere," she said. And she would not move, although a young fellow gallantly offered his tent back on a vacant lot in which to shelter her children.

In a corner of the plaza a band of men and women were praying, and one fanatic, driven crazy by horror, was crying out at the top of his voice:

"The Lord sent it – the Lord!"

His hysterical crying got on the nerves of the soldiers and bade fair to start a panic among the women and children. A sergeant went over and stopped it by force. All night they huddled together in this hell, with the fire making it bright as day on all sides, and in the morning, the soldiers using their sense again, commandeered a supply of bread from a bakery, sent out another water squad, and fed the refugees with a semblance of breakfast.

A few Chinese made their way into the crowd. They were trembling, pitifully scared, and willing to stop wherever the soldiers placed them.

The soldiers and the police forced every available man in the downtown district to work, no matter where they were found or under what conditions. One party of four finely dressed men that came downtown in an automobile were stopped by the soldiers and were ordered out of the machine and compelled to assist in clearing the debris from Market street. Then the automobile was loaded with provisions and sent out to relieve the hungry people in the parks.

One young man who was pressed into service by the soldiers, came clad in a fashionable summer suit, straw hat and kid gloves.

An incident of the fire in the Latin quarter on the slope of Telegraph Hill is worthy of note. The only available water supply was found in a well dug in early days. At a critical moment the pump suddenly sucked dry and the water in the well was exhausted.

"There is a last chance, boys!" was shouted and Italian residents crashed in their cellar doors with axes and, calling for assistance, began rolling out barrels of red wine.

The cellars gave forth barrel after barrel until there was fully 500 gallons ready for use. Then barrel heads were smashed in and the bucket brigade turned from water to wine. Sacks were dipped in the wine and used for beating out the fire. Beds were stripped of their blankets and these were soaked in the wine and hung over the exposed portions of the cottages and men on the roofs drenched the shingles and sides of the house with wine.

Past huddled groups of sleepers an unending stream of refugees was seen wending their way to the ferry, dragging trunks over the uneven pavement by ropes tethered to wheelbarrows laden with the household lares and penates. The bowed figures crept about the water and ruins and looked like the ghosts about the ruins of Troy, and unheeding save where instinct prompted them to make a detour about some still burning heap of ruins.

At the ferry the sleepers lay in windrows, each man resting his head upon some previous treasures that he had brought from his home. No one was able to fear thieves or to escape pillage, because of absolute physical inertia forced upon him.

Mad, wholly stark mad, were some of the unfortunates who had not fled from the ruins. In many instances the soldiers were forced to tear men and women away from the bodies of their dead. Two women were stopped within a distance of a few blocks and forced to give up the dead bodies of their babes, which they were nursing to their bosoms.

A newsgatherer passing through Portsmouth square noticed a mother cowering under a bush. She was singing in a quavering voice a lullaby to her baby. The reporter parted the bushes and looked in. Then he saw what she held in her arms was only a mangled and reddened bit of flesh. The baby had been crushed when the shock of earthquake came and its mother did not know that its life had left it thirty hours before.

When law and order were strained a crew of hell rats crept out of their holes and in the flamelight plundered and reveled in bacchanalian orgies like the infamous inmates of Javert in "Les Miserables." These denizens of the sewer traps and purlieus of "The Barbary Coast" exulted in unhindered joy of doing evil.

Sitting crouched among the ruins or sprawling on the still warm pavement they could be seen brutally drunk. A demijohn of wine placed on a convenient corner of some ruin was a shrine at which they worshiped. They toasted chunks of sausage over the dying coals of the cooling ruin even as they drank, and their songs of revelry were echoed from wall to wall down in the burnt Mission district.

Some of the bedizened women of the half world erected tents and champagne could be had for the asking, although water had its price. One of these women, dressed in pink silk with high heeled satin slippers on her feet, walked down the length of what had been Natoma street with a bucket of water and a dipper, and she gave the precious fluid freely to those stricken ones huddled there by their household goods and who had not tasted water in twenty-four hours.

"Let them drink and be happy," said she, "water tastes better than beer to them now."

Soon after the earthquake San Francisco was practically placed under martial law with Gen. Fred Funston commanding and later Gen. Greely. The regiment has proven effective in subduing anarchy and preventing the depredations of looters. A detail of troops helped the police to guard the streets and remove people to places of safety.

