

## The Night Scene at the Vendome.

An esteemed lady correspondent gives the following sketch of some droll incidents at the recent fire in the Vendome:

A daughter of the most famous general of the South said last evening that she was glad to have been in Boston and at the Vendome the night of the 13th, for she had seen what might be done with a fire. Nothing more remarkable in the way of management could easily be thought of than that at the Vendome fire; and for all the flames burst out at three o'clock in the morning, yet there was the most signal control of the whole establishment. Amid the vast household there was no panic. The remarkable construction of the house, especially the unusual thickness of the walls, held the flames in check, and the promptitude of the employes in the building was something to remember for their credit and our comfort. One of them was awakened by the intense heat, and springing up, found the glass melting in the sash of the door, and the adjoining room in flames. Without an instant's delay he ran through the upper halls, giving the alarm. Then flying back to seize his garments he found his own room in a blaze, when he immediately joined the night watch in the effort to extinguish the flames. A maid servant came crying to him to save her trunk, but he told her he thought they should do very well to get off with their lives and leave their clothes behind them. Strangely enough, not a single sleeping-apartment of the guests was injured, although the side elevator (only used on occasions) was burnt, but a few feet across the hallway from a line of bedroom doors. On the Dartmouth-street side, where the fire originated, the first sound to arouse the guests on the first floor was the falling of the elevator, whose supports had burned off from above. So admirable was the whole government of the catastrophe that little now remains to be talked of but the droll incidents of the hours before the dawn. One young lady

on the third or fourth floor awoke at the call of the watchman, and, finding the hall full of smoke, without waiting to ask a question, darted down the stairs with drapery something less protecting than an angel's wing, and in this diaphanous garb ran across Commonwealth avenue to the one house which had a hospitable glimmer of light at the window. Within an hour or so there were about a score of ladies in similar undress gathered within the shelter of that dwelling. One dignified matron caught a blanket for her ægis, and sallied forth in the enforced rôle of a fair dame with aboriginal tastes. Another, with the instincts of Boston propriety, ineradicable even in that hour of peril, donned a black silk skirt, but the flames would not stay for her delicacy, and she was obliged to throw a camel's hair shawl over the upper part of her dream-robe, and arrayed in this fashion she walked tranquilly off into the house of a host whom she had never seen till the light of the fire revealed him and his hospitality. An old man of ninety years, the most venerable member of the entire household, was cooler than an iceberg, for that might yield a point to flames, but not he. The valet, terrified at the sight of actual firebrands falling almost at the threshold, wildly hurried the dressing, and put on the old gentleman's suspenders awry, and nothing would satisfy the calm nonagenarian but to stop within six feet of the fire and adjust them properly, and then taking his silk hat and cane he walked composedly through the long corridor and down and out, saying he thought they were much more scared than hurt. As it proved, he might as well have been left in his bed, for withal the extraordinary nearness of the flame, yet there was not so much as the smell of fire upon the portière of his apartment. One lady, awakened by the crash, opened her door and was confronted by a tall and stately individual arrayed in a white garment in which, whatever may have been its nominal uses, she could hardly suppose he had intended to make her a ceremonious call; he had another white wrap held carefully

under his arm, and a stovepipe hat crowning his unsupported dignity, while with invincible civility but in despairing tones, he asked of her "Where shall I go?" "Why, go down stairs," was the response; and the stranger, finding himself only up one flight, stepped past the firebrands and walked comfortably down to the street floor. A maid-servant, with remarkable self-possession, dressed herself in every article of daily wear, and appeared, "clad and in her right mind," to render any assistance needed. Nor was there wanting a touch of chivalric compassion as well as composure, from one who, having been warned by the firemen to roll his books and valuables at least under cover of a fire blanket, for his possessions were perilously near the flame, stopped in the midst of his self-preservation to dress the bleeding arm of the baker, who in his excitement had sorely wounded himself. But the beautiful girl from the South, alluded to in the beginning, credited her birthright of courage and coolness in making her toilet, even to dressing her hair and donning her bonnet. She said she had always heard that the Southern ladies could not equal in the style of their dressing the belles of the North, so that she considered it quite the triumph of her life when she was told at day-break that she was much the best-dressed woman in Hotel Vendome!

But meanwhile the devouring element had been mastered; all the guests returned to their rooms, and to one who hastened over at the first tidings of disaster in the morning, the house, strangely enough, had almost the suggestion of triumph rather than dismay, for the deliverance had been as great as the danger; and at breakfast time the elegant dining-hall had as tranquil a host gathered about the tables as if the midnight had not known the awful warning of the flames.

E. M. K.