

OWNERS OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS RESPONSIBLE

Responsibility is something like the Southerner's description of the necessity of carrying a gun in the South. He said a fellow might go along and along, for years, even, and never have any use for it, but if ever the time came when he did have occasion to use it, he would need it "mighty powerful." The responsibility enjoyed by the public, through its representatives or officials, and individual responsibility are so indissolubly linked and welded together that there can be no satisfactory line of demarcation drawn in an attempt to fasten the blame or fix the responsibility upon either to the exclusion of the other.

The public owes its existence to the presence of the individual. The individual holds the general collection of similar individuals responsible for his safety, freedom and environment. As everybody's business is nobody's business, it has been found expedient to represent the general masses of people under popular forms of government by representatives, whose duty it is to protect by laws, to enforce by legitimate and humane means its prescribed laws, and bring to the constant use and benefit an evenly balanced joint responsibility between the individual and society. However closely the individual and the public may seem to be united and may share alike all responsibility, yet there has been room enough left for the press to squeeze in, and thus push them apart until custom has made our daily newspaper the safety valve for all economical relationship and has made the popular newspaper an hour glass where the constant experience in the daily living of the whole human family is sifted through its discriminating grains of sand and its ceaseless functions mark the progress of the day or stir up latent energy, whose lapse and apathy incriminate a healthy and strong society. But the prestige and enviable position of the press, standing as it does between the individual and the commonwealth, is not within its solemn responsibilities, and it is so generally understood and expected that the press break not its sacred trust, that it becomes either a shield to the villain or an effective weapon for good. The press may be truthfully said to represent the sentiment in whatever community it may be immersed, and the exception to this rule is no more alarming than are the laws of the legislature, which, when passed, are known to the common people, not to be the general wish of themselves, nor were they passed to meet a demand of the people. And by reason of the exception being in evidence, the law and the exception to our rule, become a dead letter and its expressions without weight or effect. Therefore, for a newspaper to carry any weight and hold its head high it must first and last seek out the sentiment of the people, and forever arguing for the right, for justice and protection to the poor, it may thus keep in touch with the power which makes its existence possible, thereby become a limb of the great body of the commonwealth, and not the body to a limb as we would occasionally infer from the conduct of some newspaper people. While public sentiment is well known to be both blind and headlong at times, yet, upon whom does the concealed newspaper call for enforcement of its decrees and appeals but to the better tempered individuals and conservative ones, who, we perceive, also form part of that intricate and inseparable amalgamation, the common people? The press is powerless but for the backing it has from the better elements in society. So, we see in this phase of the matter, that even the newspaper, although it stands between the individual and the public, yet it, in turn, bows to public sentiment. As a famous man once said that civilization travels faster on a powder cart, so we find our three relationships maintaining an even balance through this dependence upon each other.

To consider the local aspect of a joint responsibility, or a three-phase compact, is always in order, like a motion to adjourn. Here we have three things with which to deal. One, the public; another, the newspaper, and lastly, the individual. These three things, if they may be properly so termed for the present purpose, are responsible for everything, share and share alike. Even in case of what is termed an act of God we are not held blameless, since there are individuals who believe and hold that we are responsible because we lack the very amount of good in our daily lives to remove the necessity for such calamities. The public is to blame for its carelessness and negligence and for its moral stamina, the newspaper for its wrong conditions to

