

A Great Disaster.

F. Marion Crawford Tells of Horror of Messina.

The "Nazarene."

That man knows not the day or the hour when he shall be gathered in the grim harvest of death is strikingly illustrated by F. Marion Crawford who tells in *The Outlook* of "The Greatest Disaster of History." The noted Catholic author contributes the first paper of an article on the Messina earthquake and it serves well to clear some of the deep haze of misunderstanding that followed the dreadful tragedy. Mr. Crawford tells his readers that not only was the first telling of the tale not exaggerated, but the full extent of the horror was not told; he estimates that of the population of 150,000 there are alive to-day but fifteen percent, say twenty thousand persons. But this is not the first great misfortune the city has suffered, by very many; for, without going further back than the sixteenth century, we find that in 1573 the plague carried off forty thousand persons, and as many more in 1743; in 1783 a terrific earthquake almost destroyed the city, and the population, which had risen to 120,000 in 1674 was reduced to only 46,000 in 1798. In 1848, the year of revolutions, Messina was bombarded by Ferdinand II. of Naples, who earned the nickname of "King Bomba" during that expedition. The destruction he wrought was not wholly repaired till nearly thirty years had elapsed, and during that time another ten or twelve thousand inhabitants were carried off by the cholera that raged in 1854. Nevertheless, in 1908 the population had risen to nearly 150,000, being the highest figure attained since 1674.

No one who remembers the Straits as they were before the earthquake can be surprised that the Sicilian city, with its neighboring villages and the towns on the Calabrian shore, should have grown populous in a long period of peace which has been also a time of prosperity. Even in poor, misgoverned, half-populated Turkey, the Bosphorus is both rich and beautiful, and Constantinople, destroyed over and over again is even now one of the fairest cities in the world.

The great Sicilian seaport was never comparable with the imperial capital of the East, but to my mind the Straits of Messina surpassed the Straits of Constantinople in beauty at all times of the year, and as for the grandeur of the background no comparison is even distinctly possible; guarded on the one side by the Calabrian Mountains, that end in Aspromonte, and on the other by the glorious range that towers up, crest after crest, higher and higher, till it culminates in distant Etna, the rippling, eddying tide swept up and down in ebb and flow between shores as rich in color as an old Persian carpet from Shiraz or Sine, splendid with pomegranate blossoms and golden oranges, and the dark, glossy green of carob trees, which is more indescribable than the olive itself; and these lovely shores were broken here and there by white-walled villas, with red-tiled outbuildings, and now and then by picturesque villages, charmingly irregular in outline as all really Italian towns are, and warm in many shades of brown, picked out with patches of blazing Oriental white. On the right, as you sailed down, the grand sweep of Messina came into sight within the sickle shaped arm that embraces one of the finest natural harbors in the world, and the palaces and the houses rose in tiers from the half-circle of the port to the remains of the ancient fortifications above, it was not a city of ancient architecture, and perhaps it was not very beautiful within, but it was fair to look at across the water from a little distance, and it was marvelously situated. Intensely alive it was, too, like all places which are the natural marts and cross-roads and trysting places of the world, the harbor was full of shipping, the piers swarmed with busy people, the air was ever ringing with a thousand echoes of men's voices, of moving vehicles, light and heavy, of distant machinery and of the busy forge, of trains coming and going, of shrill whistling from tugboats and of the deeper horns of the great steamers that ply between the Western and the Eastern worlds. That was Messina, as I knew it, and shall always remember it.

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The portrait and signature of A. W. Chase, M.D., the famous Receipt Book author, on every box. 50 cents at all dealers or Edmanston, Bates & Co., Toronto.

The Irish Franciscan Fathers have acquired for their students the well-known Protestant College, Berkeley Hall, situated just beside the Queen's College, Cork. This spacious college

rene' and went about their business, while he and his young companion proceeded on their way; and the street boys howled at them and pelted them with bits of orange-peel and peach-stones; but they passed on unheeding and unflinching as if accomplishing a mission entrusted to them as a sacred duty.

