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THE LATEST HORROR.

The appalling extent of the disaster which overtook the excursion steamer Slocum in East river, New York, necessarily makes momentary comment more severe than otherwise would be the case. Pending the official investigation, then, it will be difficult to place the blame for the loss of the lives of 600 or more women and children, if indeed anyone is really to be held accountable for the catastrophe.

Because of the circumstances surrounding the East river disaster, it is not unlike the Chicago theater horror, which is still fresh in public memory. In both instances the victims were mostly women and children, for whom there was no assistance. It is difficult to understand how the accident could occur at such a time, as it would seem the utmost precaution would be observed for the safety of the immense crowd of excursionists that the Slocum carried. Yet disasters of the kind are not infrequent, and in most cases the blame is not directly chargeable to anyone.

So long as people congregate in vast numbers, just so long will terrible calamities occur to strike grief and terror to the nation and to the world. Those thousands who crowd the theaters accept a certain risk, just as the thousands who crowd excursion steamers take their lives in their hands. The collapse of the grandstand at the race track on derby day will result in hundreds of deaths, and the weaker will be trampled beneath the feet of the stronger in the immense crowds that gather on public occasions of moment.

It is too early as yet to say whether or not anyone is really to blame for the East river horror, but in all probability everything possible was done to save the lives of the helpless excursionists after fire was discovered aboard the vessel. It is only reasonable to suppose in this case, as has been correctly supposed in others of like nature, that such disasters are a feature of the age. There is no law that will endow people with brains; and the man, woman or child who is always safe from danger is the one whose reason keeps him out of it.

TURNING OUT THE RASCALS.

"A Year's Disclosure and Development" is the title of a pamphlet just issued by the National Municipal League. The book is compiled by the secretary of the league, Clinton Rogers Woodruff, and deals interestingly with municipal conditions throughout the country.

One of the most interesting of the showings of the pamphlet, which is in the nature of a report, concerns the wholesale arrest of hoodlums throughout the nation. Mr. Woodruff shows that in many of the cities interest in municipal elections had waned, but of late the people have been manifesting more interest in their own affairs, with the result that the grafters have been indicted, and, in many instances, imprisoned. He expresses the logical conviction that the number of arrests for malfeasance in office is not indicative of increase in hoodling, but rather that it indicates a disposition on the part of the people to do away with the present hoodlums.

Mr. Woodruff tells of the successful efforts of the people of the larger cities to clean up their municipal affairs. In almost every one of the great commercial centers the dishonest city officials have been defeated at the polls and honest men have been put into power. In New York, Chicago, Baltimore, Boston, St. Louis, Philadelphia and other cities of prominence the voters have awakened to their duty and have turned out the rascals in almost every instance. That there will hereafter be tolerated much less of the corruption which has characterized the conduct of our municipalities is quite evident from the league's pamphlet, and it is equally as apparent that the desired relief will be brought about only by means of the ballot.

THE ALASKA FISHERIES.

Howard M. Kutchin, special agent of the department of commerce and labor for the inspection of the Alaskan salmon fisheries, has embodied in his report for the year 1903, which is now published by the department, an intelligent review of the operation of the fishing laws in Alaskan waters and some strongly emphasized advice upon the perpetuation of the

salmon supply through hatcheries. He warmly seconds the recommendation made by the special fish commission last summer that the government undertake the work of propagation.

"Artificial propagation—these two words," says Kutchin, "to my mind embody the solution of the vexed question of the perpetuation of the Alaska salmon fisheries, and it may be stated with equal brevity that the attempt of the government to exact that this work be done by the packers of the salmon has been, and must continue to be, a failure. Suffice it to say that out of about 40 companies and individuals engaged in the packing business only a single one—the Alaska Packers' Association—has gone into hatchery effort with anything like earnest purpose and thorough business-like method, and even this concern by no means covers the territory in which it operates nor produces an approximate percentage of the ratio called for by the hatchery regulation."

The scarcity of fish has begun to make itself manifest in the season's total output. In his statistical report Mr. Kutchin shows that, whereas the output of 1902 from all the concerns aggregated 2,631,320 cases, that of the last season amounted to only 2,361,782 cases, a falling off of 269,538 cases, representing a loss of 12 1-2 per cent. In the central Alaskan region about the Cooks inlet and Prince William sound waters the salmon runs have been noticeably short. Some of the more rare and valued species of the fish are being diminished to the extent of an enforced suspension of packing in those bands.

Not to the decreasing numbers of the fish alone is due the threatened shortage in supply, but also to the frequent violation of the fish laws in force along Alaskan waters. Though the special agent declares in his report that the laws are obeyed in the main with about as great an observance as any law commands, he cites frequent and flagrant violation of the measure which prohibits the seining of more than one-third of a stream's waterway. Some unscrupulous canneries, which, in the absence of the inspectors, fence in an entire stream with wire netting, do much to destroy the fish supply.

From the reading of the special agent's report and a consideration of the report made by the special fish commission appointed to investigate the methods of the canneries in Alaska last summer, it appears that if the wealth of the Alaska canneries is to continue unimpaired, the fish packers themselves must see to it that every regulation made by the government is stringently enforced, says the San Francisco Call. If they are prodigal with their supply now they can blame nobody but themselves should the exhaustion of the salmon force suspension of business in the future.