The martial law dispensed was of the sternest. They have no records existing of the number of executions which had been meted out to offenders. It is known that more than one sneaking vandal suffered for disobedience of the injunction given against entering deserted houses.

There was a sharp, businesslike precision about the American soldier that stood San Francisco in good stead. The San Francisco water rat thug and "Barbary Coast" pirate might flout a policeman, but he discovered that he could not disobey a man who wears Uncle Sam's uniform without imminent risk of being counted in that abstract mortuary list usually designated as "unknown dead."

For instance: When Nob Hill was the crest of a huge wave of flame, soldiers were directing the work of saving the priceless art treasures from the Mark Hopkins institute.

Lieut. C. C. McMillan of the revenue cutter Bear impressed volunteers at the point of a pistol to assist in saving the priceless art treasures which the building housed.

"Here you," barked Lieutenant McMillan to the great crowd of dazed men, "get in there and carry out those paintings."

"What business have you got to order us about?" said a burly citizen with the jowl of a Bill Sykes.

The lieutenant gave a significant hitch to his arm and the burly man saw a revolver was hanging from the forefinger of the lieutenant's right hand.

"Look here," said the lieutenant. "You see this gun? Well, I think it is aimed at your right eye. Now, come here. I want to have a little talk with you."

The tough stared for a moment and then the shade of fear crept over his face, and with an "All right, boss," he started in upon the labor of recovering the art treasures from the institute.

"This is martial law," said the determined lieutenant. "I don't like it, you may not like it, but it goes. I think that is understood."

John H. Ryan and wife of Chicago after spending their honeymoon in Honolulu and Jamaica reached San Francisco just before the earthquake. They were stopping at the St. Francis Hotel, which was destroyed partially by the earthquake and totally by the fire following the shock. They lost many of their personal effects, but are thankful that they escaped with their lives.

"When the first shock came," said Mr. Ryan, "I was out of bed in an instant. I immediately was thrown to the floor. Arising, I held on by a chair and by the door knob until I could get around the room to the window to see if I could find out what was the matter. I saw people running and heard them in the corridors of the hotel. I also heard women screaming. I hastily called one of my friends

and he and myself threw on our overcoats, stuck our feet into our shoes and ran downstairs. I ran back to tell my wife, when I found her coming down the stairs.

"The first shock lasted, according to a professor in the university, sixty seconds. I thought it lasted about as many days.

"At the second shock all the guests piled into the streets. We stood in the bitter cold street for fully a quarter of an hour with nothing about us but our spring overcoats. I said 'bitter cold.' So it was. People there said it was the coldest spell that has struck Frisco in years.

"After standing in the streets for a while my friend and myself, with my wife, started back into the hotel to get our clothes. The guard was at the foot of the stairs and he told us that we would not be allowed to go to our rooms. I told him we merely wanted to get some clothes on so we would not freeze to death and he told us to go up, but to come right down as soon as possible, for there was no telling what would happen. We rushed into our rooms and hurriedly threw on our clothes, and started out to reconnoiter. We stopped near a small building. Just then a policeman on guard came up and ordered everybody to assist in rescuing the persons within. We did not hesitate, but rushed into the building heedless of the impending falling of the walls. We found there a man lying unconscious on the floor. He revived sufficiently to make us understand that his wife and child were in the building and that he thought they were dead. We looked and finally found them, dead.

"We saw ambulances and undertakers' wagons by the score racing down Market street. They were filled with the bodies of the injured and in many cases with dead. The injured were piled into the wagons indiscriminately without respect for any consequences in the future of the patients."

R. F. Lund of Canal Dover, O., was asleep in apartments when the shock rent the city. "I awoke to find myself on the floor," said Mr. Lund. "The building to me seemed to pitch to the right, then to the left, and finally to straighten itself and sink. I had the sensation of pitching down in an elevator shaft – that sudden, sickening wave that sweeps over you and leaves you breathless.

"I got into my clothes and with some difficulty wrenched open the door of my room. Screams of women were piercing the air. Together with a dozen other men, inmates of the apartments, I assembled the women guests and we finally got them into the streets. Few of them tarried long enough to dress. We went back again and then returned with more women.