History is full of such tales, and people are too ready to believe that they have always been invented after the fact. It would be safer to say that of many prophecies few are fulfilled, and that those few are thrust upon our notice; but we know too little of nature to scout the suggestion that great natural convulsions may be announced beforehand by signs perceptible to a few hypersensitive organizations. To mention only one circumstance which may give such a theory color in the present case the atmospheric conditions which preceded the two great earthquakes of 1783 and 1908 were remarkably similar and were hardly paralleled during the intervening century and a quarter. In both cases a long and destructive drought broke up a short time before the catastrophe in a deluge of almost equally ruinous rain. Last year, in some of the southernmost parts of Italy, from Bari downwards, not a drop of rain fell in almost thirteen months; great numbers of cattle had to be killed for lack of drink; water for the inhabitants was brought by sea from Venice and even from Greece, and by railway from Naples; and in Bari itself, in the month of September, the Neapolitan water was sold for fifteen centimes. Even here in Sorrento there was no rain that descended the name from the 20th of April to the 19th of October; and when it came at last the leaves of the orange and lemon trees were withering, a thing which no one now living remembers to have seen before. Will any one assert that besides these very visible signs there were not others as certain, which only an exceptional and neurotic temperament like that of the "Nazarene" could perceive? Delphi had its motto, the key to all true philosophy—"Know thyself;" but only one word is given over the gateway of modern science—"Perhaps."

THE FATAL HOUR.

The Southern Italians make great feasting from Christmas until Twelfth Night, in which custom they differ from the Romans. This may be due to the strong influence of Norman rule and northern customs in the South, or to some other reason less easy to find; it matters little, but the fact explains why so many persons from other parts of Sicily were visiting their relatives in Messina and perished in the disaster, while whole families of the north had gone to spend the merry-making season with friends and relatives living in the country, and thus were saved. The number of those who were in the city and escaped with their lives is very small indeed, and more than half of those are unhurt for the simple reason that many of the wounded died of their injuries within a few minutes or a few hours of being taken out of the ruins. Up to this time (February, 1909) there are no trustworthy statistics to be had, but it appears to be very doubtful whether as many as fifteen per cent of the population are now alive, scattered in groups throughout Italy—say something over twenty thousand and out of a hundred and fifty thousand, for the city of Messina alone. The proportion of those saved on the Calabrian side is certainly larger—principally, I think, because the houses in Reggio, Vill San Giovanni, Palmi, and the other towns destroyed were much lower than those in the city. Moreover, as will be seen before long, many persons died of hunger and thirst in Messina, where the whole water supply was cut off by the ruin of the first shock, and bread was not obtainable at any price for many days; but on the Calabrian side the survivors camped out in the orange groves, and the fruit, which is almost ripe at Christmas in that latitude, stayed their hunger and assuaged their thirst.

Religious Inventor.

Franciscan Has Designed Apparatus to Prevent Railroad Collision.

The Rev. Fr. Adriano D'Antonio, O.F.M., of the Province of St. Bernardine, in the Abruzzi, Italy, has recently invented an apparatus for the prevention of railroad collisions. It is based on the Herzian waves used in wireless telegraphy.

While studying at the College of St. Julien, at Aquila, and considering the great number of human lives sacrificed annually on the railroads, Fr. Adriano dreamed of a means to prevent such terrible disasters. He immediately set to work and by diligent and zealous labor has developed his dreams into a reality. He was always a lover of the sciences, and although he is yet quite young, he has many other inventions which are not yet perfected, having devoted most of his time to complete the wonderful apparatus which he has now patented.

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which will henceforth be called, very appropriately, St. Anthony's Hall, was built by the famous Dr. Webster of Cork, and was completed in 1885. He intended it for a lecture hall and hostel for the students attending Queen's College. He also had a house built in connection with it, called the dean's residence, where he himself resided. For the few years during which he had charge the college served its original purpose fairly well, but after his death its period of usefulness abruptly terminated, and no one seemed to possess a particle of the enthusiasm which actuated Dr. Webster in founding and maintaining it, so that it had to be closed. It was afterwards sold to Mr. Donovan, the present Lord Mayor of Cork, from whom it was lately purchased by the Franciscans.

It is an interesting fact that Berkeley Hall is built on the site of the famous Irish monastery and school of St. Finbarr, the patron saint of Cork, where that great luminary of the ancient Irish Church lived and taught. It seems, therefore, like a special disposition of Divine Providence that Berkeley Hall should come into the possession of the Franciscan Order, so renowned in Ireland for patriotism, piety and learning, and which has done so much for Faith and Fatherland, especially during the terrible years of persecution, when their schools and monasteries, whose ruins now cover the land and excite the admiration of all Irishmen, were plundered and destroyed.

The Franciscans, driven from their homes, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, established colleges abroad—in Louvain, in Prague, and in Rome. In the last-mentioned city the celebrated Irish Franciscan, Father Luke Wadding, not only founded the famous College of St. Isidore, but also the Irish College for the secular mission, from both of which came a host of missionaries who kept the Faith alive in Ireland in the penal days. With all these glorious traditions it is only natural to expect that the Irish Franciscans should be desirous of availing themselves of the educational opportunities which the new university College offers, and they are indeed fortunate in securing so convenient and suitable an establishment, being, as it is, almost a part of the University College, and so admirably adapted to the requirements of a university house of residence. Their new hall will be a boon not alone to their own students but also to those of Cork County and other parts of the country, as a portion of the building is to be set apart as a hostel for students attending the University College, who have no residence in Cork.

