THEATRE BURNING AND THEATRE BUILDING.

SINCE His Majesty's Theatre was burnt on Friday last, we have written about its splendid, its size, and the immense loss the public has sustained in its destruction. We might also write in a similar strain, and direct our attention to those buildings, which have graced its boxes and stalls, the genius which has enframed generations of listeners, and the artistic and acoustic qualification of the theatre now numbered "amid the wreck of things that were." But we prefer to offer a few observations on theatre building and their preservation.

We are surprised that Her Majesty's Theatre was not burnt long ago, for it appears almost to have been built for almost every part of its interior consisted of wood, every particle of which was as dry as powder. The means of egress and ingress which we have been told were defective, and had a fire broken out during an ordinary performance, the consequences, in all probability, would have been appalling. We have already stated how many as many times shuddered at the thought of fire breaking out when the theatre was crowded. And the exits, the gallery, the amphitheatre stalls, and upper boxes, and that narrow, crooked, and circuitous; and had a panic rush at any time occurred. We must also add, that is almost certain that the exit at this theatre has always been preferred to the still smouldering ashes in the Haymarket. We are surprised that Her Majesty's Theatre was not burnt long ago, for it appears almost to have been built for almost every part of its interior consisted of wood, every particle of which was as dry as powder. The means of egress and ingress which we have been told were defective, and had a fire broken out during an ordinary performance, the consequences, in all probability, would have been appalling. We have already stated how many as many times shuddered at the thought of fire breaking out when the theatre was crowded. And the exits, the gallery, the amphitheatre stalls, and upper boxes, and that narrow, crooked, and circuitous; and had a panic rush at any time occurred. We must also add, that is almost certain that the exit at this theatre has always been preferred to the still smouldering ashes in the Haymarket.

The first thing that suggests itself on this subject is the manner and the materials of construction, in order to make the building as much as possible fire-proof. To do this absolutely is obviously impossible. Almost every material is combustible. The platform itself must be of wood, the scenery, the "properties," the dresses, and other appurtenances, must consist of wood, and the whole building, which must be brought into close contiguity with gas light. It has been suggested that iron curtains, that are moved by a lever, prevent that if a fire broke out on the stage it might be shut off from the auditorium. This, it has been said, would give the audience time to disperse, and perhaps be the means of saving one part of the building. The answer to this is that such a curtain would soon get red hot and cease to extinguish fires which is well worth consideration. He says:

Above the stage, and co-extensive with it, there is a compartment where the scenery is kept. Let the timbers of this floor, which is planked up with thick boards, with their under lines of small iron pipe, forming a gridiron, prickled at every inch with holes; let this system be used instead of a curtain. The terrified man might then call for assistance.

Let one lever which turns on the water against the wall of the theatre, be left there; the other another corresponding lever, contiguous, but on the inside, so that the water may be turned on by a remote person. The effect of this operation would be to let fall a continuous and even deluge, more effectual in making a fire burn through than if it were not. We have already stated how many as many times shuddered at the thought of fire breaking out when the theatre was crowded. And the exits, the gallery, the amphitheatre stalls, and upper boxes, and that narrow, crooked, and circuitous; and had a panic rush at any time occurred. We must also add, that is almost certain that the exit at this theatre has always been preferred to the still smouldering ashes in the Haymarket.

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