"In one room particularly there was great commotion. It was occupied by two women and they were in a state of hysterical terror because they could not open their door and get out. The sudden settling of the building had twisted the jambs.

"Finally I put my two hundred and thirty pounds of weight against the panels and smashed them through. I helped them wrap themselves in quilts and half led, half carried them to the street.

"While passing through a narrow street in the rear of the Emporium I came upon a tragedy. A rough fellow, evidently a south of Market street thug, was bending over the unconscious form of a woman. She was clothed in a kimono and lay upon the sidewalk near the curb. His back was toward me. He was trying to wrench a ring from her finger and he held her right wrist in his left hand. A soldier suddenly approached. He held a rifle thrust forward and his eyes were on the wretch.

"Involuntarily I stopped and involuntarily my hand went to my hip pocket. I remember only this, that it seemed in that moment a good thing to me to take a life. The soldier's rifle came to his shoulder. There was a sharp report and I saw the smoke spurt from the muzzle. The thug straightened up with a wrench, he shot his right arm above his head and pitched forward across the body of the woman. He died with her wrist in his grasp. It may sound murderous, but the feeling I experienced was one of disappointment. I wanted to kill him myself.

"Along in the afternoon in my walking I came upon a great hulking fellow in the act of wresting food from an old woman and a young girl who evidently had joined their fortunes. No soldiers were about and I had the satisfaction of laying him out with the butt of my pistol. He went down in a heap. I did not stay to see whether or not he came to."

"Strange is the scene where San Francisco's Chinatown stood," said W. W. Overton, after reaching Los Angeles among the refugees. "No heap of smoking ruins marks the site of the wooden warrens where the slant-eyed men of the orient dwelt in thousands. The place is pitted with deep holes and seared with dark passageways, from whose depths come smoke wreaths. All the wood has gone and the winds are streaking the ashes.

"Men, white men, never knew the depth of Chinatown's underground city. They often talked of these subterranean runways. And many of them had gone beneath the street levels, two and three stories. But now that Chinatown has been unmasked, for the destroyed buildings were only a mask, men from the hillside have looked on where its inner secrets lay. In places they can see passages 100 feet deep.

"The fire swept this Mongolian section clean. It left no shred of the painted wooden fabric. It ate down to the bare ground and this lies stark, for the breezes have taken away the light ashes. Joss houses and mission schools, grocery stores and opium dens, gambling hells and theaters – all of them went. The buildings blazed up like tissue paper lanterns used when the guttering candles touched their sides.

"From this place I, following the fire, saw hundreds of crazed yellow men flee. In their arms they bore their opium pipes, their money bags, their silks, and their children. Beside them ran the baggy trousered women, and some of them hobbled painfully.

"These were the men and women of the surface. Far beneath the street levels in those cellars and passageways were many others. Women who never saw the day from their darkened prisons and their blinking jailors were caught like rats in a huge trap. Their bones were eaten by the flames.

"And now there remain only the holes. They pit the hillside like a multitude of ground swallow nests. They go to depths which the police never penetrated. The secrets of those burrows will never be known, for into them the hungry fire first sifted its red coals and then licked eagerly in tongues of creeping flames, finally obliterating everything except the earth itself."

"The scenes to be witnessed in San Francisco were beyond description," said Mr. Oliver Posey, Jr.

"Not alone did the soldiers execute the law. One afternoon, in front of the Palace Hotel, a crowd of workers in the ruins discovered a miscreant in the act of robbing a corpse of its jewels. Without delay he was seized, a rope was procured, and he was immediately strung up to a beam which was left standing in the ruined entrance of the Palace Hotel.

"No sooner had he been hoisted up and a hitch taken in the rope than one of his fellow criminals was captured. Stopping only to secure a few yards of hemp, a knot was quickly tied and the wretch was soon adorning the hotel entrance by the side of the other dastard."

Jack Spencer, well known here, also returned home yesterday, and had much to say of the treatment of those caught in the act of rifling the dead of their jewels.

"At the corner of Market and Third streets on Wednesday," said Mr. Spencer of Los Angeles, "I saw a man attempting to cut the fingers from the hand of a dead woman in order to secure the rings. Three soldiers witnessed the deed at the same time and ordered the man to throw up his hands. Instead of obeying he drew a revolver from his pocket and began to fire without warning.