continue, which is known of by its employees, who become detectives-beneficiaries to the public, learning of these conditions under privileges not accessible to the general public, and the individual is responsible for either wilfully creating a menace to public safety, or, for being human. This last great fact, that we are only human, and that other maximized fact that "it is human to err" may ever soften harsh judgment, soothe critical expressions and aid us in our struggle with the vicissitudes of life, helping each other rather than doing no good, but wrong, by expecting perfection from imperfection. When we work together as common citizens, for the common good, then nothing can stop harmonious progress. To illustrate: We have an ordinance in our city laws requiring buildings to be fitted with suitable fire escapes. Now some of the buildings specified have not been fitted yet. It is to be expected that if the Chicago newspapers had howled for the opening up of the fire escapes in all the theatres, which would have cost a few dollars, that they would have been calamity howlers, but AFTER the Iroquois Theatre disaster, then how anxious were they all to fix the blame for an event entirely unnecessary, and to punish the guilty for a loss of human life, which nothing could restore. How anxious are we to punish the guilty after the crime, rather than anticipate it? We never stop to weigh our own indirect responsibility to the sad occurrence. We seek to imprison those directly connected, while the real stewards of the public safety are sleeping at their post. After the fire at the Iroquois how many of the Chicago papers would have given most anything to have been the one, and only one paper to have opened these fatal traps and by their demand for protection, have saved nearly a thousand women and helpless children from the blackened ruins. So, turning to our own little city, we see several buildings without the required escape. Now, before the possible occurs, let us look into the responsibility. The law has been made, thus discharging, in a measure only, the sense of responsibility from the public. The representatives of the people, employed for the purpose of enforcing this law, have been notified of this precautionary measure for public safety, and lastly the individual has been warned. All three are concerned. The individual owner of the building can be seen walking about enjoying life and deriving profit from his structure, whose menace to the public has been brought to his attention. He knows that each day there are confined in the walls of that building at a dangerous height a number of individuals whose chances of safely descending are minimized by want of suitable avenues. The attendant risk and possibility of loss of life are daily known to this owner, and yet he hesitates to equip this building. And for why? Who can say? It is that he dislikes to spend money for this indirect return? Would he like this self-same policy turned upon himself and have occupants refuse to any longer rent his spaces until he did equip the building with safety devices? We can dismiss the question of why don't a man be a man, and under the popular cloak of charity excuse his love for money and consequent disregard for public safety. If it required anything else besides money, would the building be equipped any quicker? If so, then we are certainly in a very deplorable state of society, when human life and limb are worth less than the paltry dollar dug from the dust. Dismissing the individual owner, who openly allows this public menace for the sake of a dollar, because we would hardly care to say it would be the love of the danger to which his tenants may be exposed, and charred ghosts to haunt his conscience, we ask to see the responsibility of the public officials. These officials also know of this law and of this building not being properly supplied with apparatus for safe flight, yet, officials notify and then set down to wait the pleasure or convenience of the owner. Under semblance of being "reasonable with a fellow" the building is allowed to remain unprotected and thus we find a greater responsibility growing upon these officials. In turn the newspaper is well aware of this condition. It is better positioned to call attention to this necessity than any other party to this generally shared responsibility, therefore its duty becomes that much greater. Still the newspaper feels like being "reasonable" also, forgetting in this exercise of human policy that we are NOT dealing with human powers and agencies, but that we are in the

midst of laws and agents whose slightest infraction may cause us untold disaster and loss. It is not a question of being "reasonable" or "easy" with anybody, it is purely and solely a question of seeing to it that every precaution is had to prevent a conflict, not with somebody's purse (which can be made out of a sow's ear), not with somebody's feelings, but with the natural laws in which we find ourselves submerged, and which we must respect if we expect to live here with any degree of safety, and laws which no human being on earth made, ever can make, or can annul. Therefore, this higher sense of the condition under which we find ourselves should appeal at all times, and not the petty and narrow concept which we frequently fall into by losing our sense of this personal safeguard. Were your own children caged in the top of that building, you would feel different. Remember, then, if they are not your children, they are children of somebody else, children as dear to them. So we find we are all to blame. Think of the price Chicago had to pay before she learned her lesson. Even that did not prevent the General Slocum disaster. Will it teach us anything?

Now that our winter's amusement houses and public halls are being opened for the season's festivals, had we not better look to it and see that they are all ready for us, with opened fire escapes and asbestos curtains in our theatres, exterior stairways from our high buildings and fresh underpinning for weak or defective structures? Let us defeat the workings of apathy and indifference and maintain an effectual bar to local distress by removing the incipient stages, and above all be thankful for having escaped these dire calamities in the past and for the suggestions here offered for the future.

FRED R. WATERS.

Salem, Oct. 4, 1904.

To Command in the Philippines.

San Francisco, Oct. 8.—Major-General Corbin sailed for Manila on the steamship Mongolia today to assume command of the Philippine division of the army. Mrs. Corbin accompanied him to the Philippines.

MARKET QUOTATIONS TODAY

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Poultry—at Steiner's Market.

Eggs—Per dozen, 25c.
Hens—8c.
Young chickens—8c.

