

PORTLAND, OREGON, SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 30, 1908

# OUR SACRIFICE TO CARELESSNESS

1100 LIVES A DAY

And in Money We Lose \$600,000,000 a Year by Agencies That Are Preventable



**I**N A PROPOSAL for the establishment of a school of sanitary science the staggering fact has been brought to light that this country wantonly sacrifices more than 400,000 lives per year.

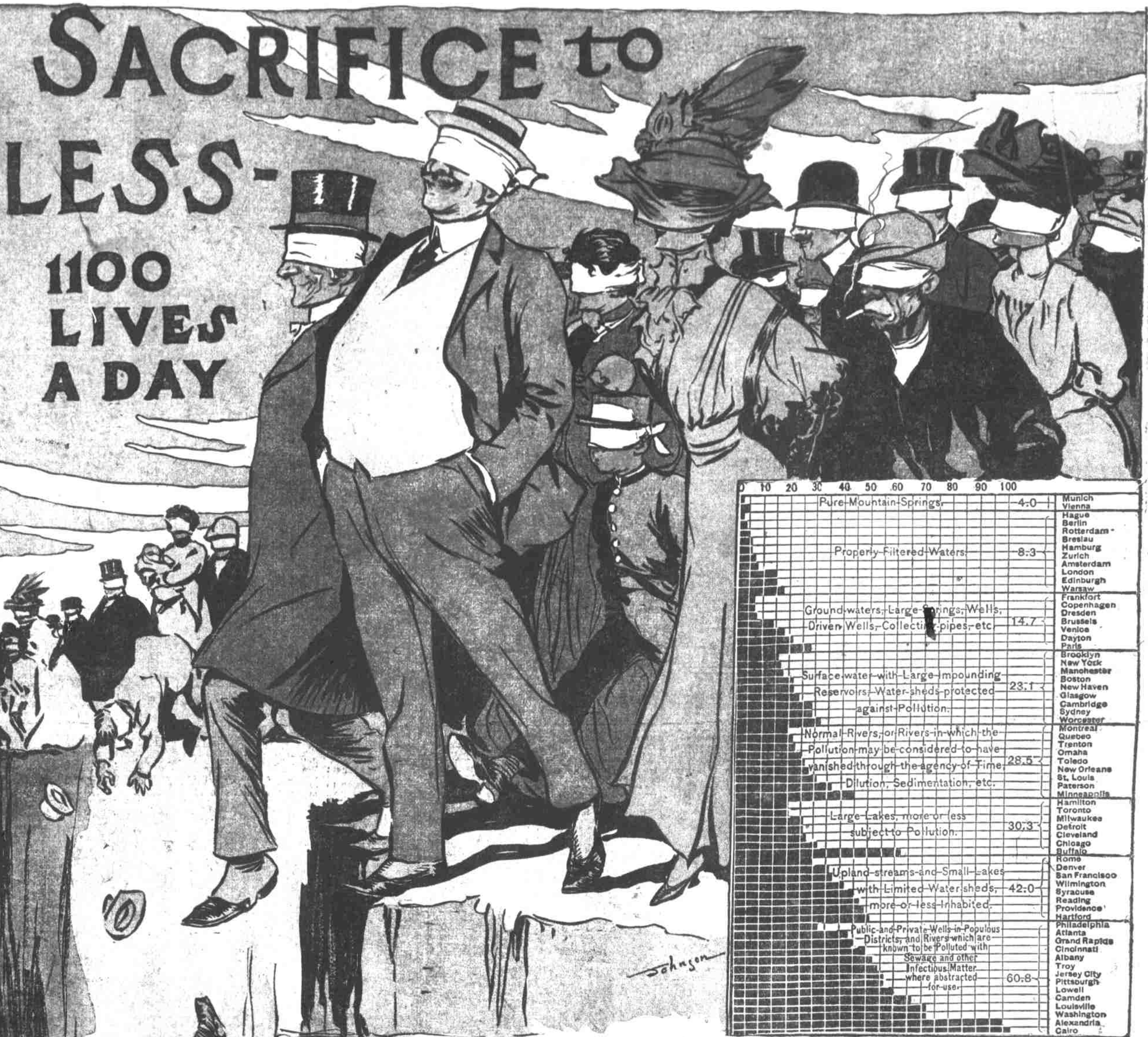
That enormous number represents not the lives of human beings who die of inevitable disease, but those whose fatal illnesses were wholly, assuredly preventable.

