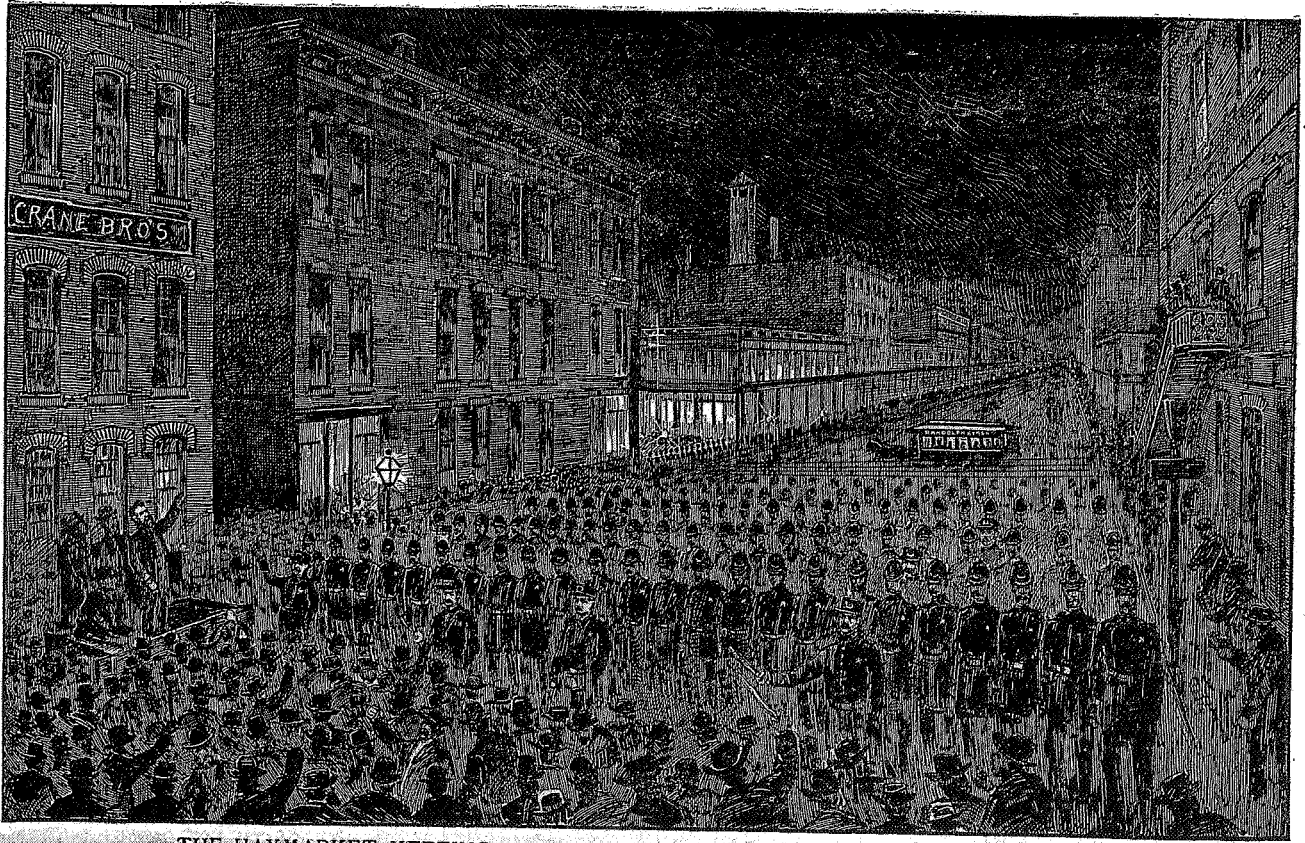


## CHAPTER VIII.

The Air Full of Rumors — A Riot Feared — Police Preparations — Bonfield in Command — The Haymarket — Strategic Value of the Anarchists' Position — Crane's Alley — The Theory of Street Warfare — Inflaming the Mob — Schnaubelt and his Bomb — "Throttle the Law" — The Limit of Patience Reached — "In the Name of the People, Disperse" — The Signal Given — The Crash of Dynamite First Heard on an American Street — Murder in the Air — A Rally and a Charge — The Anarchists Swept Away — A Battle Worthy of Veterans.

