

DISASTROUS FIRE

Mansion Burned Down

HISTORIC CO. LIMERICK SEAT

PRICELESS ART TREASURES LOST

Curragh Chase, Adare, the magnificent Co. Limerick seat of the de Vere family, and birthplace of the famous poet, Aubrey de Vere, was disastrously damaged by fire which broke out in the early hours of Sunday morning.

The fire, which started in the library, and is attributed to the fusing of an electric wire, was first noticed at about 1.40 a.m.

Only three people were in residence at the time—Mrs. de Vere, widow of the late Mr. Robert Stephen de Vere, and two maids.

They were awakened when the heat caused the electric bells to ring and escaped uninjured.

The alarm was quickly given and the Limerick Fire Brigade was hastily summoned. Supt. J. J. Cooney, Adare, and Sergeant T. Murphy and Guard McDermott, Pallaskerry, also hurried to the scene.

MASS OF FLAMES.

The flames quickly caught a grip on the building and the conflagration spread rapidly.

Neighbours and estate employees ran to give assistance but it was quickly apparent that nothing could be done to save the building.

Rivulets of flames spread with baffling rapidity through the ground floor and aided by a strong wind quickly shot up to the other stories.

Tongues of fire were soon licking at the roof and smoke was billowing through the windows, the whole conflagration throwing a blood-red glare across the night sky.

Within a short time the whole building was engulfed in a searing mass of roaring flames and clouds of smoke. The roof, alight from end to end, collapsed with a rending of timbers amidst showers of sparks and falling debris.

When the Limerick Fire Brigade arrived shortly after 4 o'clock, under the command of Captain Hogan, the residence was completely afire.

FIRE BRIGADE HELPLESS.

It was found that there was no water supply available except the pipe-line in the house which had already been cut off. Helpless in face of this unexpected contingency the brigade members directed their efforts to salvaging what articles of furniture could be removed with safety from the ground floors. In this they were assisted by the Guards and neighbours and before the danger became too acute a fair quantity of furniture and other effects were brought clear of the fire.

For hours the fire held its devastating grip on the building, until after some six hours, it burned itself out, nothing being left except the gaunt skeleton of the house with its smoke-blackened walls and gaping windows.

To prevent any possible spread of the flames to the outbuildings,

PRICELESS TREASURES LOST.

Our Rathkeale correspondent writes:—

Priceless art treasures and many antiques and articles of historic value were among the valuables lost in the conflagration. Scores of people from the surrounding districts came on Sunday to Curragh Chase and viewed with evident regret the smouldering walls which were all that remained of the historic mansion. It was sad to observe in the midst of the debris broken busts and other fragmentary remains of what were once most valuable statuary.

Very sincere sympathy is felt by the general public for the present popular proprietor, Mrs. Isobel de Vere, on the loss she has sustained, materially and sentimentally.

Mrs. de Vere, who is a most charitable and kindly woman, has done much to alleviate distress in a wide district around Curragh Chase, especially in the matter of fuel, as she has been most generous in giving poor people free access to her woods to obtain firing.

RECENT FIRE

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AT CURRAGH CHASE MANSION

In connection with the recent disastrous fire at Curragh Chase Mansion it was incorrectly reported that the outbreak was due to the using of an electric wire. It has since transpired that this was not so. There were only ordinary electric bells in the house and these were of very low tension. It is to be stated, too, that the water supply was not cut off but was going perfectly as usual. It is very gratifying to know also that much more of the valuables were saved than was at first reported. All the saloon furniture, etc., was saved, including a valuable Marie Antoinette table, first reported to have been destroyed.

Here it may be mentioned that the steward (Mr. Quin) and his son, and Mr. Parkinson, Mr. Pappard, and the other members of the staffs, did splendid work in saving art treasures and preventing the spread of the flames. Mr. Quin and the men on and close to the place were mainly responsible for saving the contents of the saloon.

Amongst the many valuables rescued by Mr. Quin were some precious relics, including Sir Aubrey de Vere's Seal, a Charles II. Cross and a watch that belonged to Lord Glentworth, the poet's great-great-grandfather.

The maids in the house rendered splendid services in sending word of the fire and getting help to cope with it. Indeed the entire residents and staffs did all that was humanly possible in the circumstances and at much risk to their own safety.