The loss of that life which is all in all to its possessors is only the first of the terrible train of disaster consequent upon the nation's wasteful neglect of safeguards and precautions which should be commonplace of the national existence. The next affliction is the legacy of sorrow entailed upon all to whom they were dear.

When, in considering the consequences to the nation, the value of those lost lives is estimated according to the famous Hunter appraisement of the value of the citizen—\$1500 in the United States—it is apparent that the people of this country, apart from the callous cynicism with which they regard the destruction of nearly half a million of their fellows, hurl over the precipice of irrecoverable destruction wealth amounting to \$600,000,000.

Never in the history of the world has so heinous a disregard of human life and national resource been in evidence; for, although the decimations of pestilence and the holocausts of war have raged from era to era, there has previously existed some excuse of ignorance or warrant of necessity.

Now, however, with almost every secret of disease and its prevention laid bare to the well-nigh omniscient eye of sanitary science, the plea of ignorance has been nullified. Henceforth the nation must bear the



Water Source	Percentage	City
Pure Mountain Springs	4.0	Munich, Vienna
Properly Filtered Waters	8.3	Hague, Berlin, Rotterdam, Breslau, Hamburg, Zurich, Amsterdam, London, Edinburgh, Warsaw
Ground waters, Large Springs, Wells, Driven Wells, Collecting pipes, etc.	14.7	Frankfurt, Copenhagen, Dresden, Brussels, Venice, Dayton, Paris
Surface water with Large Impounding Reservoirs, Water-sheds protected against Pollution	23.1	Brooklyn, New York, Manchester, Boston, New Haven, Glasgow, Cambridge, Sydney, Worcester
Normal Rivers, or Rivers in which the Pollution may be considered to have vanished through the agency of Time, Dilution, Sedimentation, etc.	28.5	Montreal, Quebec, Trenton, Omaha, Toledo, New Orleans, St. Louis, Paterson, Minneapolis, Hamilton, Toronto, Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, Buffalo, Rome
Large Lakes, more or less subject to Pollution	30.3	Denver, San Francisco, Wilmington, Syracuse, Reading, Providence, Hartford
Upland streams and Small Lakes with Limited Water-sheds, more or less Inhabited	42.0	Philadelphia, Atlanta, Grand Rapids, Cincinnati, Albany, Troy, Jersey City, Pittsburgh, Lowell, Camden, Louisville, Washington, Alexandria, Cairo



full responsibility for sacrifice. How far has it gone in assuming that responsibility; and how far can it go?

**G**REAT was the material, intellectual and social progress of the world during the nineteenth century; there has been no advance comparable, in influence upon the happiness of mankind, with the increased power then achieved for the lessening of suffering from disease and accident and for the control of the spread of pestilence.

With that huge, main fact as his text, Dr. Norman Edward Dittman has made public, in the Columbia University Quarterly, the enormous assemblage of facts he gathered upon the subject of preventive medicine in the United States and upon the urgent need for a school of sanitary science and public health.

Here and there, in this state and that city, there has been some measure of comprehension of the imperative need that presses upon the American people, urging them to free their national conscience from the guilt of such murderous neglect. But the impulses to betterment has been little enough—little enough for conscience' sake, and little enough for the immediate, vital welfare of the nation. For, says Dr. Dittman:

"The dangers arising from the spread of contagious and other infectious diseases threaten not the individual only, but the industrial life and the whole fabric of modern society. While our progress in the power to conquer disease has been great, there is a growing tendency to allow the glory of past achievement to obscure the magnitude of the field of tasks still undone. Reforms and the adoption of new methods, while accomplishing much, have had a tendency to stimulate our efforts in directions where the greatest returns are not secured from the degree of effort invested. While there has been an immense expenditure of labor and means to cure these evils, comparatively little has been done to prevent them."

It was Pasteur who said: "It is within the power of man to make all infectious diseases disappear from the world."