WITH such active work among the conspirators as I have shown, it was only a question of time when some terrible catastrophe would ensue through the instrumentality of the powerful bombs they had manufactured. The public mind was in a state of fear and suspense, not knowing the direction whence threatened devastation and destruction might appear. The incendiary speeches were enough to excite trepidation, and the appearance of the "Revenge circular" fanned the excitement into general alarm and indignation. The McCormick attack proved conclusively that the Anarchists meant to practice what they preached. After their rout and defeat, they were heard to express regret that they had not taken forcible possession of the works before the arrival of the police and then received the officers with a volley of fire-arms, as had once been contemplated in a star-chamber session of one of their "revolutionary groups." The air was full of rumors, and the general public was convinced that some great disaster would occur unless the police promptly forbade the holding of further revolutionary meetings. The Mayor's attention had been called to the possible results if such meetings were permitted to continue, and he, in turn, directed the Police Department to keep close watch of the gathering called for the Haymarket Square and disperse it in case the speakers used inflammatory language. During the day many of the Spies' circulars had been distributed in the vicinity of the McCormick establishment, and it was expected that many of the enraged strikers from that locality would attend the meeting. It was clear that, in view of the temper of the Socialists, only slight encouragement would be required to produce a disturbance, and it was of the utmost importance that prompt action should be taken at the first sign of trouble. It subsequently transpired that the leaders had intended to make the speeches threatening in order to invite a charge upon the crowd by the police, and then, during the confusion, to carry out the Monday night programme.

The city authorities fully comprehended the situation, but concluded not to interfere with the meeting unless the discussion should be attended with violent threats. In order to be prepared for any emergency, however, it was deemed best to concentrate a large force in the vicinity of the meet-

