

FIRE FIEND WOULD DESTROY THE OCEAN BEACH PAVILION

The Massive Structure Saved by the Timely Appearance of Watchman Wilkins.

Officials of both the Police and the Fire departments are investigating a case of incendiarism that gives promise of sensational developments. The great Ocean House Pavilion, at the foot of the Hill leading to the Cliff House, was found on fire at an early hour yesterday morning, and every indication points to the fact that it was fired by an ex-employee of Henry Doscher, the proprietor. The building covers a great area, and being built of the most inflammable material, would prove easy prey to the fire king if that consuming element once secured the mastery. Whittlings of wood and rags saturated with coal oil show how desperate was the incendiary. Revenge is supposed to have actuated the man to destroy property and endanger many lives.

Shortly after 4 o'clock yesterday morning W. T. Wilkins, night watchman at the Cliff House, was making his customary rounds of the great building. He had been through the stables, the kitchen and other portions of the establishment, and stepped out on the main veranda. As he did so his attention was attracted by a great blaze to the southward. One glance was sufficient to show him that the Ocean House Pavilion was in flames. Without a moment's hesitation he started off at top speed for the scene of the conflagration. Although Mr. Doscher, the proprietor, was sleeping in the adjoining building, the Seal Rock House, neither he nor his wife nor servants had been awakened by the crackling timbers. Mr. Wilkins was the first on the spot.

His first thought was for the persons asleep in the pavilion and adjoining houses, and he made a great outcry to awaken them. Started out of their sleep, they appeared on the scene in all stages of heshabille.

It was but the work of a moment to organize an amateur fire department, as it was readily seen that before an alarm could be turned in for the nearest engine in Richmond District the building would be but a mass of smoking ruins. A bucket brigade was first organized, but this did not prove effective. "Billy" Geishen, bartender of the Seal Rock House, borrowed himself of a stout garden hose and soon had this attached to a near-by standpipe. The fire had been started at the corner of the building, on the main road, near the terminus of the Park and Ocean Railway, and the flames were mounting up high. Mr. Wilkins and Mr. Geishen took the hose and practically fought their way through the flames that were bursting out from under the building. Once under there they directed the water on the seat of the trouble and soon had it under control. The smoke and heat were stifling, and several times they were nearly overcome. It was nearly daylight when the fire was finally extinguished, and then the cause was investigated. The work of the dastardly incendiary was evident on every hand. In addition to the heavy fumes of coal oil, with which the atmosphere seemed charged, there was a hint of pitch pine about.

The investigators soon found more material evidence of the work of the incendiary. First to attract their attention was a heap of wood shavings which some one had apparently whittled out on the spot from some pieces of soft wood. Mixed with these was a lot of old rags, all redolent of the odor of coal oil. The would-be incendiary had planned his vicious deed well, and it was only the elements which saved the great building from total destruction. Not a breath of air was stirring to fan the flames started with such malicious intent. Had they secured any headway no power available would have stopped them until they had laid waste the building and those adjoining it. The match had been cunningly applied, at the corner where the flames would have had a full sweep of the great structure, and where they would have left nothing but a few burning embers to mark the havoc they had wrought. The building, which is partly insured, is the property of A. P. Hotelling & Co., and is leased by Mr. Doscher. He has a small amount of insurance on his property in the pavilion.

Mr. Doscher is convinced that he can place his hand on the man who applied the torch to his property. He was in a highly nervous state yesterday after his experiences of the early morning hours, saying: "I am satisfied I have an enemy who has determined to take desperate chances to break me up in business. The man I have in mind was recently discharged by me, and when he left he swore he would do something desperate to injure me. I thought his threats were merely idle words, but I soon saw he intended to carry them into effect. The first evidence of his enmity was shown on Sunday when the pot bear which I have had for a long time was found dead in its house. It had been poisoned during the night. I am not going to take any more chances and have employed a watchman, who has instructions to deal harshly with any suspicious characters he may see prowling about the place."

Mr. Doscher was so much disturbed by the exciting scenes through which he had passed that so soon as he could place his business affairs in order he went away to the country, where he could rest in seclusion and quietness.

W. T. Wilkins, night watchman at the Cliff House, was the hero of the



THE OCEAN HOUSE PAVILION SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION.

occasion. He is a cousin of Manager Wilkins, of the world famous hostelry on the edge of the ocean. "I had made my customary rounds of the Cliff House," he said yesterday, "and stepped out on the southern balcony. As I did so my attention was at once attracted by a bright light at a corner of the Ocean House Pavilion. One glance was sufficient to tell me that the place was on fire, and I ran as fast as I could down the hill to render whatever assistance I could. My first thought was to turn in an alarm, but it was evident from the start the fire had made that it could burn the building down in a few minutes; certainly long before the firemen could hope to arrive. There was not a soul about when I reached the scene, so I at once awakened Mr. Doscher and his wife, the barkeepers and all the men about the place. We first started to fight the fire with buckets, and then 'Billy' Geishen secured a garden hose and we went at it with that. The two of us went under the porch through the smoke and thus got at the seat of the fire. There was a strong smell of coal oil and something that smelled like pitch. After we put the fire out we found rags and whittlings of wood all saturated with oil at the place where the fire started. It was fortunate that no wind was blowing, as had there been any the pavilion would have been wiped out of existence, as nothing we could have done with the appliances at hand could have checked it."

