

## TERRIBLE CALAMITY.

### EXPLOSION AT THE WASHINGTON ARSENAL.

The community were shocked yesterday by one of those calamities that appall the mind by their suddenness and terrible consequences.

At ten minutes past twelve o'clock, the quarter of the city adjacent to the United States Arsenal, near the foot of Four-and-a-half street, was startled by an explosion, followed by a column of smoke rising from the Arsenal grounds. Persons hurrying to the scene found that the long building or shed, called the laboratory, where shells are charged, was blown up, and was on fire. The alarm was given and the Hibernia steam engine and other machines were quickly rallied and set to work to quench the flames, which were roasting the bodies of the unfortunate victims of the disaster. At twenty minutes past one the fire was extinguished, and some bodies and fragments of bodies were taken out of the ruins.

The scene was horrible beyond description. Under the metal roof of the building were seething bodies and limbs, mangled, scorched, and charred beyond the possibility of identification. Most of those who escaped—about two hundred and fifty persons, mostly females, were employed in that building—had fled shrieking away. Some fainted, and were with difficulty restored, and some had, after the first shock, returned to shriek over the fate of their companions; while an agonized crowd of relatives rushed to the spot to learn tidings of their daughters or sisters who were known to have been in the fated building.

Up to three o'clock eighteen or nineteen bodies had been taken from the ruins. They were so charred as to defy identification. The number could not be definitely ascertained, as the reader may know, when told that a half dozen of the bodies were put into a box about five feet square. Three women were taken out alive and placed in the hospital. Their names are Sally McKilloch, Anne Bache, (or Bates,) and Rebecca Hill. Miss Bates is so seriously burned that her recovery is doubtful. Sarah Campbell escaped from the building, and, being terribly frightened, ran towards her home, which is on Four-and-a-half street, Island, between Fifth and Sixth, but swooned away, and died instantly, it is supposed from fright.

The following are still missing, and are doubtless among the dead: Edw. Lacey, Miss Dunn, Lizzie Braecler, Bettie Branigan, Melissa Adam, Julia McKwen, and Maggie Young. The three last named are given up by their friends as dead. Many who are not among the dead are missing, for they were so frightened that they fled in all directions. One took refuge in a cellar, and remained there for an hour before she recovered from the effects of her extreme terror.

The square in front of the Arsenal gate presents a most appalling scene. Brothers, sisters, husbands, and fathers are there seeking for sisters, wives and daughters. The anxiety and sorrow exhibited is beyond all description.

The building destroyed was about one hundred feet long on the south side of the yard, with wooden walls and tin roof. It is used for charging artillery shells &c. Yesterday the hands were at work preparing signal rock to and the explosion is accounted for by the ignition of red stars used in three places. A quantity of these stars were being dried in brick pans outside the building. A spark was sent to the touch chimney of the cartridge factory by a man of the superintendent of the Arsenal, and it is supposed that the stars were set on fire in his workshop. An electric spark from the stars became heated by the sun by the touch chimney and a point was set on fire. The large shells in these stars dashed into the building and caused the explosion. Secretary Stanton is on the spot endeavoring to settle the matter.

The injured parties were attended to by Dr. Porter, who was assisted by Dr. Charles Allen, of this city, who happened to be in the neighborhood.

The foregoing particulars of this terrible calamity were derived from the Republican of last evening. At a later hour we learned that the charred remains of seventeen of the victims had been recovered. With one exception, they were all women, and only two of the bodies could be identified.

The verdict of the Coroner's inquest, we learn, severely censures Superintendent Brown whom it charges with having been guilty of the most culpable carelessness and negligence, in having inflammable substances placed so near a building filled with human beings, indicating an unaccountable and most reckless disregard of life. It is the most frightful accident we have ever had in Washington.