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Eggs—Per doz, 25c.
Potatoes, Vegetables, Etc.
Potatoes—1½c.
Onions—2½c.

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Ash—\$5.00.
Oak posts—15c.
Cedar posts—10c.

Hides, Pelts and Furs.

Green Hides, No. 1—5c.
Green Hides, No. 2—4c.
Calf Skins—4@5c.
Sheep—7c.

GOAT SKINS—25c to \$1.00.

PORTLAND MARKET.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 81@82c.
Valley—85c.
Flour—Valley, \$4.10@4.25; graham, \$3.50@4.00.

Oats—Choice white, \$1.25 @ \$1.30.

Barley—Feed, \$20@21 per ton; rolled \$23@25.

Millstuffs—Bran, \$19.00.

Hay—Timothy, \$14@15.

Potatoes—90c@1.00.

Eggs—Oregon ranch, 24½@25c.

Poultry—Chickens, mixed, 10½@11c per pound; turkeys, 16@17c.

Pork—Dressed, 9½@7c.

Beef—Dressed, 4@6c.

Veal—6@7c.

Mutton—Dressed, 4@5c.

Hops—1903 crop, 25@26.

Wool—Valley, 19@20c; Eastern Oregon, 19@17c; Mohair, 30c for choice.

Hides—dry, 16 pounds and upwards, 15@15½c.

Butter—Fancy creamery, 25@27½c.

Grain and Flour.

Oats—Buying, \$1.25@1.35.

Barley—\$21 per ton.

Hops—25@28c.

Salem Flouring Mills.

Flour—Wholesale, \$4.10.

Wheat—80c.

Live Stock Market.

Steers—2@2½c.

Cows—1@1½c.

Sheep—\$1.50@2.00.

Dressed veal—4@5½c.

Fat hogs—5@5½c.

Hay, Feed, Etc.

Baled chaff—\$10@11.

Baled clover—\$10.

Bran—\$22.50.

Eggs, Butter and Cream.

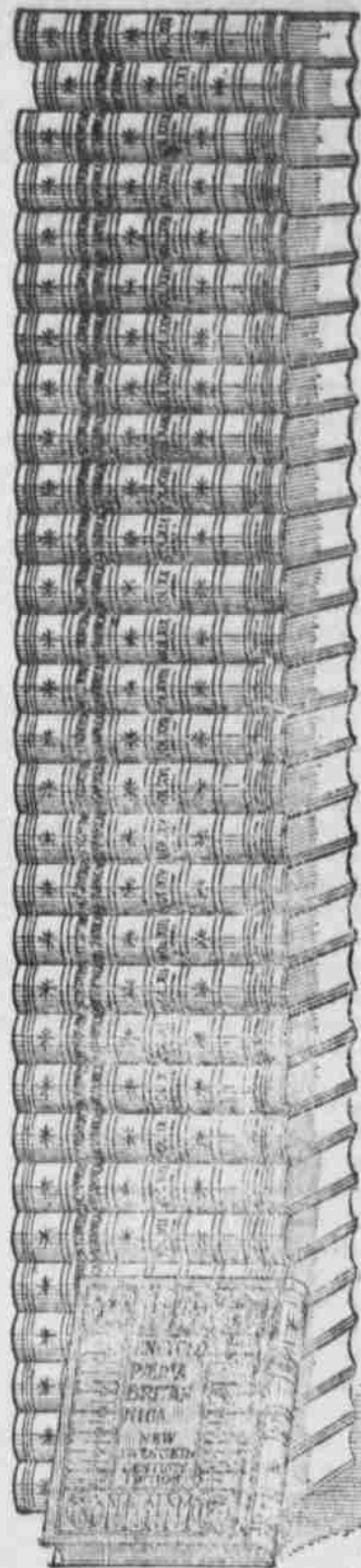
By Commercial Cream Co.

Eggs—25c cash.

Butter—27½@30c.

Butter fat—27½c at station.

Times are Stirring! Keep Posted



The theater of the world contains many things of interest nowadays. Another war has arisen which threatens to change the aspect of the Far East. The politics of England are undergoing upheaval. The United States is taking more and more part in world affairs; is preparing to dig the Panama canal; and is facing another political struggle.

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