

## THEY COURT DEATH

Those Who Take Liberties With Fulminate of Mercury.

### PERILS OF BLASTING CAPS.

These Dangerous and Sensitive "Play-toys," Often Picked Up Around Quarries, Are Responsible For Hundreds of Crippled Youngsters.

Over 600 children have been hurt or perhaps crippled for life in the last five years from playing with blasting caps. If this had happened at one time what a howl would have gone up all over the world! But because the accidents are spread all over the country and happen at the rate of only about ten a month nothing is done by the authorities. Indeed, nothing can be done except to educate the whole population to realize how dangerous these exceedingly useful things are when they are out of their proper place. And what a dreadful thing it is going through life crippled or blinded for want of a little care and knowledge.

Boys often play in and around quarries on Sundays and sometimes pick up stray caps and start to investigate them. It is the rarest thing that they ever do this without getting hurt. They perhaps know they are dangerous and that a spark or a blow will explode them, but they do not realize how sensitive they are, how violent the explosion or how the pieces of copper fly. Even the name is misleading in this respect. The word "caps" suggests the paper caps used with toy pistols, and because the blasting caps are called by this name it is natural to think that the two articles belong to the same family. They may, but they bear about the same resemblance to each other that a hungry man eating tiger does to the gentle pussy cat.

There are lots of ways of getting crippled by exploding blasting caps besides hitting them with a hammer and putting them in the fire. Extracting the contents with a pin distributes untold fingers; holding a lighted match under them or thrusting the flaming end into the cap gets immediate action. In the mines and quarries even, where the men who have to use blasting caps every day ought to know better, there are plenty of mangled hands and punctured hides as the result of crimping caps on fuse with a jack-knife, pointed nail or any tool that's handy.

Many a miner has blown a hole through his face in biting the cap on the fuse, and others have filled themselves with copper or have been killed outright by the sparks from their hat lamps or pipes dropping in an open box of caps. Lots of blasters continue to bite the caps on the fuse and think that because they have never exploded them they never will, but some day they will bite the business end and lose something besides teeth. It is much easier and lots safer to use the crimper, a tool made for the purpose. Accidentally stepping on a cap will often spoil a perfectly good foot. Sparks, flame, heat, blows, friction—it's all the same to the cap to which they are applied.

A blasting cap is a copper shell about a quarter of an inch in diameter and an inch or two long, half full of fulminate of mercury. This fulminate is the most sensitive and about the most impulsive explosive in common use. Blasting caps contain anywhere from fifteen to twenty grains of it. Primers for firecracker cartridges usually contain not more than one grain. That's what the hammer or firing pin of a gun or pistol hits to ignite the powder in the shell. A blasting cap is meant to work the other way. The powder from the fuse ignites the fulminate in the blasting cap, and it explodes with terrific force and detonates the dynamite. The explosion of the fulminate is so exceedingly quick that the flying particles of copper will embed themselves in iron a foot away. They will blow a hole clean through a steel plate one-sixteenth of an inch thick. A box of caps will blow a beautiful square hole right through a two inch oak plank. One cap will blow a child's hand off with the utmost certainty and dispatch. Ling, one of the Chicago anarchists, committed suicide by biting a blasting cap between his teeth.

The point to be remembered is that when a blasting cap goes off it does great damage locally. There is no escaping its effects. Among all the 600 or more accidents reported from playing with blasting caps there are only two or three in which somebody was not hurt.

Electric blasting caps are just as strong as ordinary blasting caps, but as the capsule or shell is sealed up with a sulphur plug through which the wires are carried down to the fulminate, not so many accidents occur in playing with them. They are generally dipped in dark colored wax and are not such attractive playthings as the bright copper blasting caps, but they get there just the same. Amateur electrician are earnestly advised to bury the electric cap a foot or two in the earth before trying to pass electric currents through the wires, and they had better not do it then. Don't open it up to see what's in it! Explosive manufacturers are not given to imparting trade secrets promiscuously, but they will gladly tell what's in the caps and how they are made rather than have you blow your hands off trying to find out for yourself.

Don't carry caps around in your pockets! Don't take them home with you! Don't leave them where children can get at them! Don't monkey with them!—Chicago Record-Herald.

## RISE AND FALL OF SAWBILL.

The End Came With a Rush When the Gold Vein Vanished.