The building, with its great organ, is well known to all persons who have ever visited the Ocean Beach. It is a popular place for dancing parties frequented by people of a certain class. It has also gained renown as the headquarters of Tom Sharkey whenever he is preparing for a ring engagement in this city. Here he had his gymnasium, and from the door nearest where this fire originated he used to sally forth twice a day, clothed in his faded bath robe, for a swim out in the breakers, which often roll mountains high and sound like thunder as they break on the sandy beach.

The authorities expect to apprehend the fire fiend, and will deal with him in a summary manner.

JOINT GUARDIANS OF THE CANAL

America to Act With England.

Special Dispatch to The Call. NEW YORK, Dec. 6.—The Washington correspondent of the Herald telegraphs: The Senate committee on the Nicaraguan canal will add to the canal bill now pending a provision intended to bring about a treaty with Great Britain for a joint guaranty of the neutrality of the canal. This provision is embodied in an amendment which has been prepared by Senator

Harris of Kansas, who is one of the closest students of problems relating to the construction of the canal, as well as one of the most earnest supporters of the canal project in Congress. The Senate committee, of which Senator Morgan is chairman, will meet to-morrow to consider this amendment, as well as to formulate a supplemental report concerning the new concession which was granted by Nicaragua during the recess of Congress. At this meeting the plans of the friends of the canal will probably take shape. The fact that the report of the commission of which Admiral Walker is chairman will not be ready before about January

1 is regarded by Senator Morgan and other strong supporters of the canal as unfortunate, and it is feared that the result of this delay, taken in connection with a desire of Republican leaders to confine this session to absolutely necessary matters, will be that the canal will have to go over to the new Congress.

The Harris amendment will authorize the President to negotiate a treaty agreement with Great Britain for a joint guaranty of the permanent neutrality of the canal. It is designed to meet the English objections that the plans of Congress for American construction and control fly in the teeth of the expressed terms of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. The failure of the President to make any mention in his message of the existence of that treaty has called forth a note of criticism from London newspapers, particularly those which are regarded as representing the views of the British Government. The President's failure to refer to the treaty is construed as an encouragement to Congress to go ahead without any reference to the terms of that document which Great Britain contends are and ought to be still in force. The American contention has, of course, been that Great Britain's violation of the terms of that treaty have been such as to give this Government "call warrant in going ahead with the construction of the canal without any reference to its provisions. It is Senator Harris' idea, and Senator Morgan agrees with him, that the simplest way to prevent any misunderstanding is to authorize the President to make an agreement of the kind contemplated by the amendment.

LOS ANGELES TO BOOM THE CANAL

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 6.—At the Chamber of Commerce in this city today a meeting of prominent business men was held to map out a plan of action for the booming of the building of the Nicaragua canal. It was decided to send a number of workers to Washington to carry on a campaign for the canal there. Another meeting to select the men to represent this section in Washington was called for next week.

GERMANY WILL GET NONE OF THE CAROLINES

BERLIN, Dec. 6.—The Deutschwarte says it learns on high authority that Germany will not acquire any of the Caroline Islands.

CRAWLS FOR HOURS ON HIS STOMACH

Wounded Man Covers Two and One-Half Miles Before He Finds Assistance.

SACRAMENTO, Dec. 6.—With his left kneecap shot away and his leg mangled, Frank Miller, a prominent young farmer of Sacramento, crawled on the flat of his stomach a distance of two and a half miles over the Yolo basin this morning, and, summoning all the strength he had remaining in him, waved his hat above his prostrate body and cried aloud for help. His appeals were heard by a teamster in the distance, who lifted him into his wagon and brought him to the Receiving Hospital at Sacramento for treatment. Miller, who has lived in Yolo County all his life, started from his farm at an early

hour this morning to collect some bills in Sacramento. He placed a loaded shotgun in the wagon. When about four miles from Davisville, driving along an abandoned road, Miller's wagon struck a bowlder and turned over, throwing out himself and the gun. In striking the ground the gun was discharged, the entire charge entering Miller's left thigh and shattering his kneecap into splinters. Miller lay helpless on the ground in the bitter cold waiting for some passer-by, and, none coming, he snatched at clumps of grass ahead of him and drew his body along over a tortuous stretch of two and a half miles until rescued in the manner described.

Surgeons were at once called to his assistance when he was brought to the Receiving Hospital, and while he will be crippled for life, it is thought his leg may be saved from amputation.

