

WILL 1912 PROVE the TERRIBLE YEAR?



Every Generation Has One Year of Famine and Disaster, and the Twelve-month Has Started to Break All Records



Mexican Revolutionaries on the Way to Battle, Having Just Captured a Town.



In the Famine District of Russia.



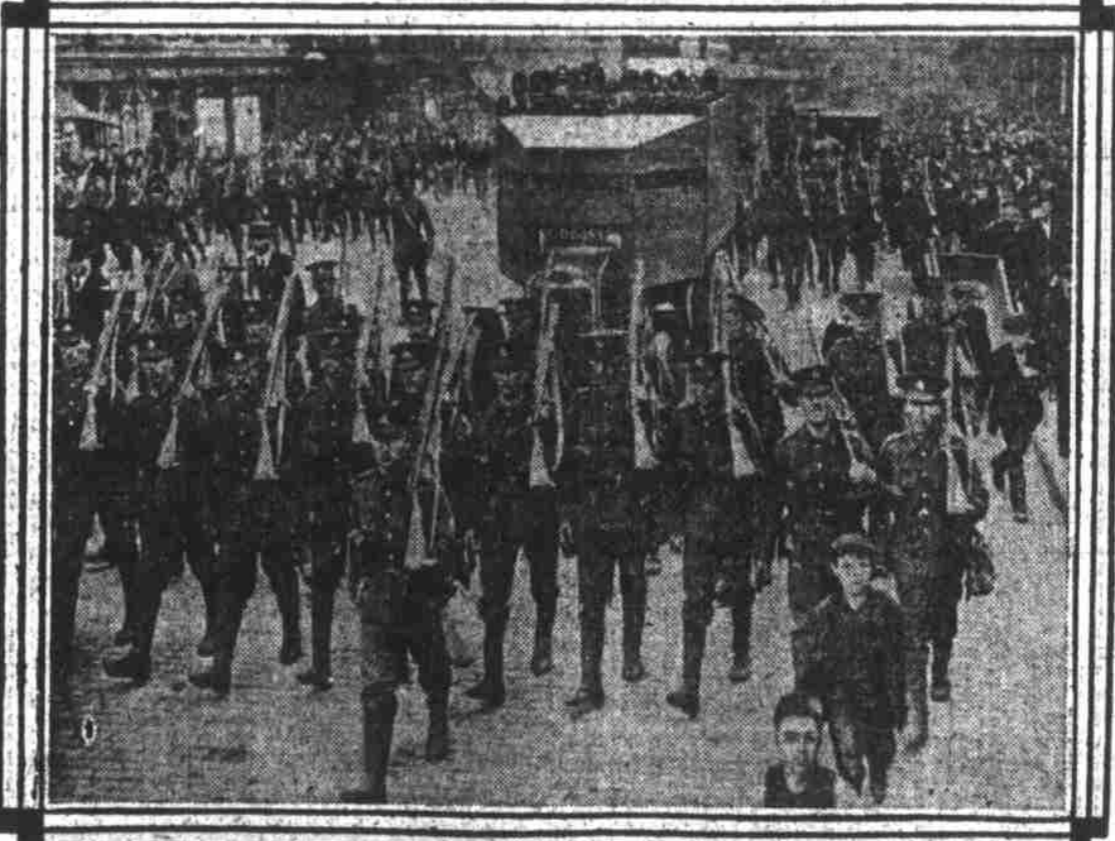
A Type of the Chinese Famine Victims.



In the Italian Trenches Beyond Tripoli.



Flood's Ravages in America, During the Mississippi Disaster. (Photo by Underwood & Underwood.)



England's Industrial Warfare—An Armored Police Car in Use in Liverpool.

PROBABLY never in the history of mankind has the whole world been more profoundly shocked than by the foundering of the Titanic, with its loss of more than 1600 lives. Most terribly dramatic of the tragedies of the sea, it had every element that could command sympathy—the manner of the accident, the heroism of the men who stood back, the great number of rich and famous persons who perished, the bravery of the women who were saved, and the seamanlike manner in which Captain Rostron, of the Carpathia, set about the work of rescue. In all of these features the elements of grandeur entered. Even the final scene of the sinking would have been of majestic

beauty had it not been that the suffering it caused blotted out every other impression. And yet the Titanic's loss of life was but a mere nothing to the thousands that are being blotted out every day, to the millions that will be no more when 1912 has become a memory. This year, indeed, promises to realize all that the prophets of evil have been predicting. With scarcely more than six months of it gone, the entire globe has been devastated by war, famine, pestilence and political uprisings. When one considers calmly the things that have happened since 1911 went out, he can hardly avoid asking the question, "Will 1912 be the terrible year?"

FIRST and foremost we may consider, in America, the constant drain on human life. Almost as bad as war or famine it is. This year not less than 500,000 men, women and children will die of preventable diseases. Not less than 40,000 to 50,000 lives will be lost in industrial accidents, most of them the result of carelessness. Ten times that number will be injured. And yet even this is as nothing to the vast numbers that are today facing starvation. Take the case of China. Early this year the revolution swept away the oldest monarchy the world has ever known. Under one dynasty or another, the Chinese government goes so far back that it is lost in antiquity. It alone of modern governments was in existence when the children of Israel fled from Egypt. As far as history is concerned, 1912 would have been a memorable year if nothing else had happened than the formation of the Chinese republic. It was an upheaval on a truly titanic scale. Considered in connection with the importance of the event, the loss of life was not great. Only a few battles of consequence were fought—those around Hankow and on the road to Nanking. Yet there were massacres without number, murders for pillage and revenge, executions for mutinies—loss of life in so many ways and places that it is probable that the number killed will never be known. An estimate of 50,000 slain would probably be conservative. Yet this pales before the famine. During 1911 and the spring of this year the sufferings in all parts of the great republic have been acute. Five years ago a million people died of hunger. This year the number is not likely to be much less, for, in addition to all other causes for the shortage of food, there is the chaos that came with a change in the form of government and the consequent inability of the new rulers to get the money needed to run the national machinery and, at least partially, provide food for the people. Famine likewise is devastating eastern Russia and Siberia as a consequence of the failure of last year's crops. Not only were the cereals and vegetables exhausted in the long winter, but the domestic animals were virtually all killed off to make up for the shortage in grain. When they were gone starvation followed them. As early as February it was estimated that 26,000,000 people were in need of relief. People in this country cannot comprehend what that means. It is as if the whole Atlantic coast states had to be fed until the new crops began to come in. The Russian government has been spending tens of millions, but many have perished because the bureaucratic methods are slow, and even embezzlement has to be fought against. Disease is a natural attendant of famine. In eight Russian provinces at one time were reported 30,000 cases of scurvy, hunger typhus and typhoid. Imagine the ravages that will be wrought among a people debilitated by hunger!

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