

The Human Stampede

(Continued from page 2)

To judge from their outward appearance wrote Peter de Roya: "They appear a Race of Fools, without speech or sense."

This led to all manner of fanaticism. There was one crowd known as the "Sleepless Hermits." They refused to sleep so as to keep up unbroken prayer to God day and night.

Another crowd was known as the "Grazing Monks." They roved about shelterless and almost naked and grazed like cattle on the herbs they usually found.

Simon the Stylite spent half a century upon the summit of a pillar 60 feet high from which he preached to the people, and refused to come down.

The result of this was a stampede in which thousands lost their lives, and it took a thousand years for their emotion to cool off.

A SECOND stampede was the Pilgrimage to the Holy Land which resulted in the Crusades.

People got the idea that going to the Holy Land was conducive to the health of the soul. Every man who took such a journey, on his return, carried a staff and became a noted person.

This soon became a panic. When the Persians took Jerusalem in 611, 90,000 pilgrims were put to death.

At the end of the 10th century it was universally believed that the world was coming to an end. Thousands stampeded. But the Turks captured Jerusalem and for a time stopped the flow of pilgrims.

Then it was that Pope Urban sent Peter the Hermit throughout Europe preaching the Crusade. This movement was so called because of the cross which the pilgrims wore on their coats.

Europe stampeded. It is said 6,000,000 men took part—unarmed, unprovided for—a mob. Peter the Hermit placed himself at the head of a vast army, behind which marched a quarter of a million of men, women and children. Only 7,000 reached Constantinople. These crossed the Bosphorus and fell into a trap laid for them by the Turks. A heap of bones alone remained to tell the story of their destruction.

THIS was followed by what is known in history as the Children's Crusade.

Men said the older people could not succeed on account of their sins,

but innocence could conquer everything.

Thirty thousand French children and 40,000 German children took up the crusade.

Their parents tried to stop them. But in vain. The German army, under the boy Nicholas started out. Few of them reached Italy. The Pope sent them back but when they arrived home they were ruined.

The boy Stephen commanded the 30,000 French children. Seven ships sailed from Marseilles, 5 of them reached the coast of Africa and the children were sold into slavery.

During the Crusade, it is estimated that as high as seven million people lost their lives. A few fanatics in religion allowed their emotions to run away with them, this caused a panic which resulted in dire disaster.

Again, People believed the teaching of Scripture that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. They gathered together in crowds to be whipped that their blood might flow. They considered that they should be whipped 33 days.

This idiotic practice under the sway of the crowd lasted three or four hundred years. There is scarcely any limit to which uncontrolled emotion in the interests of religion will not go.

OUR next illustration of what we mean by "the human stampede" is the belief in and punishment of witchcraft.

The belief in witches and their power



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to do supernatural things goes back to the ages of antiquity.

The Egyptians had their magicians, soothsayers and sorcerers. The Israelites had their witches. The Hindus had their workers of magic. This belief in the product of mysticism.

Even down to modern days there was a belief that witches and wizards had contracts with the devil signed in blood. They held their midnight convocations, and careered through the air on broomsticks.

The old Romans placed a law upon their statute book against witches.

It read like this: No one should remove his neighbors crop to another field by incantation, or conjure away his neighbors corn.

England for a century believed in witches. The writings of Shakespeare show how widespread was that belief.

Even the most educated were stamped into the belief.

Eminent doctors defended it. Clergymen found it a popular subject if they wanted to gather a large congregation.

Even John Wesley who in most instances must be regarded as a sensible man, showed his weakness here. He caught the microbe and in 1768 he wrote—to give up belief in witches is in effect to give up the Bible.

Blackstone the eminent legal authority in his commentary on the laws of England accepts witchcraft as a fact.

TO show you what a panic this belief in witches created let me read an account of a trial entered in the English law courts in the year 1664.

Sir Matthew Hale was the Judge and Sir Thomas Brown was the medical expert witness.