OUR UNTAMED BRETHREN.

A census bulletin just issued by the census bureau gives the population of our new possession, the Philippines, and tells some interesting things about the natives. According to the bulletin, the total population of the islands is 7,635,426, of whom 6,987,686 are civilized, or partly so, and 647,740 are wild.

The report states that the aborigines of the Philippines are believed to be the Negritos, of whom 23,000 still remain. They are found in many, although not all, of the provinces, living in a primitive state. They are very short, the males averaging about 4 feet 10 inches in height, while the females are shorter. Their color is black, their hair is woolly and bushy, their toes are remarkably prehensile, and they can use them almost as well as their fingers. They wear no clothing except a gee string, and live on such food as they can find; they have no fixed habitations or occupations, but wander about in the forests, having but little contact with other people, except when trading. They are skillful in the use of the bow, in throwing stones, and in making a fire, which they do by rubbing together two pieces of dry bamboo. The women, as usual with uncivilized races, do all the work. They are not without a religious belief; the principal deity is the moon. They are very shy and distrustful, and all efforts to civilize them have apparently failed. They probably approach as nearly to the conception of primitive man as any people thus far discovered.

The origin of the Negritos is not known, but from the fact that people of the same type are found in the Malay peninsula and the Andaman islands, bay of Bengal, leads to the belief that they once occupied the entire Malay archipelago. With the arrival of the Malays in the Philippines, the Negritos gradually withdrew or were driven away from the coast into the mountains.

"Salem now claims a population of 13,000."—Portland Evening Telegram. (Be accurate. It is 13,287, and they are all here.)—Salem Statesman. But, alas! many under restraint.

There is an effort on foot to have the Oregon City land office removed to Portland. Better remove the whole state to Portland and be done with it.

Russell Sage objects to the vacation habit. He is getting so close that he hates to spend time.

JUST FOR INSTANCE.

The Tale of Jupiter Brown.

During the next year and a half Jupiter Brown was the honored citizen of ancient Rome. He installed a telephone system, constructed a telegraph line, built a steamboat and did divers things that raised him in public esteem. But on a certain day there was a thunderstorm. Caesar got a shock at the telephone; the telegraph line burned out just as the High Mightiness desired to send a message to his troops; the steamboat blew up and killed half the court beauties—and Jupiter Brown went to prison in chains. In order to regain his liberty he stated that he could construct a piece of machinery that would turn out to be the greatest means of transportation in the world. Brown had visions of a steam engine.

Caesar gave him a year in which to make good. Brown got busy. Mechanics were sent to his aid. Piece after piece of metal was forged and fitted. The engine grew rapidly. It was a crude affair, but Jupiter Brown depended upon it to get him out of the scrape.

Then came the great day. The engine was taken to the center of the arena and all Rome assembled to witness the test. Brown fired up. The steam began to hiss! Then he stepped forward and began a speech.

"You see before you the greatest invention of all time," said Brown. "With it you can conquer your enemies, astound your friends, build up your country! The hissing you hear means the eternal supremacy of the Roman empire! And I—even I—Brown, did it! Pardon me a moment!"

Brown stepped back and pulled a lever. There was a roar, and the face of Jupiter Brown turned white. A scream rent the air.

"Run for your lives," yelled Brown; "I've forgotten to put on a safety valve!"

The explosion caused the forum to totter and startled the inhabitants in far-away Greece. And then—Brown woke up.

(Fins.)

The Japanese are beginning to realize that war is exactly what General Sherman said it was.

We understand that certain ladies have said the hose team's running suits are not in style. Wouldn't that make you take a trip to Paris!

Those correspondents who state that they are being detained at Russian headquarters run an awful chance of hereafter being detained at home! McCULLLEY.

JAPANESE ARMY RATIONS.

General Weston, chief of subsistence of the American army, has solved what he believes to be the great secret of the wonderful mobility of the Japanese army. It lies in the field ration, a sample of which he has received from Major W. B. Barker at Nagasaki, one of the American officers who are watching the war. The ration shows that the Japanese soldier can live and fight for a month on a food supply that weighs less than the daily ration of the American soldier in the field.

The fish received by General Weston is about seven inches long and an inch and a half thick, in the middle, and is dried until it resembles petrified wood. It weighs only 12 ounces, but Major Parker says it will sustain a Japanese soldier for seven days.

When soldiers are on the march they eat the fish just as it is, biting off small pieces, which are thoroughly masticated, but when they are in camp the fish is shaved off in small slices and cooked with rice. The fish resembles a mackerel, but its Japanese name is "mamibushi."

The fish is about two feet long and thick and solid before preparation for the army ration. In preparing it for army use it is cut in two and steamed and dried alternately until it is reduced to about one-eighth of its original size, with a corresponding reduction in weight.

Each Japanese soldier can carry enough fish and rice to last him three or four weeks and a whole army can be made absolutely independent of the commissary train that are indispensable in other armies. If the Russian soldier could live on as little as the Japanese require the Siberian railroad would have little to do but haul troops, for one trainload of dried fish and rice would sustain General Kuro-patkin's army for weeks.

Dried fish is used only as a field ration. The regular daily ration in the Japanese army consists of one and a half pounds of rice and half a pound of canned meats. The daily ration in the United States army weighs about four pounds and the emergency rations is not a great deal lighter.

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