POWELL CLAYTON IS EMBASSADOR TO MEXICO

Elevation of His Rank Follows the Action of Mexico in Promoting Its Representatives.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6.—The President to-day sent to Congress the nomination of Powell Clayton of Arkansas, to be Ambassador to Mexico, in place of Senor Romero, the former Mexican

BLAZED LIKE A TORCH IN THE MIDST OF THE OCEAN

GILLET IN CHIHUAHUA. Has Not Been Arrested and Is Not Likely to Be.

DENVER, Colo., Dec. 6.—A special to the News from El Paso, Texas, says: A private dispatch from Chihuahua confirms the report that Grant C. Gillett, the cattle plunger, is in that city. He has not been arrested, according to the dispatch, and is not likely to be. Shaeffer of Kansas City and a Pinkerton detective arrived in Chihuahua yesterday in quest of Gillett. They have a warrant for his arrest for obtaining money under false pre-

Total Loss by Fire of the Lumber Laden Ship W. H. Starbuck.

Another marine disaster has been recorded. The American ship William A. Starbuck while on her way from Port Blakeley for South Africa caught fire and was burned to the water's edge. The captain, his wife and three children and some of the crew escaped in the boats and reached Hawaii, but the second mate, steward and four sailors are missing. The cook was drowned.

A passenger who arrived on the steamer Australia from Honolulu yesterday told the following story of the disaster:

"Captain McDonald was fairly well when I saw him on the island of Maui last month, but Mrs. McDonald was prostrated by what she had gone through, and it will be a long time before she will be well again. The children bore the exposure well and seemed to be none the worse for their trip of twenty days in an open boat.

"The William H. Starbuck was loaded by Renton, Holmes & Co. at Port Blakeley, and she sailed for Cape Town on October 15. She had aboard 1,012,585 feet of pine and redwood lumber and a great number of doors and windows. All went well until early in the night of November 5. At 10 p. m. a fire was discovered in the forepeak and all hands were called. A cursory examination showed that all on board were in a precarious position. The only way in which the seat of the fire could be reached was by the small hatch over the chain locker, and the water that could be passed in that way only seemed to make the fire burn more fiercely.

"The captain and his officers held a brief consultation and it was decided to jettison some of the deck load in order to reach the fore hatch. Over 30,000 feet of lumber was thrown overboard, and about 3 a. m. the fore hatch was clear and the covering raised. In a moment the flames burst up as high as the foremasthead mast, and some of the crew had to jump overboard to save themselves from being burned. Lines were thrown to them and they easily scrambled aboard again. A glance showed that the interior of the ship was a raging mass of fire, so the captain ordered everybody into the boats. Three of the boats were provisioned and launched, the captain in command of one, the first mate of another and the second mate of the third.

"The three boats stayed by the burning ship all of the 6th and all that night. The morning of the 7th she was burned to the water's edge, so the boats

came together and another consultation was held. The question to be decided was, should the boats remain in the track of passing ships and take the chances of being picked up, or should they make for Hawaii, 2,000 miles away. Owing to the limited supply of water it was decided to try to reach Hawaii.

"The only boat that had a compass and navigating instruments was the captain's, so the other two had to follow him as closely as possible. After three days of fine weather a storm came up and blew very hard during the night. The next morning the third boat, containing the second mate, steward and four sailors, was missing and was not seen again. When the shipwrecked men in the two remaining boats were twelve days on their way to Hawaii another storm came up and the mate's boat capsized. The cook was hurt in the accident and sank before help could reach him. The mate's craft was now damaged and useless, so the captain had to take him and his crew into his boat. In order to do so nearly all the provisions and stuff in the captain's boat had to be thrown overboard to make room for the men.

"Everybody was then placed on short allowance and for eight days Captain McDonald, his wife and three children and the nine members of the crew knew what starvation diet meant. Finally they made the island of Maui and landed at Hookeua, where they were hospitably received and everything possible was done for their comfort.

"The ship was burned in latitude 13.10 north, 131 west. No one knows what effects and had nothing but what they stood in when they landed at Hookeua. Captain McDonald and his family will probably come up from Honolulu on the next steamer."

The agents for the William H. Starbuck in San Francisco were the firm of Hind, Rolph & Co. From Cape Town she was to have gone to Newcastle, N. S. W., in ballast, thence to Kahului with a load of coal, and thence to New York with a load of sugar. She was 1272 tons net burden and was built in 1882 by Goss, Sawyer & Packard of Bath Maine. She was 194.1 feet long, 39 feet broad and 24.3 feet deep. She was owned by the "Sailing Ship William H. Starbuck Company."

The news of the loss of the Starbuck reached Honolulu by the steamer Mauna Loa the day the Australia sailed for San Francisco.

Minister, having been raised to the rank of an Ambassador, Mr. Clayton's promotion follows, under an act of Congress. The President also sent to the Senate a number of appointments made during the recess. They include those of Secretary Hay, Assistant Secretary of State



LAST OF THE AMERICAN SHIP WILLIAM H. STARBUCK.