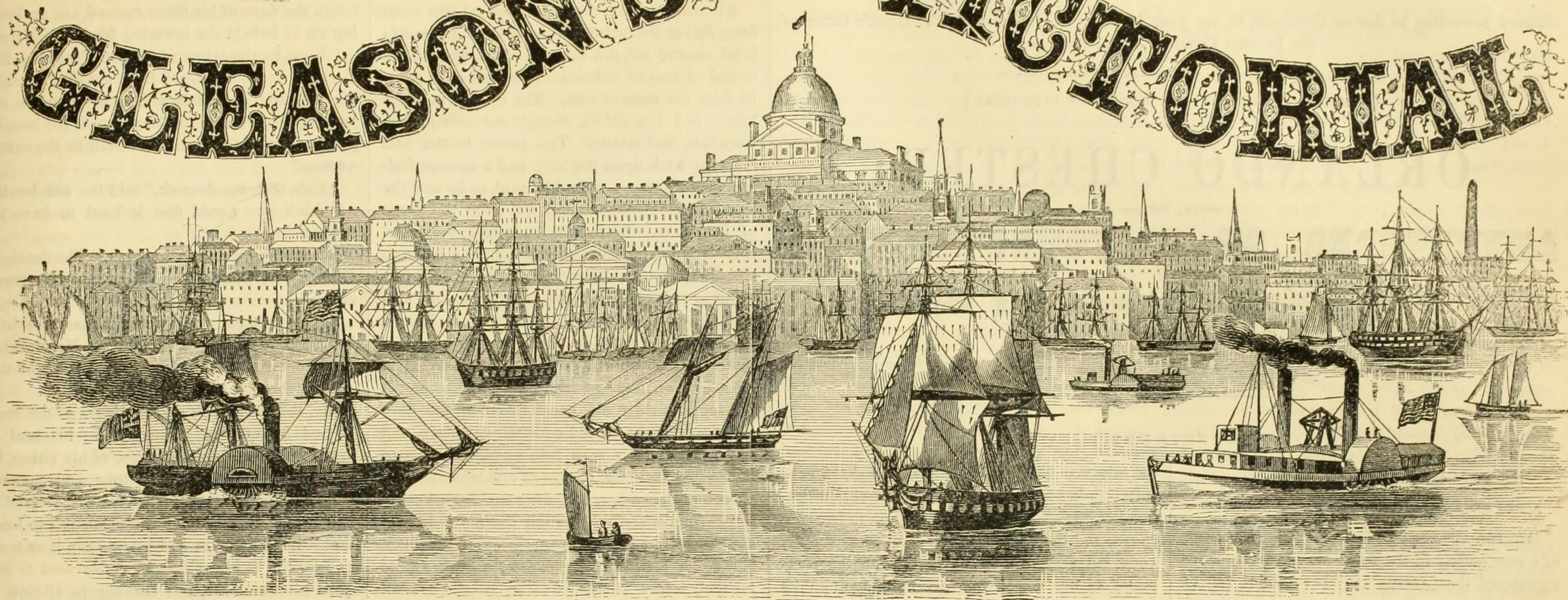


GLEASON'S PICTORIAL



F. GLEASON, { CORNER OF BROMFIELD
AND TREMONT STREETS.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 1852.

\$2 00 PER VOLUME. } NO. 16.—VOL. II.
10 CTS. SINGLE COPY.

BURNING OF TREMONT TEMPLE.

The destructive fire, which occurred but a few days since, was entirely too neighborly to this establishment to suit our taste, inasmuch as the roof of our own building was more than once on fire, and a considerable damage to glass, wood work, etc., sustained. This, however, the insurance companies have at once remedied.

The cut below represents the midnight scene as sketched by our artist from the roof of our own building, and will give the reader a very faithful idea of the fearful scene when at its height. On the last page of the present number will also be found a representation of the ruins after the fire, drawn from a daguerreotype, by Whipple, taking in Tremont street in the pros-

pective, and showing our office in the distance. Both these pictures are excellent and faithful ones, and are particularly commended to the reader. The fire burst out a little after midnight, and the alarm was soon spread over the city. Before the arrival of any of the fire companies, several citizens were busily engaged with buckets in passing water and applying it to the

flames, which they managed for a time to keep confined to the room in which the fire originated. From some unexplained cause, the first company that arrived upon the ground had some trouble in unreeling and stretching their leading hose from a hydrant to the building, and in the meanwhile, the flames gained rapid headway.

