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TERRIFIC TRAGEDY IN CHILI

Two Thousand Five Hundred Persons Roasted to Death in a Church.

AwfulEndingof a Grand Religions Fete at Santiago, / the Chilian Capital.

THE CONFLAGRATION AND ITS INCIDENTS

Heart-Rending Scenes, and Tales of Horror,

Whole Families Consumed—Women Of All Banks Mainly the Victims.

Culpability of the Priests—Public Anathemas upon Them*

NOBLE CONDUCT OF THE AMERICANS

Graphic Descriptions from Our Special Correspondents,

SANTIAGO DE CHILI, Monday, Dec. 14, 1863.

Since the horrible loss of life in the earthquake at Mendoza, nothing has approached in mournfulness the spectacle presented to-day by the magnificent capital of Chile. By the conflagration of the Jesuit Church on the evening of the 8th inst., more than *two thousand* victims were suddenly hurried into eternity, by the most *fearful* of all possible deaths, that of *fire*. It were impossible to exaggerate the horror of the scene—it cannot even be described; and although an eyewitness of the terrible reality, I feel how utterly impossible it is to convey in language an idea of the heart-rending spectacle of Tuesday evening.

It has been the custom for the past five years to celebrate the "month of Mary" with great zeal and pomp, in the Church of the Companía or Jesuit Church, situated at the corner of the street of that name and Bandera-street, and fronting the plazuela of la Compañía. The curate having organized a religious association, known as the "Daughters of Mary," has held annual services during said month, winding up upon the 8th with a grand illumination of the Church and sermon in the evening, at which all the members were earnestly entreated to be present.

This year, determined to outshine all former exhibitions, he made arrangements to adorn the church with garlands of flowers, colossal statues, and with an unprecedented number of lights. He was vainly remonstrated with by the Archbishop and others in authority, who reluctantly gave their consent to the display. The church was filled with the devout all day, and towards nightfall a continuous stream of human beings, almost exclusively women, poured into the church until every avenue was densely packed, and the steps of the church and far out into the plaza were filled with a hushed and kneeling crowd.

The *doors were then all closed*, save the main entrance, for the double purpose of preventing the confusion occasioned by late comers and of making the voice of the preacher more distinctly heard. At a little before seven, the assistants began lighting up the church and were just finishing the grand altar, the rest of the building being fully illuminated with thousands of lamps, most of them of *perfect oil*, when, from a transparent crescent, at the foot of the statue of the Virgin, burst forth a jet of flame. The attendant endeavored to extinguish it with his poncho, but the inflammable liquid penetrated the fabric and only increased the danger. In a moment the flames darted up the garlands of artificial flowers to the roof, the immense cupola caught fire and the lamps suspended from the roof by strings dropped and exploded among the densely packed mass of women kneeling beneath. Darting along the wooden ceiling, already heated to the dryness of tinder, the flames ran like hissing serpents the whole length of the church and rolled down in huge billows upon the compact crowd, that had instinctively sought the main entrance. During the first few moments of surprise and terror shrieks of sorrow for the destruction of their beloved church resounded through the aisles of the building; but,when,rushing to the various outlets, all were found closed save one, and that one impassable, load streams of horror burst from the demoniac multitude. For a few moments the heart-piercing cries of perishing women were increasing; they gradually grew fainter and fainter, and soon an awful silence reigned within that horrible furnace, broken only by the angry roar of the flames, or the crash of falling towers. By the lurid glare within could be seen hundreds of human forms, some with faces elevated in prayer to Him before whose throne they were rapidly hastening, others with eyes eagerly upraised and hands outstretched towards the outer air, imploring that assistance that it was impossible to give; mothers clasping their little ones close and seeking to shield their darlings from the flames already blistering their own expiring features; children clinging in the frenzy of despair to those who would have gladly died for them, but could only die with them.