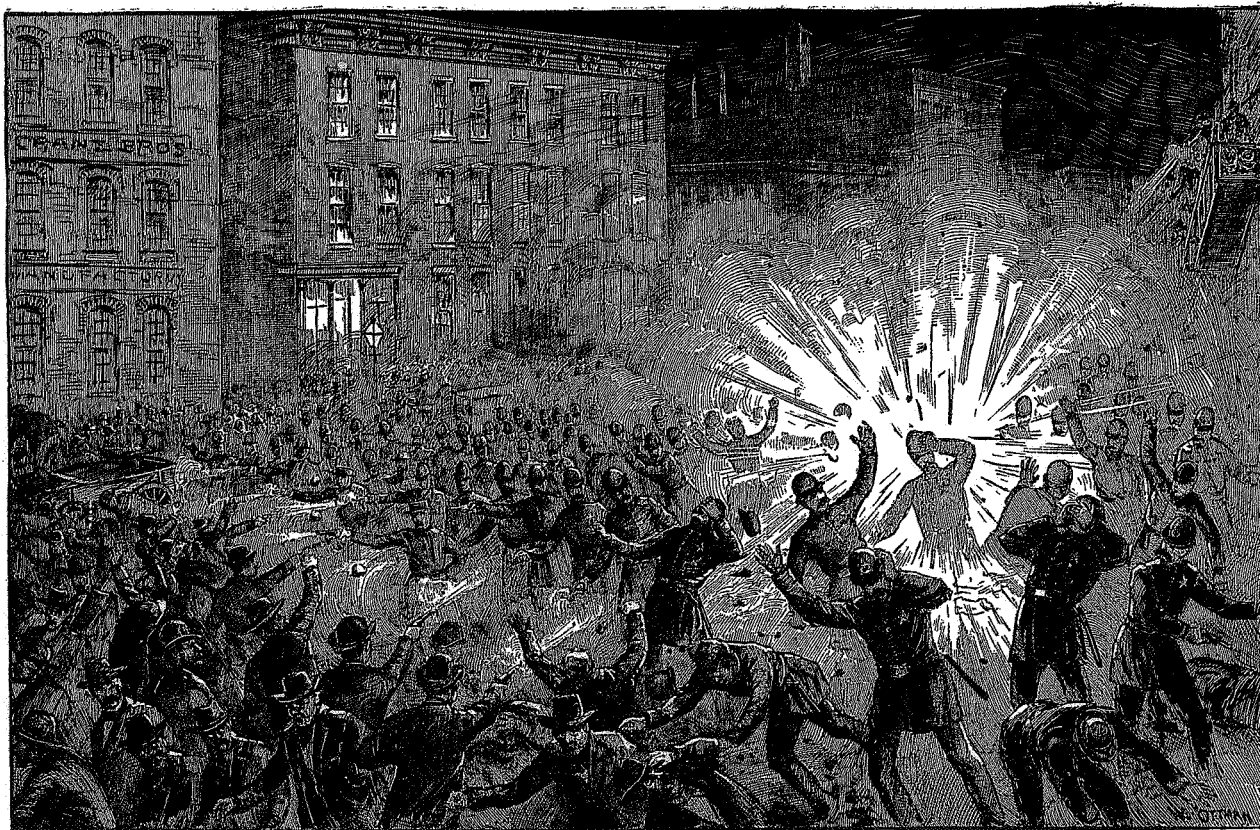


THE HAYMARKET MEETING.—"IN THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE, I COMMAND YOU TO DISPERSE."

ing—at the Desplaines Street Station. One hundred men from Capt. Ward's district, the Third Precinct, under command of Lieuts. Bowler, Stanton, Penzen and Beard, twenty-six men from the Central Detail under command of Lieut. Hubbard and Sergt. Fitzpatrick, and fifty men from the Fourth Precinct, under Lieuts. Steele and Quinn, were accordingly assigned for special service that evening. Inspector John Bonfield was ordered to assume command of the whole force, and his instructions were to direct the detectives to mingle with the crowd, and, if anything of an incendiary nature was advised by the speakers, to direct the officers to disperse the gathering.

The meeting had been called for 7:30 o'clock, and at that hour quite a number had assembled in the vicinity of Haymarket Square. This square is simply a widening of Randolph Street between Desplaines and Halsted Streets, and in years past was used by farmers for the sale of hay and produce. It was for this place that the call had been issued, but for certain reasons the meeting was held ninety feet north of Randolph, on Desplaines Street, near the intersection of an alley which has since passed into public fame as "Crane's alley." In sight almost of this alley was Zepf's Hall, on the northeast corner of Lake and Desplaines Streets, and about two blocks further east on Lake Street were Florus' Hall and Greif's Hall—all notorious resorts and headquarters for Anarchists. On the evening in question these places and surrounding streets leading to the meeting-place were crowded with strikers and Socialist sympathizers, some within the saloons regaling themselves with beer and some jostling each other on the thoroughfares, either going for liquids or returning to the meeting after having for the moment satisfied the "inner man." Here was a condition of things that would permit an easy mingling in, and ready escape through, the crowd, in the event of inauguration of the revolutionary plan adopted the evening previous. The throngs would serve as a cover for apparently safe operations. Another advantage gained by holding the meeting at the point indicated was that the street was dimly lighted, and, as the building in front of which the speaking took place was a manufacturing establishment,—that of Crane Bros.,—not used or lighted at night, and as the alley contiguous to the speaker's stand formed an L with another alley leading to Randolph Street, there were points of seeming safety for a conflict with the police. Besides, the point was about 350 feet north of the Desplaines Street Police Station, and it was evidently calculated that when the police should attack the crowd, that part of the Monday night programme about blowing up the stations could easily be carried into effect.

These were the undoubted reasons for effecting the change. The reader will remember that one of the objections urged by Fischer against holding the meeting on Market Square was that it was a "mouse trap," and one of his potential arguments for the Haymarket was that it was a safer place.