[FOR CONTINUATION SEE PAGE 256.]



VIEW OF THE BURNING OF TREMONT TEMPLE, FROM THE CUPOLA OF OUR OFFICE.

They were soon checked, and the fire was supposed to be in a fair way to be speedily extinguished. The flames, however, which had secretly and unobserved crept into the ceiling and under the floors, burst out with renewed force, and raged with almost unexampled fury until the whole structure was in an entire sheet of fire. It was one of the most serious and destructive fires we have had in Boston for many years. The catastrophe is also especially sad from the fact that human life has been sacrificed, and art lost some of its finest trophies. Tremont Temple may be said to have been the resort of the artist, for under its roof were congregated more of the profession than any other in the city. Many of our first works of art in painting and sculpture now lie in ashes among the ruins. So speedy and fearfully did the flames spread, that scarcely anything was saved. Many attempted to enter the building after the conflagration had got full headway, but were repelled by the threatening danger. The fire was first discovered in a room on the third floor, in the northwest corner of the building, occupied by Benjamin Champney, portrait and landscape painter. Upon the rekindling of the flames, the fire extended rapidly to the southerly side of the building, and soon burnt off the principal timbers, and about two o'clock, the roof fell in with a heavy crash. At this time a number of persons were inside the building, all of whom narrowly escaped serious if not fatal injury. In attempting with the others to obtain shelter under the balustrade from the falling mass, a fireman named Turner, fell from the balusters to the ground, and very fortunately received but slight injury. Several persons made every effort to gain access to the different rooms for the purpose of saving such articles of value as they could grapple, but the heat and dense smoke forced them back repeatedly. An intense excitement prevailed upon the instant of the falling of the roof, and the escape of several from a terrible death seemed to have been cut off, but fortunately a rear door was forced by some bold hand, by which egress was had through a house in Montgomery Place.

During this period the entire department had got to work, and torrents of water were pouring from the various lines of hose upon the flames, apparently producing but little effect. At about half-past two, the south wall fell, outwardly, upon the roof of a low old wooden building adjoining, crushing the building nearly to a heap of ruins. Several persons who were in this building narrowly escaped with their lives, and we regret to state that one fireman, George Esty, a member of Engine Company No. 7 of Charlestown, was very badly injured by the falling wall. He was taken into the Tremont House, where a physician was called, and every attention paid him by the proprietor, Mr. Parker, and his assistants. It was soon ascertained that Mr. Esty's left leg was fractured, his back very badly wrenched, and perhaps broken, and that he was otherwise very severely bruised. He was subsequently conveyed to the Massachusetts Hospital, where he still lingers with little hope of life. All efforts to extinguish the fire were vain. First the immense roof, flame-lined, fell into the fire below, throwing into the sky immense clusters of cinders, which spread in every direction, and presenting one vast atmosphere of sparkling fire. Shortly after the magnificent front wall of the Temple began to sway and totter. The flames beat against it in terrific rage. The massive granite began to crack with heat. The masonry crumbled away. The engulfing flames raged still fiercer. The pile again trembled, tottered, and then fell, with a tremendous crash into Tremont street. The earth almost shook, as if by a quake of nature. A thrill of fright ran through the assembled thousands. Heavy blocks of granite, hot and seething and

steaming now lay in confusion. Hundreds had barely escaped instant destruction. The fiery mass fell entirely across the street, carrying before it the massive iron fence in front of the Tremont House. The moment was one of intense excitement. But two minutes before the place where were piled tons of granite, stood hundreds of our fellow-citizens. Had the wall fallen when it first tottered, the loss of life must have been sad indeed. Providentially it did not.

Tremont Temple, as is well known, was formerly the home of the drama, having been built as a theatre in 1827, and was used as such until 1843, when it was sold to the Baptists for public worship for \$55,000. It was fitted as at present at an expense of \$25,000. The depth of the

very rare and costly pictures stored in an upper story, lost his entire collection, which was valued at over \$50,000. He had no insurance, and the loss is irreparable. Many of the paintings were collected in Europe, and were master-pieces. It was said to be the finest collection in the United States. We understand that Mr. T. was in one of the upper rooms of the Tremont House, and saw the flames gradually consume all that was dear and genial to his taste; and to gather which had been the ambition of his life. As one bust and painting after another fell before the ruthless element, his agony of mind was almost insupportable. Mr. King, the sculptor, lost probably over \$3000. Among his collection were marble busts of Webster, Clay, Calhoun,