The news spread rapidly through the city, and, in an incredibly short space of time, our Minister, Mr. PIZARO, Dr. SILVER, American Consul at Valpo, HANNY MARONE, and his nephew, HENRY M. KEENE, W. EATON-JONES COLVEN, C. T. PEARCE, and a number of other Americans, were upon the spot, hewing down doors and rushing into the flames to drag out the few whose proximity to the doors rendered it possible to reach them. Don CLAUDIO MAYNARDA, Don CONCEPTO GALLE, and D. ANTONIO GAZOO, and a number of Chilenos, also aided in the good work, but the majority of the by-standers, paralyzed by the fearful sight, stood aloof, while the foreigners, at the most imminent risk of life, dragged out the living, the maimed and the dead, until the falling timbers and rain of fire from above extinguished every hope of saving another victim. The most fainthearted escapes testified the heroism of these noble spirits, who, unappalled by the fearful scene within the church, never ceased their exertions, until it was but too evident that not one soul remained alive of all that multitude.

The criminal neglect to take the most ordinary precautions against fire, or even alarm, has been fearfully stored. Of the 3,000 persons within the pile, but five or six hundred escaped, and most of them wounded, scorched and naked. The rest became wedged together, and f[illegible]nline with heat, terror and pressure, lost the ability to take any more or second the efforts of those who risked their lives to save them. It was only by almost superhuman effort that some few were dragged from the tightly packed mass of human beings at the hardly opened outlets; and of these few, a great majority only lived a few hours.

The rescuers, approaching too nearly the dense mass of victims, were time and again seized by the outstretched hands of numbers, and only saved by their own desperate struggles, aided by their companions from behind. But who could withstand the imploring entreaties of those who, upon the very threshold of salvation, saw a fearful and agonizing death swiftly approaching? Inside the church, and within a few steps of the main door fronting upon the plaza, was a group of perhaps two hundred, from the white-haired and venerable woman to the infant of tender years. On the right hand such a beautiful girl of some seventeen years, as yet untouched by the eager flames that poured down from above, and by her side her sister and mother, locked in each other's arms, *within the reach* of those without, who every moment dashed recklessly through the scorching doorway, and ineffectually slapped the clothing or limbs of the nearest. Writhing with terror, the horrible group swayed to and fro, the weaker gradually sinking forward and falling, never to rise again, while the stronger battled with desperate energy to reach the spot, and thus struggling and panting to reach them. But all was in vain, and in an awfully brief space of time the wall of flame became impassable; the entire floor of the church was a sea of fire, fed by the clothing of the victims and intensified by the dropping lamps. The roof fell in; the towers followed; and the belfry, with an awful crash, fell across the doorway, burying the scorched and hissing bodies of those whose suffering was over.

The scene without the church was heart-rending. The streets were filled with the dead and dying, and hundreds rushed frantically to and fro, calling upon the names of loved ones; some knelt in the streets to pray, some were carried off by their friends, raving in their grief, while some, distracted at the thought of wife or child perishing, rushed frantically into the church, and were seen no more. Hundreds were taken to the hospitals and to the neighboring private houses. All the physicians of the city were upon the spot, ministering to the injured. At midnight the flames, spent for want of material to feed upon, had lowered, and by morning had entirely ceased. The spectacle, by the glaring light of day, was *indescribably horrible. Two thousand corpses*, in every stage of carbonization, from blackened cinder to the slightest scorch, lay in heaps around the several exit doors, the last struggle painfully visible in the easier position, the contorted features, the staring eye-balls. The upper portions of the bodies were, with few exceptions, disfigured beyond recognition—the lower extremities were scarcely touched by the flames.

