

ties with the closest scrutiny. Matters of great moment can, as a rule, safely be allowed to take care of themselves, because they are apparent to the dullest comprehensions. The things mostly to be feared are: the beam in the flue or under the hearth; the unfilled joint in the unswept chimney; the improperly constructed elevator shaft, perhaps further bungled in some stupid alteration; the woodwork too close to the furnace or the pile of wood carelessly heaped near it; the stove pipe hole in some wooden or plaster partition; the wrongly placed gas jet; and such trivialities. Any one of these things may cause more damage in a few short hours than the whole revenues of a city for years together could repair, even if they could be devoted to that purpose.

As to fire-escapes, permanently fixed on buildings, there seems to be little need of them in ordinary dwellings up to four stories in height, because the firemen's ladders can always be brought into service in cases of extremity. Tenement houses (of which, however, we have few) need special attention, and the ordinary fire-escapes, even when affixed to them, cannot always be used when most needed. To illustrate this, the destruction on the 16th December last of a tenement house, No. 172 Suffolk St., N. Y., may be cited. The fire occurred in the day time, had it been at night, the loss of life would inevitably have been great. The outside escapes, with which the building was provided could not be approached by reason of the fire in their vicinity. The flames swept up the stairways from story to story until they reached the roof, and so rapid was their progress that the means of escape for the inmates was quickly cut off. The occupants of the top stories managed to reach the roof before the fire and thus were rescued, but for those in the lower stories the only recourse was the windows, from which they were compelled to jump.

Other buildings needing special attention are hotels, theatres and public halls, schools, manufactories, mills, asylums and prisons. In the last five it would appear judicious, in addition to whatever life-saving appliances may be adopted, to periodically drill and instruct the occupants in the quickest and best means of escaping in case of danger and so as to avoid a panic.

No fixed fire escape has yet been devised which is suited to all localities under all circumstances, and, in the nature of things, it never can be; and although preference may be given to one style of escape over another, each peculiar case must be dealt with separately. It seems superfluous to say that in all cases careful and special precautions should

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