Two widows named Rose Cullender and Annie Dunny were accused of bewitching two children. The main points of evidence were: There had been a quarrel between the accused parents of the children, and the accused had uttered threats against them. The children vomited crooked pins, one of them vomited a two penny nail with a broken head. They cried out the name of the accused in their fit. They couldn't pronounce the names Lord, Jesus or Christ, but when they came to 'Satan or Devil' they cried "This bites, but makes me speak it well." One of the children fell into a swoon and after being nursed by one of the accused, a great cold fell out of the child's blanket and exploded in the fire like gun powder, and immediately afterwards the accused witch was seen sitting at home maimed and scorched.

The next witness was a farmer. He said that once when his cart had

touched Cullender's house it overturned continually and they could not get it home.

Sir Thomas Brown, the medical expert arose and in a solemn voice gave his weighty opinion:—Those swooning fits and vomiting, crooked pins, etc., were due to the subtlety of the devil co-operating with the witches.

Then Sir Thomas Hale, the presiding judge, arose and in summing up said: That there was no doubt in his mind but that they were witches, and pronounced a verdict of death for each of the accused.

Witches in almost every country were hanged or burned. If you doubted the existence of witches you were similarly treated.

The coming of inductive science gave witchcraft its death blow. Men examined the evidence and found that this belief was without any substantial foundation. Today we regard it as a fable. But let us not forget that in that 'human stampede' no less than 300,000 innocent persons were put to death.

LEAVING the realm of the mystical and coming to the world of finance, I want to show that even hard-hearted business men are subject to this tendency to stampede.

The world has experienced four great financial panics, each of which ended in a great disaster.

First there was the tulip mania amongst the Dutch. This began in 1634. One man conceived the idea of raising tulips. Another was influenced to do it. Then another and another, until soon the whole country started



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ed in buying or selling tulips. Tulip exchanges were organised instead of money exchanges.

"The excitement went on until a single root brought \$1200, and another \$2,000. Properties worth half a million dollars were all thrown into this one speculation. The Amsterdam tulip, supposed to be the only one of its kind in the world, brought \$1814,000."

Things went on at this mad pace until a man one day said, what's the good of a tulip anyway. He sold out, another followed; then another. Then came the stampede. Prices dropped. The whole business went to the wall, and the country was nearly ruined.

The world is slow to learn its lessons. This financial panic was followed by another of even greater proportions. This time it was France. In 1716 John Law, a Scottish gambler projected the Mississippi Scheme. The people of France had heard that the American contract was a chunk of gold and this Mississippi Scheme was projected by John Law for the purpose of taking this gold and pouring it into France. The whole nation turned into lunatics. The people rushed in. There were 300,000 applicants for shares. The mounted police had to disperse the crowd. Five hundred tents had to be erected around Law's establishment in which people might stay while they were waiting for their interview with this notorious gambler.

It is said a hunch back made his fortune by allowing his back to be used as a writing desk in the street. Excitement knew no bounds. A lady of fortune had her coachman upset her carriage near by where John Law was passing in order to get an interview with such a benevolent man.

Stocks continued to soar until they reached 2050 p.c., i.e., \$2050 cash was given for \$100 of stock.

Suddenly the people began to suspect there was something wrong. Then came the stampede. Crash went John Law's Mississippi Scheme, and under it was 'urled the projector and all the best financial interests of the French Empire.

ENGLAND had her stampede in 1720. It was the South Sea Company. This company was formed to pour all the gold of Peru and Mexico and all the islands of the sea into England. Books were opened £5,000,000 worth of stocks were offered at £200 a share. In a few days it was all taken and twice the amount subscribed. The whole nation went insane with excitement.

Bubble companies soon sprung up. One company was formed to provide funerals for all parts of the land.

Another company, with a capital of \$5,000,000 to develop a wheel in perpetual motion. Another company with a capital of \$15,000,000 to insure people against losses by servants. And then to cap the climax a company was formed for a great undertaking, nobody to know what it was. \$2,500,000 shares were offered at \$500 a share. The banks were opened at 9 o'clock in the morning, closed at 3 in the afternoon, and the first day it was all subscribed. In six hours the schemers pocketed \$12,500,000.