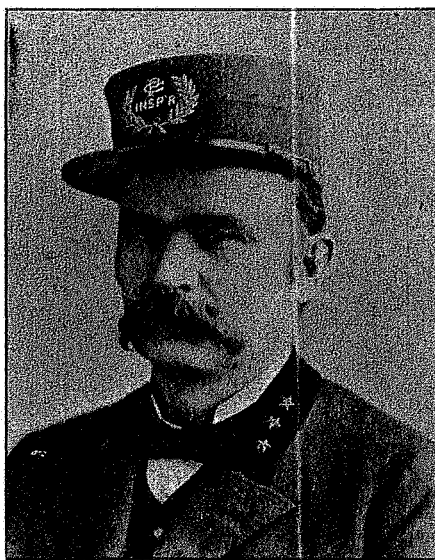


THE HAYMARKET RIOT. THE EXPLOSION AND THE CONFLICT.

for the execution of their plot. There was thus a "method in their madness." All the contingencies had evidently been very carefully considered.

But, as I have already stated, the hour had arrived for calling the meeting to order, and as there appeared no one to assume prompt charge, the crowd exhibited some manifestations of impatience. About eight o'clock there were perhaps 3,000 people in the vicinity of the chosen place, and some fifteen or twenty minutes later Spies put in an appearance. He mounted the truck wagon improvised as a speaker's stand and inquired for Parsons. Receiving no response, he got down, and, meeting Schwab, the two entered the alley, where there was quite a crowd, and where they were

overheard using the words "pistols" and "police," and Schwab was heard to ask, "Is one enough or had we better go and get more?" Both then disappeared up the street, and it is a fair presumption—borne out by the fact that they had entered a group of Anarchists on the corner of Halsted and Randolph Streets, as noted in the preceding chapter, and other circumstances—that they went to secure bombs. Spies shortly returned, and, meeting Schnaubelt, held a short conversation with him, at the same time handing him something, which Schnaubelt put carefully in a side-pocket. Spies again mounted the wagon (the hour being about



INSPECTOR JOHN BONFIELD.

8:40—Schnaubelt standing near him), and began a speech in English. It is needless, at this point, to reproduce the speech, as its substance appears later on, both as given by the reporters and as written out subsequently by Spies. But both reports fail to give a proper conception of its insidious effect on the audience. It bore mainly on the grievances of labor, the treatment of the strikers by McCormick, and an explanation of his (Spies') connection with the disturbances of the day previous. The lesson he drew from the occurrence at McCormick's was "that workingmen must arm themselves for defense, so that they may be able to cope with the Government hirelings of their masters."

Parsons had meanwhile been sent for, and on the conclusion of Spies' harangue was introduced. He reviewed the labor discontent in the coun-

try, the troubles growing out of it, touched on monopoly, criticised the so-called "capitalistic press," scored the banks, explained Socialism, excoriated the system of elections, and terminated his remarks by appealing to his hearers to defend themselves and asserting that, if the demands of the working classes were refused, it meant war. His speech, like that of Spies, was mild as compared with what would be expected on such an occasion. Perhaps this is accounted for by the fact that during their harangues Mayor Harrison mingled in the throng and paid close attention to the sentiments of the speakers. He afterwards characterized Parsons' effort as "a good political speech," and, being apparently satisfied that there would be no trouble, left for the Desplaines Street Police Station, giving his impressions of the gathering to the Captain in charge and telling Bonfield that there seemed to be no further use for holding the force in reserve.

No sooner had Harrison left for the station and thence for his own house, than the next speaker, Fielden, grew bolder in his remarks and sent the words rolling hot and fast over an oily, voluble and vindictive tongue. He opened with a reference to the insecurity of the working classes under the present social system, drifted to the McCormick strike, in which men, he said, were "shot down by the law in cold blood, in the city of Chicago, in the protection of property," and held that the strikers had "nothing more to do with the law except to lay hands on it, and throttle it until it makes its last kick. Throttle it! Kill it! Stab it! Can we do anything," he asked, "except by the strong arm of resistance? The skirmish

lines have met. The people have been shot. Men, women and children have not been spared by the capitalists and the minions of private capital. It had no mercy—neither ought you. You are called upon to defend yourselves, your lives, your future. I have some resistance in me. I know that you have, too."