The officiating priests, although as heavily incinerated as the women with clothing, succeeded in escaping, *without a single exception*, and the same paper which published to-day a list of over 2,000 *victims whose names are known*, gives also a list of church ornaments and plate rescued, valued at thousands of dollars! From the vestry doors opened into the church, whence the priests escaped—half one of this morning's papers states, upon the authority of persons on the spot, that the *door was then closed*, lest the fire should penetrate the vestry and destroy the church property therein! Certain it is, that three rooms in a neighboring palatial mansion are filled with furniture, carpets, curtains and plunder, saved from the vestry, while a few paces beyond were perishing, in frightful torture, hundreds of frail and helpless human beings, many of whom could have found safety through that door.

Lest it be wondered at that the fire was allowed to gain such headway, I may mention that Santiago, a city of a hundred thousand inhabitants, possesses but three engines, all out of order and badly managed, fires being extremely rare. Soon after the alarm had been given a company of regulars arrived, and with fixed bayonets, was stationed around the building, not only impeding access to it but driving back those who implored to be allowed to assist in their exertions. A Mr. JAMES DUNLOP, upon being called by name by one of the sufferers, insisted upon entering the church, and received a bayonet wound for his pertinacity.

The papers are filled with incidents of the catastrophe. One young lady, finding all hope of escape cut off, tied her handkerchief tightly round her face. In the morning her body was discovered charred about the head and shoulders beyond all recognition, but the precaution she had taken identified her—her name being in the corner of the handkerchief.

It is announced this afternoon that but seven bodies have been recognized out of more than 2,500 victims!

Seven dwellings have been closed and sealed by the authorities—not one soul having returned of either of the families living therein.

Deep and loud is the indignation manifested by the press and the public, at the criminal indifference of the priesthood to the safety of their congregation, and the Government has been earnestly besought to raze the pulas of the ill-fated "Companía" to the ground, and to forbid in future the illumination of churches, or night services. The priests (who), and Santiago rebuilding the ill-fated pile, which, upon Tuesday last, was for the *third* time destroyed by fire. Public indignation is rising and threats have been publicly made that, if the authorities do not demolish the baleful walls, the people will do it for them.

I am conscious how feeble the foregoing details portray the horrible scene of torture it was my misfortune to witness. No human pen could possibly convey the awful reality—no language could depict the heart-rending nature of the spectacle. Santiago is to-day a city of mourning—the entire Republic a partaker in her grief.

SIDNEY.

FROM ANOTHER CORRESPONDENT.

PANAMA, Friday, Jan. 8, 1864.

The British steamship *Collao* arrived here at noon, from Valparaiso and intermediate ports, on the evening of the 5th. She brings nearly a million of dollars, principally for England, a portion of the money being the depreciated Bolivian currency used in Peru, and which is sent forward to be recoined, or to be exchanged for the bullion secretly exported by the Government of Peru. Consul WINSLOW, of Paita, on his way to Washington, was a passenger on the *Collao*. The dates from Valparaiso and Santiago de Chile are to the 11th ult., and from Lima and Callao to the 23d.

The *Collao* brings us the details of the most terrible tragic event of the last thousand years—THE BURNING IN SANTIAGO OF TWENTY-TWO TO TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED WOMEN AND CHILDREN, 600 to 800 of whom were the elite of the Chilian capital. I quote from the Santiago and Valparaiso dailies, but principally from the *Mercurio*. I have added some translations from the papers printed entirely in Spanish, of facts and incidents. I inclose you a list of 2,074 persons known to have been burned. It will be seen that Hon. THOMAS NELSON, United States Minister, and other Americans, are specially praised for their energetic efforts to save the lives of the unfortunates. The priests come in for terrible anathemas from most of the journals. In fact, the iron-grasp of the priesthood at Chile at the throats of its victims has been so loosened, that many seem to entertain hopes that the people will *and* they have not suffered in vain to this terrible disaster.

Santiago is the capital of Chile, and contains 180,000 inhabitants. Mixed marriages of Catholics and Protestants are not sanctioned by ecclesiastical law, and the priests have always had pretty much their own way in the whole of the Republic, except in Valparaiso, where foreigners have much influence. Of the children born in Santiago, one-fifth are illegitimate, but this is probably no larger proportion than in most purely Catholic countries.

