

FLAMES IN A CANDLE FACTORY.

A FIRE IN FOURTH-STREET WHICH ATTRACTED THOUSANDS OF SPECTATORS.

Roland G. Mitchell & Co.'s paraffine candle manufactory, a three-story flat-roofed building having a frontage of 75 feet in First-avenue and one of 100 feet in Fourth-street, and known as Nos. 67, 69, and 71 First-avenue, was burned down last evening, and a multitude of people were treated to a display such as is seldom seen at conflagrations. The disaster is little regretted, as the manufactory has been a nuisance to the noses of the inhabitants of the Seventeenth Ward for a decade. The fire was detected about 6:30 o'clock by a thin column of brown smoke rising over the factory. The watchman, Anton Kinzelman, of East New-York, entered the place, and from one of the hatchways over the deep basement poured, when it was opened, a volume of hot, pungent smoke. The fire was near a wall which separated the engine-house, known as No. 120 East Fourth-street, from the factory. There is a firm opinion that a fire-cracker which fell or was thrown through a basement window caused the mischief. While Kinzelman was wasting valuable time in throwing pails of water down the basement, a citizen acted sensibly, and ran to the quarters of the engine company at No. 342 Fifth-street, and kicking at the door, shouted, "The candle factory's a-fire." Foreman Philip Sheridan ordered a third alarm sounded, which summoned 11 engine companies, five hook and ladder companies, and Chiefs of Battalion Gicquel, Miller, and Fisher. Capt. McCullagh, of the Seventeenth Precinct, took command of the Police.

The fire traveled with remarkable rapidity. The basement was ablaze before the engines had got well to work. This was at 6:40 o'clock. Ten minutes later the entire factory, with the exception of the engine-room, was on fire. The smoke grew thicker and thicker, and became an immense pillar, which shot up 500 feet in the air. The fire on the upper floors decreased in intensity after a while, but the smoke increased in volume and density, but soon it started again and burned vigorously, gradually eating away the wood-work and letting materials and machinery fall on the charred first floor. At intervals this floor gave way, letting masses of rubbish into the basement with a crash, and these plunging into melted fat floating on the water caused sheets of flame to shoot out of the basement and ground floor windows, making the firemen retreat or shade their faces. The basement was often at a white heat. At 7:45 o'clock the fire was well under control.

An estimate that 20,000 persons watched the fire from streets, windows, and roofs, would not be very wide of the mark. The fire was in a densely populated neighborhood, and on the Fourth of July. Three-quarters of the spectators were neighbors, and fully one-third of them were children. At the beginning of the fire about 20 families fled from No. 73 First-avenue and other tenement-houses and they and their baggage were cared for at the Seventeenth Precinct Station-house. Detectives Bissert and Robinson, of the precinct, watched abandoned apartments and, as far as is known, nothing was lost. The only casualty reported was severe but not dangerous injuries to Fireman Robert Beattie, of Engine Company No. 18, who fell from the engine in Fifth-street, east of the Bowery, while going to the fire. He was taken home to No. 275 West Twelfth-street. Insurance agents at the fire roughly estimated the loss at \$60,000. A closer estimate of the losses makes them \$80,000 to \$85,000, of which \$25,000 are on the building, which is owned by Mitchell & Co. They manufacture paraffine candles by a process which is a secret, so that the material on hand cannot be ascertained. It is said that at the time of the fire they had 5,000 boxes of candles ready for shipment. The same authority gives the tallow on hand at 200 hogsheads. There were also from 25 to 30 carboys of vitriol and a quantity of not very expensive material used in the secret processes. A great loss is in the item of machinery and molds. The factory was burned down twenty years ago, and there was a slight fire there some six years later.

When the fire was out the walls of the factory stood plumb. In the cellar there remained a large mass of fatty substances floating on the water, the remainder of tallow, &c., the weight of which is estimated at 250 to 350 tons. Estimates of the loss consider this as salvage, which, when subjected to certain processes, will be worth from 1 to 3 cents a pound.