"The three soldiers, reinforced by half a dozen uniformed patrolmen, raised their rifles to their shoulders and fired. With the first shots the man fell, and when the soldiers went to the body to dump it into an alley eleven bullets were found to have entered it."

Here is an experience typical of hundreds told by Sam Wolf, a guest at the Grand Hotel:

"When I awakened the house was shaken as a terrier would shake a rat. I dressed and made for the street which seemed to move like waves of water. On my way down Market street the whole side of a building fell out and came so near me that I was covered and blinded by the dust. Then I saw the first dead come by. They were piled up in an automobile like carcasses in a butcher's wagon, all over blood, with crushed skulls and broken limbs, and bloody faces.

"A man cried out to me, 'Look out for that live wire.' I just had time to sidestep certain death. On each side of me the fires were burning fiercely. I finally got into the open space before the ferry. The ground was still shaking and gaping open in places. Women and children knelt on the cold asphalt and prayed God would be merciful to them. At last we got on the boat. Not a woman in that crowd had enough clothing to keep her warm, let alone the money for fare. I took off my hat, put a little money in it, and we got enough money right there to pay all their fares."

W. H. Sanders, consulting engineer of the United States geological survey, insisted on paying his hotel bill before he left the St. Francis. He says:

"Before leaving my room I made my toilet and packed my grip. The other guests had left the house. As I hurried down the lobby I met the clerk who had rushed in to get something. I told him I wanted to pay my bill. 'I guess not,' he said, 'this is no time for settlement.'

"As he ran into the office I cornered him, paid him the money, and got his receipt hurriedly stamped."

Dr. Taggart of Los Angeles, a leader of the Los Angeles relief bureau, accidentally shot himself while entering a hospital at the corner of Page and Baker streets, Saturday, April 21. He was mounting the stairs, stumbled and fell. A pistol which he carried in his inside coat pocket was discharged, the bullet entering near the heart. He rose to his feet and cried, "I am dying," and fell into the arms of a physician on the step below. Death was almost instantaneous.

Mrs. Lucien Shaw, of Los Angeles, wife of Judge Shaw of the State Supreme Court, disappeared in the war of the elements that raged in San Francisco.

At day dawn Thursday morning, April 19, the Shaw apartments, on Pope street, San Francisco, were burned. Mrs. Shaw fled with the refugees to the hills.

Judge Lucien Shaw went north on that first special on Wednesday that cleared for the Oakland mole.

Thursday morning at daybreak he reached his apartments on Pope street. Flames were burning fiercely. A friend told him that his wife had fled less than fifteen minutes before. She carried only a few articles in a hand satchel.

For two days and nights Judge Shaw wandered over hills and through the parks about San Francisco seeking among the 200,000 refugees for his wife.

During that heart-breaking quest, according to his own words, he had "no sleep, little food and less water." At noon Saturday he gave up the search and hurried back to Los Angeles, hoping to find that she had arrived before him. He hastened to his home on West Fourth street.

"Where's mother?" was the first greeting from his son, Hartley Shaw.

Judge Shaw sank fainting on his own doorstep. The search for the missing woman was continued but proved fruitless.

One of the beautiful little features on the human side of the disaster was the devotion of the Chinese servants to the children of the families which they served. And this was not the only thing, for often a Chinaman acted as the only man in families of homeless women and children. Except for the inevitable panic of the first morning, when the Chinese tore into Portsmouth square and fought with the Italians for a place of safety, the Chinese were orderly, easy to manage, and philosophical. They staggered around under loads of household goods which would have broken the back of a horse, and they took hard the order of the troops which commanded all passengers to leave their bundles at the ferry.

A letter to a friend in Fond du Lac, Wis., from Mrs. Bragg, wife of General E. S. Bragg, late consul general at Hong Kong, and one-time commander of the Iron Brigade, gave the following account of the escape of the Braggs in the Frisco quake. Mrs. Bragg says under date of April 20:

"We reached San Francisco a week ago today, but it seems a month, so much have we been through. We were going over to Oakland the very morning of the earthquake, so, of course, we never went, as it is as bad there as here.