Far from the railroad and more than forty miles away from the nearest white resident, hidden in the wilds of one of the most picturesque parts of the province of Ontario, Canada, specter like, stands the deserted village of Sawbill, once a bustling mining camp where several hundred men were employed.

The end came suddenly. Tools were dropped where workmen were installing a dynamo; dishes and furniture and household goods were left as they were when the word came that the mine had closed. The books end on July 31, 1901. The store was left with its stock of goods on the shelves, the hotel closed its doors, its contents intact, and the postoffice ceased to be. Only a watchman was left.

Sawbill grew out of a gold strike. The ledge, reported fabulously rich, quickly gave out when real mining was attempted. A road was built through the wilderness, a power house was erected, a forty stamp mill went up along with a hotel, store, postoffice and many buildings for the employees. On Aug. 15, 1899, the electric lights were turned on. The telephone line was opened. The water rushed through the huge flume across the lake, the giant turbine revolved, the dynamo hummed, and the power for operating the mine's machinery was at hand.

But the \$200 per ton output of the little mill first installed proved to be only a deceptive lure for all the dollars that were poured into the enterprise. When the big mill did run the greatest amount of gold obtained per ton was said never to have exceeded \$1.87. The shafts were sunk deeper, new ones were opened, but the wide veins of ore which showed on or near the surface narrowed to thin ribbons or to nothing at all. The gold obtained could not begin to pay the operating expenses.

The mill and its machinery, the power plant and its equipment, stand as though waiting for the whistle announcing the beginning of a day's work, though the last evidences of the half million spent at Sawbill are disappearing before inevitable decay and the encroaching and encroaching forest.—Robert E. Pinkerton in Ontario Globe.

### A CITY IN A GORGE.

The First View of La Paz Is Startling to the Tourist.

James Bryce in his book "South America" gives a picturesque description of the approach to La Paz, Bolivia. He tells how the traveler who nears La Paz has a surprise in front of him if he is coming from Lake Titicaca, the usual route from the coast. At a point 13,000 feet above sea level the railway from Guayaquil meets the railway from Antofagasta, 400 miles away to the south. "From this point, called Viacha, the route turns eastward toward the Cordillera, the line climbing slowly in wide sweeps over the dusty and shrubless plateau on whose thin grass sheep are browsing. There is not a house visible, and the smooth slope seems to run right up against the mountain wall beyond. Where can La Paz be? asks the traveler.

"Presently, however, he perceives strings of llamas and donkeys and wayfarers on foot moving along the slope toward a point where they all suddenly vanish and are no more seen. Then a spot is reached where the railway itself seems to end between a few sheds. He gets out and walks a few yards to the east and then suddenly pulls up, with a start, on the edge of a yawning abyss.

"Right beneath him, 1,500 feet below, a gray, red roofed city fills the bottom of the gorge and climbs up its sides on both banks of the torrent that foams through it. Every street and square, every yard and garden, is laid out under the eye as if on a map, and one almost seems to hear the rattle of vehicles over stony pavements coming faintly up through the thin air."

### Scotchman's Sad Loss.

"As the waiter laid down my five-pence change," writes C. M. in the Glasgow News, "I noticed that the top-most coin was not of British currency. It was, in fact, a French penny. I attracted his attention, therefore, with a motion of my forefinger and indicated the pile of coins with a wave of my hand, which was meant to say 'What is this you have given me?' The waiter bent gracefully forward, scooped up my change with a practiced hand and with a polite 'I thank you, sir,' moved swiftly away. Next time I'll give the language of signs a miss."

### Sympathetic.

"Don't you ever find it hard to be a freak?" asked the stonish, tightly laced woman who had stopped to converse with the fat lady.

"No, not a bit," was the reply. "I often feel sorry for some of you people who seem to find it so hard not to be freaks."—Chicago Record-Herald.

### Mixed Up.

A woman stated at a recent inquest that her husband's Christian name was James Jonathan or Jonathan James, she did not know for sure which. "You see," she explained, "he was one of twins and they got mixed up a bit."—London Standard.

### A Trade Union.

Ella (spitefully)—Their marriage was nothing but a trade union. Sophie—A trade union? Ella—Yes; she traded her money for his title.—London Telegraph.

Worry, whatever may be its source, weakens, takes away courage and shortens life.

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