The Milwaukee Fire - song lyrics

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THE MILWAUKEE FIRE.
Written by J. W. Kelley.

'Twas the gray of early morning when the dreadful cry of fire
Rung out upon the cold and piercing air,
Just that little word alone is all it would require
To spread dismay and panic everywhere.
Milwaukee was excited as it never was before,
On learning that the fire bells all around
Were ringing to eternity a hundred souls or more,
And the Newhall House was burning to the ground.
The firemen worked like demons and did all within their power
To save a life or try to soothe a pain;
It made the strongest heart sick, for in less than half an hour
All was hushed And further efforts were in vain.

When the dreadful alarm was sounded through the oft-condemned hotel,
They rushed in mad confusion every way;
The smoke was suffocating and blinding them as well,
The fire king could not be held at bay;
At every window men and women wildly would beseech
For help, in tones of anguish and despair-
What must have been their feelings where where ladders could not reach,
And they felt death's grasp around them everywhere.
Up in the highest window stood a servant girl alone;
The crowd beneath all gazed with baited breath.
They turned away their faces, there was many a stifled groan,
When she jumped to meet, perhaps, as hard a death.

In one place you could see a man, whose wife stood by his side,
They say this man was a millionaire,
To save them from their dreadful fate they left no means untried,
Gold or treasure had no value there.
A boy stood in a window and his mother was below,
She saw him, and the danger drawing near,
With upraised hands, to pray for him, she knelt down in the snow,
And the stoutest men could not restrain a tear.
She madly rushed towards the fire and wildly tore her hair,
Take me, oh, God, but spare my pride, my joy.
She saw the flames surround him, And then, in dark despair,
Said: God have mercy on my only boy.

They tell us now that this hotel has been on fire before,
And not considered safe for several years.
And still the men that owned it let it run on as before,
And they are not to blame it now appears.
Incendiarism this time has been the cause they say,
But who the fiend was they cannot tell,
So the people in Milwaukee will not rest by night or day
Till the matter is investigated well;
Still this will be no benefit to those who've passed away,
In this Milwaukee's greatest funeral pyre,
And peace he to their ashes is the best that we can say ,
For the victims to this great and dreadful fire.