"General Bragg had to wait to collect some money on a draft, but the banks were all destroyed. The chimneys fell in and all hotels were burned as well as public buildings. There was no water to put out the fires which raged for blocks in every square and provisions were running low everywhere. Eggs were $5 a dozen, etc.; no telegraph, no nothing.

"We went from the Occidental to the Plymouth and from there to the Park Nob hill, where we lay, not slept, all Wednesday night, the day of the earthquake. From there we took refuge on the Pacific with friends who were obliged to get out also and we all came over together to Fort Mason, leaving there last night. We came from there to the flagship Chicago, the admiral having sent a boat for us.

"General Bragg is very well and we have both stood it wonderfully. The Chicago fire was bad enough, but this is worse in our old age. May we live till we reach home. So many here have lost everything, homes as well, we consider ourselves quite fortunate. May I never live to see another earthquake.

"The General had a very narrow escape from falling plaster; never thought to leave the first hotel alive. Many were killed or burned. God is good to us. Our baggage was rescued by our nephews alone. No one else's was to be got out for love or money. The baggage was sent to the Presidio, not four miles from us."

CHAPTER VII.
THRILLING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Scenes of Horror and Panic Described by Victims of the Quake Who Escaped – How Helpless People Were Crushed to Death by Falling Buildings and Debris – Some Marvelous Escapes.

THE stories of hundreds who experienced the earthquake shock but escaped with life and limb constitute a series of thrilling stories unrivalled outside of fiction. Those that contain the most marvellous features are herewith narrated:

Albert H. Gould, of Chicago, describes the scene in the Palace Hotel following the first quake:

"I was asleep on the seventh floor of the Palace Hotel," he said, "at the time of the first quake. I was thrown out of my bed and half way across the room.

"Immediately realizing the import of the occurrence, and fearing that the building was about to collapse, I made my way down the six flights of stairs and into the main corridor.

"I was the first guest to appear. The clerks and hotel employes were running about as if they were mad. Within two minutes after I had appeared other guests began to flock into the corridor. Few if any of them wore other than their night clothing. Men, women, and children with blanched faces stood as if fixed. Children and women cried, and the men were little less affected.

"I returned to my room and got my clothing, then walked to the office of the Western Union in my pajamas and bare feet to telegraph to my wife in Los Angeles. I found the telegraphers there, but all the wires were down. I sat down on the sidewalk, picked the broken glass out of the soles of my feet, and put on my clothes.

"All this, I suppose, took little more than twenty minutes. Within that time, below the Palace the buildings for more than three blocks were a mass of flames, which quickly communicated to other buildings. The scene was a terrible one. Billows of fire seemed to roll from the business blocks soon half consumed to other blocks in the vicinity, only to climb and loom again.

"The Call building at the corner of Third and Market streets, as I passed, I saw to be more than a foot out of plumb and hanging over the street like the leaning tower of Pisa.

"I remained in San Francisco until 8 o'clock and then took a ferry for Oakland, but returned to the burning city an hour and a half later. At that time the city seemed doomed. I remained but for a few minutes; then made my way back to the ferry station.

"I hope I may never be called upon to pass through such an experience again. People by the thousands and seemingly devoid of reason were crowded around the ferry station. At the iron gates they clawed with their hands as so many maniacs. They sought to break the bars, and failing in that turned upon each other. Fighting my way to the gate like the others the thought came into my mind of what rats in a trap were. Had I not been a strong man I should certainly have been killed.

"When the ferry drew up to the slip, and the gates were thrown open the rush to safety was tremendous. The people flowed through the passageway like a mountain torrent that, meeting rocks in its path, dashes over them. Those who fell saved themselves as best they could.

"I left Oakland at about 5 o'clock. At that time San Francisco was hidden in a pall of smoke. The sun shone brightly upon it without any seeming penetration. Flames at times cleft the darkness. This cloud was five miles in height, and at its top changed into a milk white."

Mrs. Agnes Zink, Hotel Broadway, said:

"I was stopping at 35 Fifth street, San Francisco. The rear of that house collapsed and the landlady and about thirty of her roomers were killed. I escaped simply because I had a front room and because I got out on the roof, as the stairway had collapsed in the rear. Out in the street it was impossible to find a clear pathway. I saw another lodging house near ours collapse – I think it must

have been 39 Fifth street – and I know all the inmates were killed, for its wreck was complete. In ten minutes the entire block to Mission street was in flames."