About 150 years after that the wave of excitement struck America. Tallmage on one occasion said—America has the biggest rivers, the biggest cataracts, the biggest mountains, and so she must have the biggest gamblers.

In 1864 a man digging in Pennsylvania for salt, struck oils. 1,200 oil companies, calling for a billion dollars were formed.

The nation stampeded. A contemporary describing the panic has said: "Even ministers of the Gospel left their pulpits to speculate. Some of the companies never owned a foot of land. Their entire equipment was a map showing where the oil might be, and two phials of grease, one crude and the other clarified. America became a nation of maniacs. One young man sold his farm in Venango County at a fabulous price, came to Philadelphia, took supper in an hotel, threw down a \$5000 cheque to pay for his meal and refused to take the change, then stepped back to a gas burner and lighted his cigar with a thousand dollar bill. People from the country poured into the cities to put all their hard earned wages into the business."

But the comedy soon turned into a tragedy. One thousand millions of hard earned property was swept away in that only stampede, and thousands of people were reduced to bankruptcy and destitution.

It is surprising what small causes will lead to a panic in the financial world. A woman one day passing along Lombard Street fainted. She was taken to the steps of the nearest building which happened to be a bank. The crowd of course soon gathered. People who knew not the cause supposed that the crowd lined up before the bank meant a rush on the bank. They stampeded. They all rushed, and before nightfall the bank had to close down.

These events illustrate fully the psychology of the crowd, and show the great disaster which must inevitably follow a human stampede.

In the political sphere, politicians at all times realize the possibility of the human stampede. They take

advantage of this tendency in winning their contest. The catch-cries of their party are invented for that very purpose, and the influence of a good catch cry upon a crowd has often more influence than the most reasoned and logical appeal.

Take for example the Laurier Reciprocity proposal. Canada did not vote upon Reciprocity, but upon the catch cry of Imperialism, and Laurier went out.

Take Laurier's proposal of a Canadian Navy. That may be a good proposal or a poor one. But it was doomed by reason of the ridicule which was poured upon it by the catch cry of a "tin-pot navy." The crowd voted not so much against Laurier's proposal as against the imaginary "tin-pot navy."

The catch-cries of "robbing a poor man of his beer" has doomed many a Temperance campaign in the old country as well as on this side of the Atlantic. Very little will cause a populace to bolt, but when they do, be the reason just or otherwise, Governments and Institutions are sure to fall.