At this juncture the police made their appearance. During the remarks of Spies and Parsons, detectives had frequently reported to the station that only moderate, temperate sentiments were being uttered, but after Fielden had got fairly worked up to his subject, this was changed. The crowd was being wrought up to a high point of excitement, and there



CAPT. WILLIAM WARD.

were frequent interjections of approval and shouts of indignation. Fielden's was just such a speech as they had expected to hear. Very little was required to incite them to the perpetration of desperate deeds. Like a sculptor with his plastic model, Fielden had molded his audience to suit the purpose of the occasion. With his rough and ready eloquence he stirred up their innermost passions. His biting allusions to capitalists caught the hearts of the uncouth mob as with grappling-hooks, and his appeals for the destruction of existing laws shook them as a whirlwind.

It would be as well, he said, for workmen to die fighting as to starve to death. "Exterminate the capitalists, and do it to-night!" The officers detailed to watch the proceedings saw that the speech portended no good, and they communicated the facts to Inspector Bonfield. Even then the Inspector hesitated. To use his own language, in the report he sent to Superintendent Ebersold: "Wanting to be clearly within the law, and



LIEUT. (NOW CHIEF) G. W. HUBBARD.

wishing to leave no room for doubt as to the propriety of our actions, I did not act on the first reports, but sent the officers back to make further observations. A few minutes after ten o'clock, the officers returned and reported that the crowd were getting excited and the speaker growing more incendiary in his language. I then felt that to hesitate any longer would be criminal, and gave the order to fall in and move our force forward on Waldo Place,"—a short street south of the Desplaines Street Station.

The force formed into four divisions. The companies of Lieuts. Steele and Quinn formed the first; those of Lieuts. Stanton and Bowler, the second; those of Lieut. Hubbard and Sergt. Fitzpatrick, the third; and two companies commanded by Lieuts. Beard and Penzen constituted the fourth, forming the rear guard, which had orders to form right and left on Randolph Street, to guard the rear from any attack from the Haymarket. These various divisions thus covered the street from curb to curb. Inspector Bonfield and Capt. Ward led the forces, in front of the first division. On seeing them advancing in the distance, Fielden exclaimed:

"Here come the bloodhounds. You do your duty, and I'll do mine!"

Arriving on the ground, they found the agitator right in the midst of his incendiary exhortations, that point where he was telling his Anarchist zealots that he had some resistance in him, and assuring them that he knew they had too. At that moment the police were ordered to halt within a few feet of the truck wagon, and Capt. Ward, advancing to within three feet of the speaker, said:

"I command you, in the name of the people of the State, to immediately and peaceably disperse."

Turning to the crowd, he continued: "I command you and you to assist."

Fielden had meanwhile jumped off the wagon, and, as he reached the sidewalk, declared in a clear, loud tone of voice:

"We are peaceable."

This must have been the secret signal,—it has about it suggestions of the word "*Ruhe*,"—and no sooner had it been uttered than a spark flashed through the air. It looked like the lighted remnant of a cigar, but hissed like a miniature skyrocket. It fell in the ranks of the second division and near the dividing-line between the companies of Lieuts. Stanton and Bowler, just south of where the speaking had taken place.

A terrific explosion followed—the detonation was heard for blocks around. The direction in which the bomb—for such it was—had been thrown was by way of the east sidewalk from the alley. It had been hurled by a person in the shadow of that narrow yet crowded passageway on the same side of, and only a few feet from, the speaker's stand.

The explosion created frightful havoc and terrible dismay. It was instantly followed by a volley of small fire-arms from the mob on the sidewalk and in the street in front of the police force, all directed against the officers. They were for the moment stunned and terror-stricken. In the immediate vicinity of the explosion, the entire column under Stanton and Bowler and many of the first and third divisions were hurled to the ground, some killed, and many in the agonies of death.