Mr. J. P. Anthony, a business man who escaped from the doomed city in an automobile tells a graphic story:

Mr. Anthony says that he was sleeping in his room at the Romona hotel on Ellis street, near Macon, and was suddenly awakened at 5:23 in the morning. The first shock that brought him out of bed, he says, was appalling in its terrible force. The whole earth seemed to heave and fall. The building where he was housed, which is six stories high, was lifted from its foundation and the roof caved in. A score or more of guests, men and women, immediately made their way to the street, which was soon filled with people, and a perfect panic ensued. Debris showered into the street from the buildings on every side.

As a result, Mr. Anthony says, he saw a score or more of people killed. Women became hysterical and prayed in the streets, while men sat on the curbing, appearing to be dazed. It was twenty minutes before those in the vicinity seemed to realize the enormity of the catastrophe. The crowds became larger and in the public squares of the city and in empty lots thousands of people gathered.

It was 9 o'clock before the police were in control of the situation. When they finally resumed charge, the officers directed their energy toward warning the people in the streets away from danger. Buildings were on the brink of toppling over.

Mr. Anthony says he was walking on Market street, near the Emporium, about 9 a. m., when a severe shock was felt. At once the street filled again with excited persons, and thousands were soon gathered in the vicinity, paralyzed with fear. Before the spectators could realize what had happened, the walls of the building swayed a distance of three feet. The thousands of bystanders stood as if paralyzed, expecting every moment that they would be crushed, but another tremor seemed to restore the big building to its natural position.

Mr. Anthony said that he momentarily expected that, with thousands of others who were in the neighborhood, he would be crushed to death in a few moments. He made his way down Market street as far as the Call building, from which flames were issuing at every window, with the blaze shooting through the roof. A similar condition prevailed in the Examiner building, across the street.

He then started for the depot, at Third and Townsend streets, determined to leave the city. He found a procession of several thousand other persons headed in the same direction.

All south of Market street about that time was a crackling mass of flames. Mr. Anthony made his way to Eighth and Market, thence down Eighth to Townsend and to Third street, and the entire section which he traversed was afire, making it impossible for him to reach his destination. He attempted to back track, but found that his retreat had been cut off by the flames. He then went to Twelfth street and reached Market again by the city hall. San Francisco's magnificent municipal building had concaved like an egg shell. The steel dome was still standing, but the rest of the $3,000,000 structure was a mass of charred ruins.

It was not yet noon, but the city's hospitals were already filled with dead and injured, and all available storerooms were being pressed into service. Dead bodies were being carried from the streets in garbage wagons. In every direction hysterical women were seen. Men walked through the streets, weeping, and others wore blanched faces. Transfer men were being offered fabulous sums to remove household goods, even for a block distant. Horses had been turned loose and were running at large to prevent their being incinerated in the burning buildings. Women had loaded their personal belongings on carts and were pulling them through the city, the property being huddled in the public squares.

"The Grand Hotel tossed like a ship at sea. There was a wavelike motion, accompanied by a severe up and down shake," said J. R. Hand of the Hand Fruit Company of Los Angeles. "The shock was accompanied by a terrific roar that is indescribable. An upright beam came through the floor of my room and the walls bulged in. I thought I should not get out alive. All my baggage was lost, but I still have the key to my room as a souvenir, No. 249.

"I was on the third story of the hotel and got the last vacant room. No one in any of the stronger built hotels was killed, to the best of my knowledge. These hotels were destroyed by fire after being severely wrecked. I reached the ferry station by a trip of about six miles around by the Fairmount Hotel and thence to the water front.

"The Examiner Building went up like a flash. I was standing in front of the Crocker Building and saw the first smoke. Just then the soldiers ran us out. We went around two blocks and the next view we had the building was a mass of flames. The burning of the Palace was a beautiful sight from the bay."

F. O. Popenie, manager of the Pacific Monthly, was asleep in the Terminus hotel, near the Southern Pacific ferry station, when the first tremble came.

"The Terminus hotel did not go down at the first shock," he said. "We were sleeping on the third floor when the quake came. The walls of the hotel began falling, but the guests had time to run outside before the building fell in.