THE CATASTROPHE.

A catastrophe gigantic, horrible, unexampled in the annals of our country and perhaps of the world, has absorbed every one's mind for many days past. We will use the utmost brevity in relating the calamity to our foreign readers.

Ever since the newly invented mystery of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was declared at Rome, in 1857, the Church of the *Company*, formerly belonging to the Jesuits, had become the focus of devotion of a vast Sisterhood called the *Daughters of Mary*, in which, on payment of so much a year, almost all the women of the country were enrolled.

Every year, from the 8th of November to the 8th of December, the day of the Immaculate Conception, lasted a splendid festival in which orchestral music, singing and an astonishing prodigality of incense, of lights of oil, liquid gas, wax and every luminous combustible in the world, glittered and flared in every part, in the cornices, in the ceiling and particularly on the high altar. Every night the church blazed with a sea of flame and fluttered with clouds of muslin and gauze draperies. It could only be lighted in time by beginning in the middle of the afternoon and the work of extinguishing was only ended when the night was far advanced. In 1858 they thought of adopting hydrogen gas, but the engineer's plan, though convenient and safe, was rejected.

A priest named UGARTE, whose mind mariolatry had marked for its own, headed that Sisterhood from the beginning and worked his way down to such a depth of superstition that one of his least extravagances was the invention of a *Celestial Post-office* in Heaven, by which the *Daughters of Mary* might correspond with the Virgin in writing. At the entrance of the temple the Virgin's letter-box was constantly open, and there persons of a robust faith deposited in sealed letters their wishes and their prayers. Every Wednesday that letter-box for Eternity was placed before the high altar, and UGARTE, who acted as postman between the Mother of God and her daughters, exhibited to the Divinity those offerings, of course keeping that singular correspondence to himself. This same moustachioed got up a religious raffle for the favor of the Virgin—in a recent instance two prizes being drawn by a skeptical Minister of State, and a woman whose character was *not dubious*. The old times of pagan idolatry had resuscitated in the centre of exaggerated catholicism.

The church or the Company, built the latter half of the seventeenth century, possessed a spacious nave, but a roof that dated only from 15 years ago, of painted timber. The only door of easy access to the congregation was the principal one in the centre, the small doors leading into the aisles being opened only on rare occasions, and hidden by screens. Near the high altar there was a little door communicating with the sacristy.

A few minutes before 7 o'clock in the evening of Tuesday, the 8th of December, more than 3,000 women and a few hundred men knelt in that church, crammed to overflowing. However, that did not prevent a compact mass of fanatics from attempting to fight their way in from the steps, because it was the last night of the Month of Mary; and no one could bear to lose the closing sermon of the priest UGARTE, who always succeeded by his exciting declamations in drawing tears that place so soon to be a sea of fire. Then RIZZARDINI, the apostolic Nuncio and favorite of Pius IX, the founder of the American college at Rome, was to preach also. It is said that UGARTE, wounded in his feelings as chaplain of the "Daughters of Mary," because RIZZARDINI had told him that the illuminations of his church could not be compared with what he had seen in Rome, exclaimed, with enthusiasm, "I will give him when he comes to preach, such an illumination as the world has never seen!" Nobody can deny that UGARTE has kept his word!

Indeed, the lighting of all the lamps and candles had barely finished, when the liquid gas in a transparency on the high altar, set on fire its woodwork and wrapped in flame a kind of tabernacle, wholly composed of canvas, pasteboard and wood. In less than two minutes the altar, about 25 yards high and 10 broad, was an unextinguishable bonfire.