correctly estimated at present, but it is certain that it cannot fall short of \$200,000, on which there is undoubtedly considerable insurance. Among the losses which will be felt as a public calamity, is the destruction of the magnificent organ in the Temple. It was one of the finest in the country, and was as ornamental in appearance as it was rich and grand in tone, and was considered a beautiful specimen of musical art. At the height of the fire, the sight was terrifically grand, the immense volumes of flame illuminating, for a time, nearly the whole city. We understand that the light was distinctly visible on board the steamer Eastern State, which was off Boon Island, sixty-five miles in a direct line from Boston. Thousands of our citizens, as well as many strangers in the city, visited the scene of destruction the following day. The burning of this noble edifice is an event which will long be remembered. Mr. John Hall, carpenter, who was found dead beneath the ruins of the Temple, has left a wife and one child, who live in Province House Court. He left his home soon after the fire commenced, and seeing there was no danger of his house being burned, went back, and said to his wife, "we are all safe," and after showing his little son the fire, left him with his mother, saying, "I am going to lend a hand to get out some things." Thus he perished in his noble endeavors to assist in saving the property of others. He was 39 years of age, and left a destitute family, whose only dependence was his daily labor. It seems to be the opinion of some of the engineers, that the fire must have had its origin in a defect in a flue, as some persons who were earliest on the spot, and who exerted themselves in endeavoring to quench the flames, declare that they distinctly heard the crackling of the flames in the ceiling before they had actually burst into the room occupied by Mr. Champney.

The ruins of the building are still smoking and smouldering. The two granite corners fronting on Tremont street, remain standing as the fire left them. They have been propped so as to prevent the possibility of their falling outwardly. On Friday, several pieces of glass ware, known to have been in the attic of the Temple on the night of the fire, were found among a mass of brick, stone and rubbish, in the cellar, and what is quite remarkable, among those same pieces were a wine-glass and tumbler, as perfect as when first manufactured, with the exception of being discolored somewhat by the heat. The two perfect articles, together with others of glass nearly so, were placed in a conspicuous position for the observation of the throng of persons who visited the ruins.

Many inquiries are made, whether Tremont Temple is to be rebuilt. The matter is as yet undecided. The insurance on the former building is not sufficient to rebuild it with such improvements as are desirable, and the trustees are deliberating whether to sell the land or rebuild. If they are able to raise a loan of \$10,000 on the scrip which they are authorized by the conditions of the deed to issue, secured by the property after the mortgage, they will proceed to rebuild with substantial improvements, and manage as heretofore.

The project of erecting a theatre on the ruins of the Temple is also the topic of earnest conversation. Many of the stockholders of the Boston Theatre are desirous of transferring their interest into the enterprise. For our own part we should be glad to see the "old Tremont" thus revived again, and believe that a first class theatre in this locality would pay a good percentage on the investment, and if properly conducted, with what Boston has not had for a long while, a good stock company, would prove profitable to the management. The earliest recollections we have of actors and theatricals are those of our boyhood at the old Tremont Theatre, and we should be glad to see those scenes renewed.



VIEW OF THE RUINS OF TREMONT TEMPLE.

building was 135 feet; width in front, 78 feet; width in rear, 90 feet; covering an area of 11,340 feet. The front of the Temple was built of Quincy granite, in imitation of the Ionic style of architecture. The upper hall was 88 by 90 feet in extent, and capable of seating 2000 persons. Its destruction will be looked upon as a public calamity, for its central locality, its great capacity, and its convenient arrangement for its uses, aside from its massive and stately appearance, made it an object of interest and regard to all citizens and strangers. There was insurance on the building to the amount of \$26,000, divided between four offices—one in this city, one in Hartford, one in Salem, and one in Portland. A large number of artists, dentists, and others, occupied the various rooms of the building. Mr. Thomas Thompson, who had a collection of

and many other eminent men, which he had been at great cost in procuring. Among Mr. Pope's collection of paintings was a portrait of Madame Tedesco, which has been much admired by thousands, and which was destroyed. This picture was one of the best productions of the artist. Chapman Hall, in the rear, a large and costly structure, soon fell into the grasp of the huge flame. The efforts of the fire department, though heroic and sustained, were not competent to secure it from destruction. In two hours a portion of its walls fell, the noise from which sounded long and wide. The building was owned by Mr. Amos Baker, who occupied a portion of it for a private school. Mr. Baker is insured for \$16,000, which will nearly cover his loss. The building is valued at \$20,000. The precise amount of loss by this conflagration cannot be