"I started for San Jose on foot. When I reached the Potrero I looked back and saw the business section a furnace. Fires had started up in many places and were blazing fiercely. Finally a man driving a single rig overtook me. He was headed for San Jose and he took me in. After a distance of fifteen miles we took the train and went on."

The Terminus hotel was a six-story structure with stone and brick sides. It collapsed soon after the first shock.

Among the refugees who found themselves stranded were John Singleton, a Los Angeles millionaire, his wife and her sister. The Singletons were staying at the Palace hotel when the earthquake shock occurred.

Mr. Singleton gives the following account of his experience: "The shock wrecked the rooms in which we were sleeping. We managed to get our clothes on and get out immediately. We had been at the hotel only two days and left probably $3,000 worth of personal effects in the room.

"After leaving the Palace we secured an express wagon for $25 to take us to the Casino, near Golden Gate Park, where we stayed Wednesday night. On Thursday morning we managed to get a conveyance at enormous cost and spent the entire day in getting to the Palace. We paid $1 apiece for eggs and $2 for a loaf of bread. On these and a little ham we had to be satisfied."

"I was asleep in the Hotel Dangham, Ellis and Mason streets, when the shock came," said Miss Bessie Tannehill of the Tivoli Theatre. "There were at least 100 persons in the building at the time. At the first shock I leaped from the bed and ran to the window. Another upheaval came and I was thrown off my feet. I groped my way out of the room and down the dark stairway. Men, women and children, almost without clothing, crowded the place, crying and praying as they rushed out.

"When outside I saw the streets filled with people who rushed about wringing their hands and crying. Proprietor Lisser of the hotel offered a cabman $50 to take himself and his wife to the Presidio heights, but he refused. He wanted more money. We finally secured a carriage by paying $100. Fire was raging at this time and people were panic-stricken.

"After getting outside of the danger region I walked back, hoping to aid some of the unfortunates. I have heard about big prices charged for food. I wish to testify that the merchants on upper Market street and in nearby districts threw open their stores and invited the crowds to help themselves. The mobs rushed into every place, carrying out all the goods possible.

"I saw many looters and pickpockets at work. On Mason street a gang of thieves was at work. They were pursued by troops, but escaped in an auto."

The members of the Metropolitan opera company of New York were all victims of the great disaster, including Mme. Sembrich, Signor Caruso, Campanari, Dippel, Conductor Hertz and Bars.

All of the splendid scenery, stage fittings, costumes and musical instruments were lost in the fire which destroyed the Grand Opera House, where their season had just opened.

No one of the company was injured, but nearly all of them lost their personal effects. Mme. Sembrich placed the loss by the destruction of her elegant costumes at $20,000. She was fortunate enough to save her valuable jewels. The total loss to the organization was $150,000.

On the morning of the earthquake the members of the company were distributed among the different hotels.

The sudden shock brought all out of their bedrooms in all kinds of attire. The women were in their night dresses, the men in pajamas, none pausing to dress, all convinced that their last hour had come. Ten minutes later Caruso was seen seated on his valise in the middle of the street. Many of the others had rushed to open squares or other places of supposed safety. Even then it was difficult to avoid the debris falling from the crumbling walls.

Several of those stopping at the Oaks were awakened by plaster from the ceilings falling on their bed and had barely time to flee for their lives. One singer was seen standing in the street, barefoot, and clad only in his underwear, but clutching a favorite violin which he carried with him in his flight. Rossi, though almost in tears, was heard trying his voice at a corner near the Palace hotel.

A. W. Hussey, who went to the Hall of Justice on the morning of the disaster, told how at the direction of a policeman whom he did not know, he had cut the arteries in the wrists of a man pinioned under timbers at St. Katherine hotel.

According to the statement made by Hussey the man was begging to be killed and the policeman shot at him, but his aim was defective and the bullet went wide of the mark. The officer then handed Hussey a knife with instructions to cut the veins in the suffering man's wrists, and Hussey obeyed orders to the letter.

A story was told of one young girl who had followed for two days the body of her father, her only relative. It had been taken from a house in Mission street to an undertaker's shop just after the quake. The fire drove her out with her charge, and it was placed in Mechanics' Pavilion.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.