The advance of the fire was perhaps even more rapid than the panic of the audience. When the fire had down from the altar to the roof, the whole flock of devotees rushed to the principal door. Those near the lateral *doors* were able to escape at the first alarm; others, and mitigating the men, gained the little door of the sacristy, and lastly, those near the chief outlet forced their way through the throng, even still struggling to get in, and, indeed, part of which did get in, even in the face of the fire, stimulated by the desire of *getting a good place*, which, on this occasion, means a good place to die in. Then, the flames having crept along the whole roof, and, consequently, released the lamps of oil and liquid gas from the cornices to which they were strong, a rain of liquid, blue fire poured down upon the entangled throngs below.

A new and more horrible conflagration broke out then in that dense living mass, appalling the affrighted gaze with pictures tenfold more awful than those wherein the Catholic imagination has labored to give an idea of the torture of the damned. In less than a quarter of an hour about two thousand human beings had perished, including many children, but very few men.

Although many heroic men performed prodigies of daring and abnegation in rushing some from the death grasp of the phalanx of death that choked the door, in some cases literally tearing off their arms, without being able to extricate them, the number of the saved by this means falls short of fifty. More than five hundred persons of our highest society have perished in the greater part young girls of 15 to 20 years. One mother has perished with her five daughters. Two-thirds of the victims were servants, and there are many houses in which not one has escaped. Several houses have been rated by the police as empty, because all its inhabitants have perished.

The people think of nothing but the victims and their obsequies. All with one voice demand the demolition of the ruinous walls of the fatal temple and the offering of a monument to the dear memory of the victims. The Municipal body collected this by the medium of a commission on the 12th, and the Government is resolved on compliance. Resistance is threatened on the part of the clergy, but such exasperating and indecorous foils would infallibly call forth a general rising of the people.

The past fortnight has produced no other occurrences worth chronicling, and even if it had, they would not seem deserving of mention in this night of heavy anguish.

During the last week the tribunals and the Government have suspended their labors.

The people only weep, and their public writers could only offer tears to the nation's mourning.

THE LATEST NEWS.

SANTIAGO, Dec. 14, 1863.

EXTENT OF THE DAY.—Before 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the hour appointed to petition the President of the Republic for the demolition of the walls of the Church of the Company, a numerous and select meeting of all the social classes had collected in the open space in front of the ruins. The decree of demolition having been signed by His Excellency Don CRISTÓBAL MARTA ascended to the upper story of the Congress house and thence addressed the people, reading the decree promulgated a few hours before, and calling for a vote for His Excellency, which was enthusiastically given by the immense assembly that filled the square.

The orator proceeded then to protest, in the name of religion and humanity, against those who attempted to qualify as sacrilegious the people's longing for the demolition. To wreak its revenge on so be added, superstition tries to lash and goad the ignorant passions of the rabble into violence; but its feeble efforts are in vain, because we have never strayed from the great principles of pure religion. Fanaticism spreads its murky nets against the purity, sincerity and peace of society. Let us quench its firebrands with the sincerity and nobleness of our intentions.

THE OFFERING UP OF THE EVENING SACRIFICE.

A dreadful visitation has fallen upon us.

Truly this is "a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy." The voice of lamentation is heard all over the land, the bitter weeping of fathers, husbands and lovers, for those who were the joy and brightness of their life, that refuses to be comforted, because they are not.

Hundred of young girls—only yesterday radiant and beautiful in the luxuriant bloom of the fresh hopeful Spring of life—are now gathered, hideous corpses, horrible, loathsome to the sight, impossible to be recognized.

The 8th of December was a great triumph for the clergy of the church of the Jesuits in Santiago. An enthusiastic audience filled every nook. There were hardly any men there, but 3,000 women, comprising the flower of the beauty and fashion of the capital, were at the feet of the ecclesiastics, very many against the will of fathers and husbands—but that, of course, only showed forth the power and might of the Gospel.

Never had such pyrotechny been seen before—20,000 lights, mostly camphene, in long festoons of colored globes, blazed the church into a hall of fire.

But the performance had not yet begun when the crescent of fire at the foot of the gigantic image of the Virgin over the high altar overflowed, and climbing up the muslin draperies and pasteboard devices to the wooden roof, rolled a torrent of flame.