"Eleven hundred deaths every day as a sacrifice to the ignorance, carelessness and inertia of the multitude!" Dr. Dittman exclaims. "The loss of 400,000 workers per year from preventable disease, representing an annual loss to the country of \$600,000,000!"

He quotes two instances of the economic gain resulting from the saving of human life.

England found that the lower death rate, from what it was between 1866 and 1875 to what it became between 1880 and 1889, meant the saving of 858,804 lives. The English per capita valuation of each life is \$770. England saved lives worth \$659,000,000, and within ten years, although the annual outlay for sanitary improvements has been \$42,000,000, has saved more than the amount expended during fifteen years.

The decrease in New York city attendant upon methods of prevention rated at 5.89 per 1000 inhabitants for twenty-five years, has meant the preservation of more than 3500 lives per year, or 80,000 during the quarter of a century. At the American valuation of human life, \$1500 each, the saving amounted to \$120,000,000. The cases of sickness are usually reckoned as numbering twenty-eight for every death, while the average period of illness is nine days, and the daily wage forfeited is \$1.50. Thus, without counting the cost of nursing and medicines, the total savings to society in New York city for that period was \$150,240,000. The work of no less than three great hospitals was saved; thousands of wives were protected from widowhood; many thousands of children were preserved from orphanage; hundreds of families were saved from poverty.

This year, in New York alone, Dr. Dittman calculates, if perfect sanitation were accomplished, there would be from 25,000 to 25,000 lives rescued from the precipice of destruction to which the nation's unguarded herds are hastened, and 200,000 cases of severe illness could be prevented.

**HORRORS DAZE IMAGINATION**

Imagination stands dazed in contemplation of the horrors of the plague in the history of its ravages through the peoples of the earth. In 1348 every town and village of England was attacked; many places had but one-fourth part of their population left alive; London lost 100,000, and, heaped in the pits of one large burying ground, 50,000 victims were interred together. In later years it has been deemed improbable that there would be any more really extensive epidemics of the plague.

But one of the latest visitations of that dread disease took the lives of 164,083 victims in Bombay, and in 1899 the scourge made its first appearance in the western hemisphere, at Santos, in Brazil. That fearful reappearance in Hongkong, in 1894, which preceded the decimation of Bombay, marked the beginning of a series of outbreaks in various parts of the world.

Free from it for over two whole centuries, Great Britain was once more, in 1900, the scene of a plague outbreak, with a small but undeniable outbreak in Glasgow. Mexico and South America had their isolated cases, while in the United States, coincident with the danger of

Death Rate from Typhoid Fever in Fifty Cities, Grouped According to Quality of Drinking Water

Great Britain, San Francisco had its attack. For three years the plague smoldered, there before it broke out afresh. During the year sequent upon June 30, 1903, San Francisco had 24 cases and 23 deaths.

Modern science has conquered the bubonic plague. The identification of its bacillus and the discovery of its transmission by fleas and rats gave the clue to its prevention. The discovery of the Yersin and Haffkine serums furnished the means of cure.

The echoes of the relentless struggle inaugurated by San Francisco upon the hour of realization of the danger that confronted the community have not yet died away. The city found itself face to face with a scourge which has been the horror of mankind for ages. Its very unfamiliarity terrified all into the most drastic measures of sanitation, in accordance with the most advanced means provided by modern science; and science, used with promptness and thoroughness, conquered.

Even so did science, combined with energy and thoroughness, conquer yellow fever in Cuba, conquer it again in Panama, and free the United States from the long, awful series of epidemics which have cost untold treasures, uncounted lives, since the first recorded epidemic, in Philadelphia in 1793, when, within six weeks, out of 40,144 people, 4041 perished—literally, a decimation.

Cholera, conquered in Germany by filtration; smallpox conquered by vaccination; scurvy, conquered by mere lime juice; beri-beri, conquered by nitrogenous diet—these appalling diseases have all been overcome, almost upon the heels of the discovery of their safeguards by experimental science, by the application of those safeguards through intense national need or aroused public opinion.

But the world—and especially the United States—still reeks with the morgue-like miasma of other diseases, long ago proved to be preventable, yet continuing to claim their victims by the hundred thousand, the most enlightened, progressive nation of the earth cheerfully—and as