

A SERIOUS CONFLAGRATION.

Burton's Stable with Many Horses, Carriages, Etc., Destroyed by Fire—Many Dwellings Badly Scorched and Families Made Homeless—Loss About \$18,000.

Shortly after four o'clock yesterday morning an alarm of fire was sounded from box 42 and those who turned out witnessed one of the most disastrous fires which has visited Newport in a long time. The fire originated in Benj. Burton's stable, a large building extending from Levin street to William street. The lower part, and the south end of the upper part, of this building, was occupied by the Newport Omnibus Company, of which Mr. Burton is president, for stabling purposes, while the second story in the north end was finished off into a dance hall. This hall was rented Thursday night to a party of colored people who were having a dance, and at about 11 o'clock Mr. Burton, having got his rent for the premises, went home, leaving the hall in charge of the dancers who were to see that the place was properly closed when the amusements were over. Some time after 4 o'clock the next morning he was suddenly awakened with a vague idea that there was a fire though he could not tell whether he had heard a cry of fire or not. Seeing the reflection of fire from the window he slipped on his overalls and went out. Then discovering that it was his stable and that the flames had already broken through the roof, he hurried to the premises in the hope of saving the horses. Opening the stable door he was met by an immense profusion of smoke, but the fire being overhead he could see the horses, some of which, stationed at the south end of the building, were already suffocating. He bravely entered and succeeded in rescuing six horses out of the twelve which the stable contained. He was then so nearly suffocated that he fell to the floor, but having presence of mind he succeeded in crawling to the door where he soon recovered. He then re-entered the building where he succeeded in saving several harnesses and other articles. This building was totally destroyed together with six horses, five omnibuses, four huddies, two victorias, one buggy, one landau, one half-phaeton, about one and a half tons of hay and about \$300 worth of tools. There was also considerable furniture, belonging to various parties, stored in the upper part of the building, which was also burned. The insurance on the building was \$5000, \$2500 in the Niagara of New York and \$2500 in the Merchants. The stock was insured in the Royal of England for \$2750 as follows:—\$1000 on the horses, \$1250 on carriages and \$500 on harnesses. The total loss of Mr. Burton and the Omnibus Co. is estimated at \$12,000.

This is a thickly settled neighborhood and had the wind blown from the west the south side of Levin street and the north side of William street must have been swept to the avenue, but the wind was north and the roofs of the neighboring buildings being wet from recent rains, the fire department was enabled to confine the flames to two or three buildings, only one dwelling being totally ruined. This was a house on William street owned by Constant Smith and occupied by four colored families, William Reilly, Mrs. Harriet Gibson, John Weeden and Edward Wilson. The escape of all the members of these families was miraculous, the clothing on one of the beds in which children were sleeping having taken fire before the children were rescued. The furniture and wearing apparel of these families were a total loss. Loss on the building \$2000; insured for \$1000 in the Commerce of Albany.

The tenement house owned by Miss Anne Brown was damaged about \$1000; insured in the Providence Mutual for \$500. The residences of Catherine Boyd and John Burns were also damaged but were covered by insurance.

The fire is thought to be the result of carelessness on the part of the dancers as the fire undoubtedly originated in the upper part of the building and was discovered almost as soon as the dance broke up. One of the neighbors, in fact, says that he was aroused by the cries of the dancers themselves and, looking out of his window saw the flames coming out of the ventilator in the roof.

BURTON'S ANNIVERSARY.—In April 1855 Benjamin J. Burton, commenced the Express business in this city, under many disadvantages well known to the writer of this. His horses were frequently injured, his harnesses cut, and his wagons broken, by malicious and unprincipled competitors, but he kept steadily onward reaping prosperity and the respect of all whose respect was worth having, and on Thursday afternoon he celebrated his twentieth anniversary by a very pretty street procession. In the line were nine wagons of various sizes from the light Dispatch to the heavy goer, all in bright cerulean blue touched off with chrome yellow and decorated with flags. These were drawn by sixteen good looking horses, caparisoned in new harnesses. A halt was made on Bellevue Avenue and the "Original B. J. Burton" with his teams was made the subject for a fine photograph by the "Original J. & Williams." This over, a parade was made through every ward in our city, to the music of the new "Newport Cornet Band" under the leadership of Prof. Jacob C. Chase. This band rode in the big furniture wagon drawn by six horses, the "ribbons" being skillfully handled by that veteran knight of the whip, Mr. Stephen Saunders Vars. The final halt was made in front of Burton's Hall on Levin Street where "Ben" had arranged to receive his invited guests. A fine collation was here spread from 1 P. M. to 9 P. M., and all enjoyed the occasion, wishing their generous host, long life and happiness. Most of our City Officials and many of our most respected citizens took the opportunity of showing their respect to him as a citizen and a man, and the host could not have been otherwise than pleased with this evidence of their respect and good will. The band upon this occasion played upon the street for the first time, and with credit to themselves, and to their teacher. They number 18 pieces. Of "Ben" it will never be said that he has paid too much attention to civil rights and too little to his finances, for he pays his way promptly.

LARGE BUILDING.—The "Original" Benjamin J. Burton is having a building one hundred and twenty feet long by forty feet broad, running from William to Levin streets, erected, and it is to be used, the ground floor for summer stables and the upper for an armory and drill room for the Burnside Guards.

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