The suddenness of the fire was awful.

The immense mass of women, crazed out of their senses—numbers fainting, and all entangled by their long swelling dresses—rushed, as those who know that death was at their heels, to the one door, which soon became choked up. Fire was everywhere. Streaming along the wooden ceiling, it flung the pendent lamps, hung in rows there, among the struggling women. In a moment the gorgeous church was a sea of fire. MICHAEL ANGELO's fearful picture of hell was there, but exceeded.

Help was all but impossible. A Hercules might have strained his strength in vain to pull one from the serried mass of frenzied wretches who piled one above another as they climbed over to reach the air, wildly fastened the gripe of death upon any one escaping, in order that they might be dragged out with them. Those who longed to save them were deafened by their incessant and harrowing sight that ever seared human eyeballs.

To see mothers, sisters, tender and fondly women, dying that dreadful death that appals the stoutest heart of man, within one yard of salvation, within reach of men who would have given their lives over and over again for them. It was maddening—the screaming and wringing of hands for help as the remorseless flames came on; and then—save when some already dead with fright were burnt in ghastly indifference—their horrible agony, some in prayer, some tearing their hair and battering their faces.

Women seized in the embrace of the flames were seen to undergo a transformation as though by an optical delusion—first dazzling brightly—then horribly lean and shrunk up—then black statues rigidly fixed in a writhing attitude.

The fire implanted by the immense thickness of the walls, had devoured everything combustible by 10 o'clock. Then, *defying* the sickening stench, people came to look for their lost ones.

Oh, what a sight the fair, placid moon looked down upon! Close-packed crowds of entoned, distorted forms writhing the agonies of death, with faces whose smile was once a heaven—the ghastly phalanx of black statues twisted in every variety of agony, stretching out their arms, as imploring mercy—and then of the heap that had choked up the door, multitudes with the lower parts perfectly untouched, and some all a shapeless mass but with one arm or foot uncaught.

The silence, after these piercing screams were hushed in death, was horrible. It was the silence of the grave, unbroken but by the bitter wail or fainting cry.

Two thousand souls had passed through that ordeal of fire to the judgment-seat of God.

Heroic acts of sublime daring have not been wanting. Enduring gratitude has been excited in every Chilian heart by the gallant efforts of Mr. NELSON, the Minister of the United States, his countrymen, Mr. MENDS, and several other foreigners. There were generous men who defied the fury of the flames to save lives, and some of these died martyrs to their noble hearts. An Englishman or an American, it is unknown which, was seen to rush through the flames, to seize in his powerful arms a lady, stride with her a little way, and then his hair in a blaze and choked with smoke, fall back into the volcano never to rise again. A young lady named ORELLA, raving in vain implored some bystanders on her knees to save her mother, rushed in and shortly afterwards miraculously issued forth bearing her glorious load.

A young lady by the name of Solar, just before the smoke suffocated her, had the presence of mind to knot her handkerchief round her leg, so that her corpse might be recognized.

The population of Santiago so supine and so priest-ridden is fired with inescribable indignation at the monstrous conduct of the priests. The public conscience holds them guilty of the death of all these victims—and especially the moustachioed UGARTE, the inventor of the *Virgin's Post-office* imposture, by calling upon the people to assemble from the distant and most likely to produce a fire—a countless number of lights, pasteboard scenery and muslin hangings admitting a vast crowd—and covering the one door open, with a screen, they took every pains to bring about this tragedy. When the fire broke out and people were escaping by the sacristy, they blocked up this door, to devote themselves the more undisturbedly to saving their gold-cracks. The list of things saved makes one's blood run cold. *What the priests saved, what they have put away in cigar-shops and the houses in front in a great image, some wooden saints, a sacred sophe or two, some books, chalices, silver candlesticks, and a great deal of sacred matting and carpet!*

