

breech-loading guns on each side, two one-pound rifles for sinking torpedo boats, four Hotchkiss and two Gatling guns in the tops and a torpedo shot in the bow.

The building of this splendid war ship was the first effort to do work of that kind on the Pacific coast, and its successful accomplishment has been the means of opening the eyes of the whole country to the fact that we have here all the facilities and the mechanical skill to build the finest specimens of naval architecture that can be devised.

E. T. Y. SWETT.

#### THE OAKLAND DOOM SEALERS.

SEVERAL months ago a Scandinavian named Erickson began preaching in Oakland, Cal., and soon gathered about him a coterie of adherents and religious enthusiasts who were much after the same stripe as the ubiquitous salvation army. Finally he prophesied that on the 14th of April, San Francisco would be destroyed by an earthquake and Oakland and other cities around the bay would be engulfed by a tidal wave. Absurd and scientifically impossible as this was, he made hundreds of converts, who conducted themselves in such a manner as to become a great public nuisance. At last, about a month ago, the city authorities took hold of the matter, and put an end to the public assemblages. Erickson was arrested and his mental condition inquired into, which resulted in his commitment to an asylum for the insane. It was thought that this would end the whole affair, but they were mistaken. The mantle of the prophet fell upon another, a Mrs. Woodworth, who at once assumed the post of the fallen leader.

As the fateful day approached, Mrs. Woodworth gave all persons due warning of the terrible catastrophe about to occur. She even wrote to the governor advising him to issue a proclamation and to have all prisoners and public property removed beyond the danger line. All persons were warmly urged to leave the fated cities in time to escape the threatened doom.

About a week before the date set, the credulous believers began to take their flight, some going to one place and some another, the Napa valley being the favorite retreat. Many shipped away their household effects to save them from destruction, but the majority of them were poor people, servant girls, and laboring men, chiefly Scandinavians and negroes, and had but little to save but their own skins and the clothing that covered them.

Many who were too poor to pay their passage to more distant points took to the hills back of Oakland, quite a large encampment of them being formed near the base of Grizzly peak. This camp is the one shown

in the engraving on the opposite page. While it is no doubt true that many timid people who had no grounded belief in the truth of the prophesy found it soothing to their delicate nerves to be absent from those cities on the fourteenth, there is no question that several hundred people left them with the firm conviction that the earthquake and the flood would lay them low. Those who went to Santa Rosa and St. Helena became impressed with the idea that those places, also, were possible subjects of divine wrath, and fled for safety to the higher altitudes of Howell mountain, Mount St. Helena and Taylor mountain, where they passed the day in singing and praying, some of them going into trances. At Vacaville they confined themselves to the houses they had taken temporary possession of, feeling as did the children of Israel when the destroying angel passed over Egypt, that within their own sanctified dwellings they were safe.

At the Oakland camp the scene was a novel one. All day long the fanatical doom-sealers engaged in prayer and song, their eyes intently watching and their ears strained to catch the first signs of the coming catastrophies. The day was a beautiful one, bright and warm with sunshine, and sweet with the songs of birds and the perfumes of spring. It was a fitting day for the last of earth, and its very beauty served to more strongly convince the deluded zealots that it was the last for thousands of people. Slowly the day wore to its close, and the expected calamities failed to come, and night settled down upon the various camps of doom-sealers in exactly the same peaceful way that it did twenty-four hours before.

For several days after the deluded fugitives stole silently back to the cities from which they had fled and lost themselves in the general throng, some of them entirely cured of their infatuation, but most of them convinced that God had spared the cities for a time, or that some error had been made in the calculation. As this error may have been of a month, a year, a century or a million years, it is not profitable to speculate upon it. It is not at all impossible that another date may be set by the leaders of the movement, especially since word has come from the martyred prophet now enjoying the hospitalities of the state asylum, but it is extremely doubtful if a second he-gira would number so many people or if the enthusiasm could be again raised to so high a pitch.

Not satisfied with prophesying the destruction of San Francisco and Oakland, Erickson had kindly included Chicago and Millwaukee, which were to be engulfed by the waters of Lake Michigan. Here, also, there was a failure to connect. Chicago was unquestionably saved because of the World's Fair, but just why Millwaukee was spared is a mystery that time alone can solve.