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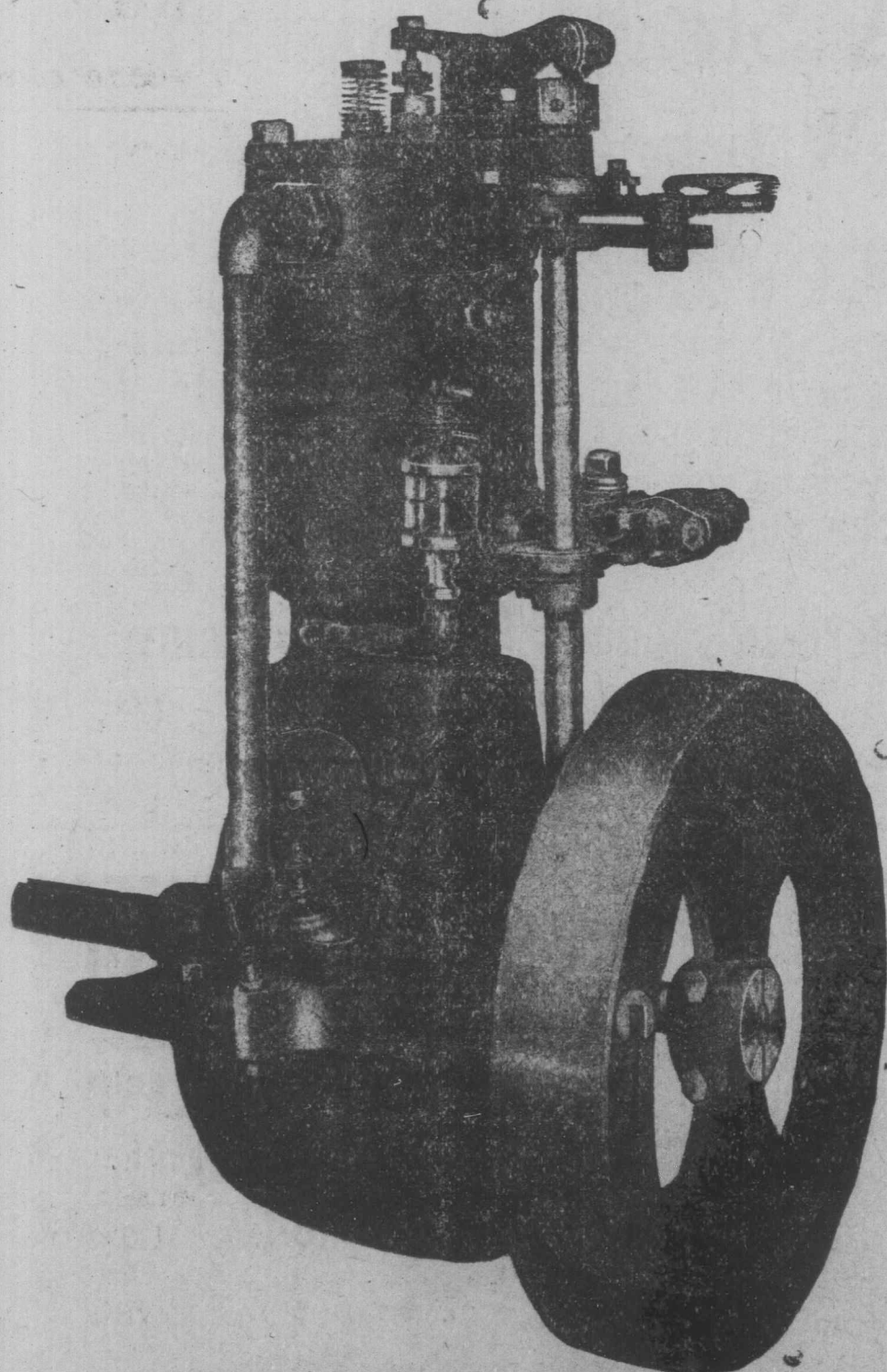
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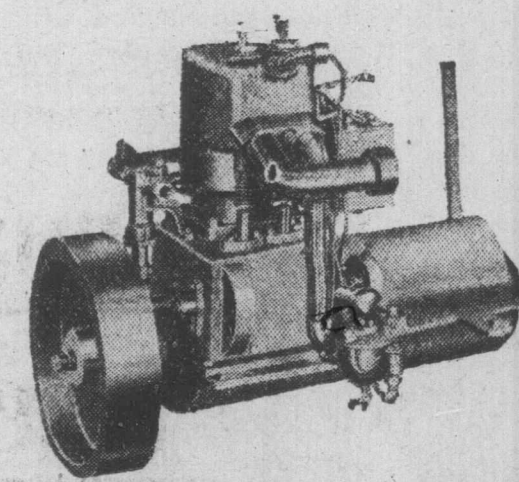


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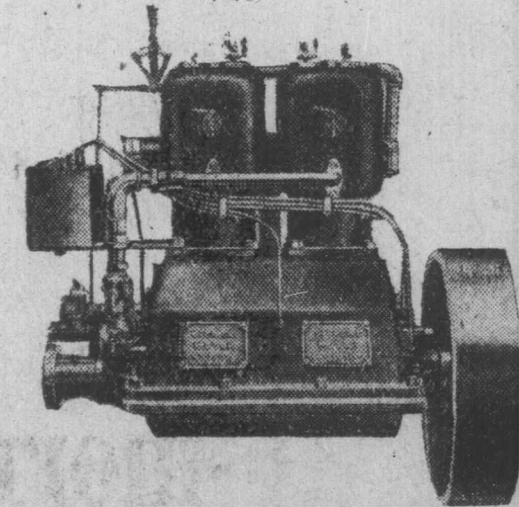
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