After saving their trash, these specimens of the good shepherds that give their life for their sheep, *fan away in company with the only and last that attested the ancient valiis, except that one priest favored the agonizing victims with his absolution, and Ugarte requested them to "be happy, because they went direct to Mary."* They then forsook the scene, and in that awful night, when fainting women and desperate men strewed the streets, and writhing forms that a few hours ago were graceful and beautiful maidens, moaned and died in chemists' shops, *not a priest was to be seen to whisper a word of Christ's comfort to the dying ear, or hold the precious crucifix before the glazing eye.*

No, not so—for the priest of Nature was there—Woman—a ministering angel in the dark hour, tended and soothed as usual. One young lady—God bless her! tore up all her under-clothing to make bandages, and bound up the wounds as only woman can. All this awful night the only thing that reminded of the clergy was the incessant tolling of bells, about the only thing they could do to increase the horrors of the scene.

This being the third time that this church has filled our homes with weeping, all with one voice demand that it never should be rebuilt, but the priests, foolishly defiant and despotic as ever, threaten to let off their miserable mediæval popgun at three they term the sacrilegious alienators of holy ground.

Their audacity has even led them to attempt an appeal to violence.

On the 13th, they appeared on the scene to take possession of the blackened ruins and insult public opinion by drawing masses for the souls whose bodies they had destroyed, but the sentinels drove them off with the butt ends of their muskets.

The Government has shown no energy, and one minister is unhappily a creature of the clergy, but the people, to whose hearts, as having wives and daughters, there dwells an idea of right—*something from God, that priests have not succeeded in poisoning*—have been in earnest, and the Government has had to follow and yield to pressure. The decree has gone forth, and not one stone of that accursed church shall be left upon another.

The public contempt and horror of these priests increase with their insolence and inhumanity.

They preach that the irreparable loss of so many of the fairest and most virtuous of Chile's virgins and matrons is a special mercy and miracle of Mary, who wished to take them in mercy outside the sinful sphere beneath them.

A calamity so appalling and horrible has no parallel in the world's history. May He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb in mercy console the bereaved and afflicted, and may this awful dispensation of His providence ever remind us of the uncertainty of life, and the necessity of constant preparation to obey His summons.

I have the honor to remain to your Excellency the assurance of the high estimation and respect with which I remain, Your Excellency's obedient servant,

THOMAS H. NELSON.

(REPLY.)

SANTIAGO, Dec. 12, 1863.

SIR: I have had the honor to receive the note which your Excellency was pleased to address me yesterday, to signify to me the profound sorrow felt in the breast of your Excellency and in that of your fellow-citizens assembled at Valparaiso, at the terrible misfortune occurring in this city on Tuesday the 8th inst., which has caused the sterile community with mourning.

Your Excellency likewise informs me that the Government and people represented by your Excellency will feel the deepest sorrow upon receiving the news of this calamitous event, and your Excellency concludes, expressing to me your trust that the Lord may grant consolation to the afflicted and unfortunate, and cause us all in View of the uncertainty of life, to be ever prepared to obey the decree of Providence.

My Government has learned the foregoing with lively gratitude, and has discovered, in your Excellency's Communication, an alleviation of the grief with which it has been afflicted by this public calamity, as well as a new evidence of the fraternal sentiments which animate your Excellency and your worthy fellow-citizens in favor of our Republic. The generous and sensitive efforts which your Excellency and they displayed on Tuesday, to save the interesting victims from the frightful fate, had already won the gratitude of my Government, which has been received by its merited appreciation.

In communicating the foregoing to Your Excellency I comply with a special charge of His Excellency the President of the Republic, to express the honorable representative and the citizens of the United States who have taken part in your public mourning, that the noble conduct observed by them upon this sad occasion will be ever gratefully recorded by the Chilian people and Government.

Will your Excellency be pleased to accept the sentiments of my most distinguished consideration and regard, with which I remain,

Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

JOSÉ R. VIGNOLA.

To the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States.

