

with half the effect that the "Milwaukee horror" does.

The reason is not far to seek; people that go on the water in overcrowded steamers are always exposed to a certain amount of risk, and when an accident does happen, it cannot be said to have been altogether unlooked for. Thus in the London accident, there were many, who, seeing the overcrowded state of the boat, refused to venture upon it, and thereby saved their lives. In the "Milwaukee horror," however, there seems to have been no premonitory warning of the dreadful danger the guests were exposed to, and the probability is that most of them lay down to rest feeling as safe and secure as they would have done in their own homes.

Hotels are generally supposed to have special safeguards thrown around them in case of fire, and up to the present time the public have had the utmost confidence in their fire extinguishing arrangements and the promptitude with which they could be put into operation.

If the Newhall House is any criterion of how these patent fire protecting apparatus work, we certainly think that the public will insist on having something more practical and certain in its application. The trouble seems to have been with the elevator, which, acting as a huge chimney, not only carried the flames from bottom to top of the building with lightning rapidity, but supplied the conflagration with all the air necessary to make it effective. Indeed we do not suppose that if an engineer were to try and construct a machine for the instantaneous firing of any large building, he could improve on this ordinary passenger elevator now in use in our hotels and public buildings. As usually constructed, they are lined with dry, seasoned wood, and the sides are well lubricated with the best of inflammable oils; all that they want is a start, and in a few seconds they can produce a flame as fierce as any that ever belched forth from the roaring mouth of a blast furnace.

Now that attention has been directed to this danger, the public should insist that these elevators should be made fire-proof. The doors should be made of iron and kept securely closed after the elevator has stopped for the night. The inside should be made non-combustible in some way, either by the use of brick or iron lining, fire-proof paint, or some other device equally effective. It is customary

in theatres to have iron screens between the stage and the audience, but in reality there is not one-half the danger to a crowd of wide awake people in a theatre that there is in a lot of half-awake people, who, roused from their beds, and not having even their ordinary senses about them, have to fight for their lives in the midst of a fog of unknown darkness and death.

We think that every hotel should have a fire bell in each bed room, with a printed card attached, telling its guests plainly that this bell was connected with the office of the hotel, and would be rung only in case of an alarm of fire. If such were done, it would be impossible, as it is too often the case at present for people to be burned in their beds without having any chance for their lives. In first-class hotels, having electric bells, this could be very easily and effectively managed.

In addition to this every hotel should be compelled to provide fire escapes of some kind from every room in the house. For a lack of better, a simple knotted rope long enough to reach the ground would be a most effective means of escape, and we venture to say that if every room in the Newhall House had been provided with one of these primitive inventions the loss of life would have been very small compared to what it was.

We think parliament should take this matter up, and legislate so as to make the lives of travellers more safe than they appear to be at present. Our hotels are really the only homes that thousands of our fellow citizens have, they are public institutions, and ostensibly agree to provide their guests with food and shelter and safety. If the Newhall House is a fair sample of our hotels, and we are sorry to say that we know more than a score of such places in Canada, the sooner that the matter is legislated upon the better.

We compel steamboat owners to provide life boats and life-preservers for every passenger in anticipation of an accident; we compel the proprietors of all public buildings to hinge their doors so as to open outwards, in short we legislate in every conceivable way in order to make life as safe and secure as possible. The same thing should be done in the case of hotel keepers regarding the safety of their guests, and all the more so because, trusting implicitly to the reputation of the house, they are practically helpless.

Many old travellers when going aboard a steamer make a thorough inspection of

the vessel, and find out all about the arrangements of the life-boats and life-preservers so that if necessity arises they know exactly where to lay their hand on them. In like manner when putting up at a strange hotel, they examine thoroughly the protections against fire, and their best avenues of escape in case anything should happen during their stay.

This is an excellent idea, and one that is easily carried out, the only difficulty about it is to be able to keep your wits about you and to be able to take advantage of your knowledge when the crucial moment comes.

Few people have self-control enough to make the most of their chances in such an emergency, and we think, therefore, that the strong arm of the law should be invoked to compel hotel-keepers to provide such safeguards for the escape of their guests from midnight peril as experience and common sense shall dictate.

### Selected Matter.

#### A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

Sing, business muse, the dark and doleful fate  
Of him who labors, but that he may wait  
The piles of goods heaped up within his store,  
Which can't be less, and never may be more.  
The man whose life has lost all fortune's prizes.  
In fact, the man who never advertises.

Sing of his start, his great ambition's scope,  
The capital that gave him cause to hope,  
His credit large, his full and ample stock,  
His bank account as solid as a rock,  
Then tell the doom to which the man was fated  
Who never advertised, but simply waited.

So simply, and so vainly! Splendid signs,  
With basement, art irradiates and refines,  
Plate-glass show windows elegantly dressed,  
In lovely clerks, cashiers, and all the rest,  
Served but to show him how the public sizes  
The style of him who never advertises.

He waited, and all waited; clerks, cashiers,  
Salesmen, saleswomen, such delightful dears,  
Impatient waited all the season through.  
With precious little for the crowd to do.  
The public saw—that fact there's no denying  
But passed the store without a thought of buying.

Business was dull, but salaries and rent  
Went on, till cash and credit both were spent  
The silly merchant hoped his luck would turn.  
Until the Sheriff closed the whole concern.  
Now, at a pittance which his soul despises,  
He works for one who always advertises.

—Hamilton Times.

#### COMPARATIVE VALUES OF GEMS.

Scientists speak lightly of coloured gems as alumina found in nature, crystallized and coloured with oxide of iron, and "valued at enormous sums." It hardly raises the more precious in