As soon as the first flash of the tragic shock had passed, and even on the instant the mob began firing, Inspector Bonfield rallied the policemen who remained unscathed, and ordered a running fire of revolvers on the desperate Anarchists. Lieuts. Steele and Quinn charged the crowd on the street from



SERGT. (NOW CAPT.) J. E. FITZPATRICK.



curb to curb, and Lieuts. Hubbard and Fitzpatrick, with such men as were left them of the Special Detail, swept both sidewalks with a brisk and rattling fire.

The rush of the officers was like that of a mighty torrent in a narrow channel—they carried everything before them and swept down all hapless enough to fall under their fire or batons. The masterly courage and brilliant dash of the men soon sent the Anarchists flying in every direction, and a more desperate scramble for life and safety was never witnessed. Even the most defiant conspirators lost their wits and hunted nooks and recesses of buildings to seclude themselves till they could effect an escape without imminent danger of bullets or of being crushed by the precipitate mob.

Fielden, so brave and fearless on the appearance of the police, pulled a revolver while crouching beneath the protection of the truck wheels, fired at the officers, and then took to his heels and disappeared. Spies had friendly assistance in getting off the truck, and hastened pell-mell through the crowd in a frantic endeavor to get under cover. He finally reached safety, while his brother, who was with him on the wagon, got away with a slight wound. Parsons seems to have taken time by the forelock and nervously

awaited developments in the bar-room of Zepf's Hall. Fischer had been among the crowd while Spies and Parsons spoke, but he was in the company of Parsons at Zepf's when the explosion occurred. Schnaubelt, who had sat on the wagon with his hands in his pockets until Fielden began his speech, hurried through the mob, after sending the missile on its deadly mission, and got away without a scratch. Other lesser yet influential lights in the Anarchist combination found friendly refuge, and, as subsequently developed, lost no time in reaching home as soon as possible. How any of these leaders who were in the midst of the awful carnage managed to escape, while other of their comrades suffered, is



LIEUT. JAMES P. STANTON.



LIEUT. BOWLER.

not clear, unless they dodged from one secluded spot to another, while the storm raged at its height — and there are many circumstances showing that this was the case. At any rate the point is immaterial: the fact remains that they were all found lacking in courage at the critical moment, and each seemed more concerned about his own safety than that of his fellow revolutionists.

Owing to the masterly charge of the police, the conflict was of short duration, but, while it lasted, it produced a scene of confusion, death and bloodshed not equaled in the annals of American riots in its extent and far-reaching results. The hissing of bullets, the groans of the dying, the cries of the wounded and the imprecations of the fleeing made a combination of horrors which those present will never forget.

No sooner had the field been cleared of the mob than Inspector Bonfield set to work caring for the dead and wounded. They were found scattered in every direction. Many of the officers lay prostrate where they had fallen, and to the north, where the mob had disputed the ground with the police, lay many an Anarchist. On door-steps and in the recesses of buildings were found wounded and maimed. The police looked after all and rendered assistance alike to friend and foe. The dead, dying and wounded were conveyed to the Desplaines Street Station, where numerous physicians were called into service.

In subsequently speaking of the bravery of his men on this occasion, in his report to the Chief of Police, Inspector Bonfield very truly said :

It has been asserted that regular troops have become panic-stricken from less cause. I see no way to account for it except this. The soldier acts as part of a machine. Rarely, if ever, when on duty, is he allowed to act as an individual or to use his personal judgment. A police officer's training teaches him to be self-reliant. Day after day and night after night he goes on duty alone, and, when in conflict with the thief and burglar, he has to depend upon his own individual exertions. The soldier being a part of a machine, it follows that, when a part of it gives out, the rest is useless until the injury is repaired. The policeman, being a machine in himself, rarely, if ever, gives up until he is laid on the ground and unable to rise again. In conclusion, I beg leave to report that the conduct of the men and officers, with few exceptions, was admirable — as a military man said to me the next day, "worthy the heroes of a hundred battles."