Our correspondent forwards a list of 2,074 names, but our space is too limited to admit its publication. Beside, there, it is calculated that three or four hundred have perished, whose names are not known, or which have not been given.

The victims are all to be placed in an immense tomb, and a suitable monument is to be erected over them.

The excitement against the priests in Chili, and especially in Santiago, is said by persons who have come to Panama, to be intense, and may yet break out in violence, as their sanctities seem more clearly to the light. It is without dispute that the priests who occupied the church and altars, pushed back the women, who were crowding to the doors, in order that they might have a better chance of saving their old mantpieces, gilt images, holy robes, sacred chairs, and other valuables.

Among the thirty persons named as the most energetic in their efforts to save life and heading the list, are—Samuel Haviland, Esq., Juan Vicenta Alva, Henry Melggs, Thos. H. Nelson, United States Minister to Chili, Mr. Hand, the Secretary, Mr. Silver, United States Consul at Valparaiso, and Don Casilio Galle. Mr. HAVILAND is a son of the late SAMUEL HAVILAND, of Boston, the latter having been a resident of Buenos Ayres and Chili 40 years previous to his death. Mr. MEIGGS, of San Francisco, Cal., has been the contractor for building the Valparaiso and Santiago Railroad.

The *Mercurio* has the following in its Spanish columns:

"Among the testimonials we have that of the opulent Don CARLOS EDWARDS, who perished in the flames, and who leaves over $200,000. This lady dived in her last moments to the house of her son Don JOSE MANUEL EDWARDS, who lost the whole of his fortune by indorsements in the crisis of 1861. The family of Señor EDWARDS are those who suspected by this lady, who daily asseverated that all her property should fall to her nephew. It (over out) that she leaves $20,000 to the *Seminario Americano*, in Rome, various sums to other ecclesiastical institutions, and about 64,000 to her nephew. The curate said to the lady was Monsignor LEZANIERA, the Director and founder of the *Seminario Americano* in Rome. Comment is unnecessary."

Of the 2,500 persons who lost their lives, more than 600 belonged to the best families. The number of servants who perished is incalculable.

Don JUSTINIANO BRAVO lost her crinoline and dropped it off, enabling her to get through the crowd, and gave her shawl to another lady who was saved by stripping herself entirely naked.

During the fire the priest HUERRAUTE mounted up to the door of the church and gave absolution to the desperate people inside who were roasting in the flames.

FROM THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY.

No Truth in the Report that Stuart was at Leesburgh.

BALTIMORE, Sunday, Jan. 17.

The report that STUART was near Leesburgh on a raid is unfounded.

Dispatches from Gen. KELLEY state that Maj. COLT, of the Maryland cavalry, has returned to his headquarters from a scout to Leesburgh, and the report that Gen. STUART was there with a large cavalry force for the purpose of an attack on Point of Rocks, or on any other place in the possession of the Government, is entirely without foundation. Not an armed rebel was seen or heard of within forty miles of Leesburgh.

The Thirty-second Massachusetts Regiment at Home.

BOSTON, Sunday, Jan. 17.

The arrival to-day of the Thirty-second Massachusetts regiment was the occasion of a great ovation to the brave men composing it. The regiment was received at the depot by a crowd of citizens, and under escort of the Independent Cadets and other military bodies, was escorted to the State House, where Gov. ANDREW tendered a welcome in an eloquent speech. A salute was fired on the Common. A dinner in Faneuil Hall followed. So imposing and enthusiastic a demonstration on the Sabbath has seldom been seen here.

Marine Disaster.

FORTRESS MONROE, Sunday, Jan. 17.

The propeller *Thomas Swan*, from New-York to Fortress Monroe and Washington, with a valuable cargo of Government stores, ran ashore at Ocracoke, yesterday morning, 25 miles south of Cape Henry. Capt. ALEXANDER has gone to her assistance with three steamers. He went back to-day for barges to lighten the propeller. With very favorable weather she may get off.