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Dear Reader,—Be patient with me for telling you again how much I need your help. How can I help it? For what else can I do? For without that help this Mission must cease to exist, and the poor Catholics already here remain without a Church.

I am still obliged to say Mass and give Benediction in a Mean Upper-Room. Yet such as it is, this is the sole outpost of Catholicism in a division of the county of Norfolk measuring 35 by 20 miles. And to add to my many anxieties, I have no Diocesan Grant, No Endowment (except Hope).

We must have outside help for the present, or haul down the flag. The generosity of the Catholic Public has enabled us to secure a valuable site for Church and Presbytery. We have money in hand towards the cost of building, but the Bishop will not allow us to go into debt.

I am most grateful to those who have helped us and trust they will continue their charity. To those who have not helped I would say:—For the sake of the Cause give something, if only a "Hilite." It is easier and more pleasant to give than to beg. Spend the glad hour when I need no longer plead for a permanent Home for the Blessed Sacrament.

Father Gray, Catholic Mission, Fakenham, Norfolk, England.

Wise Saws Hoary; New Ones Wanted.

Modern Instances Have Grown Too Old For Use.

The continual use by modern writers of "wise saws" until they become hoary and hackneyed tends to vitiate their wisdom, while the frequent citation of "modern instances" gives them an all too ancient and fish-like odor. The average novel and newspaper report teams with atavistic metaphors and epigrams, while the "floating tide" contends with the "best interest of the nation" for a place in most political speeches. Surely it is time that some of our worst-worn tags were discarded and room made for fresh ones.

Facts are stubborn things, (Shallott,) and it cannot be denied that many writers meeting an apt phrase, are too indolent to look a gift horse in the mouth, (Rabelais.) It is merely begging the question (Aristotle) and adding insult to injury (Phaedrus) to urge that old wine is wholesomest, (Webster,) because words are like women, (Bodley,) and lose their charms with age. Far too much of our contemporary literature smells of the lamp, (Plutarch,) since the average writer, faced with a choice between poor, but original, phrasing and the adoption of old but apposite tags, consoles himself with the thought that of two evils the less should always be chosen, (Kempster.) There is a tendency in such cases to make a virtue of necessity, (Chaucer.) However, it is obvious that our indolent author, in his willingness to gain authority from others' books, (Shakespeare,) has got the wrong saw by the ear, (Ben Jonson.) He reclines in a fool's paradise, (Pope,) supinely content that others should build for him, (Wadsworth,) heedless of the fact that the schoolmaster is abroad, (Broughman.)

It is essential that our literary men should turn over a new leaf, (Middleton,) and that soon, for procrastination is the thief of time, (Young.) Life is fleeting, (Hippocrates.) Let them, before it is too late, determine through thick and thin, (Dryden,) to leave no stone unturned (Remedies) in their endeavor to remedy this grievous error, (Marlowe.) Great wits will jump (Sterne,) and if, in a lucid interval, (Burke,) they will think less of the sinews of war (Libanus) and more of the greatest happiness of the greatest number (Priestly) of their long-suffering readers, they will earn the thanks of millions yet to be, (Halleck.) If our popular authors will strike whilst the iron is hot, (Greene,) and labor to improve each moment as it flies, (Johnson,) they should be able, by dint of perseverance, (Milton,) to beat out phrases spick and span new, (Ford.) The more the merrier, (Beaumont and Fletcher,) since the enrichment of the language would bring a new world into existence, (Canning.) Blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds, (Congreve,) and the experiment certainly seems worth the effort, (Virgil.)—London T. P.'s Weekly.

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The continual use by modern writers of "wise saws" until they become hoary and hackneyed tends to vitiate their wisdom, while the frequent citation of "modern instances" gives them an all too ancient and fish-like odor. The average novel and newspaper report teams with atavistic metaphors and epigrams, while the "floating tide" contends with the "best interest of the nation" for a place in most political speeches. Surely it is time that some of our worst-worn tags were discarded and room made for fresh ones.

Facts are stubborn things, (Shallott,) and it cannot be denied that many writers meeting an apt phrase, are too indolent to look a gift horse in the mouth, (Rabelais.) It is merely begging the question (Aristotle) and adding insult to injury (Phaedrus) to urge that old wine is wholesomest, (Webster,) because words are like women, (Bodley,) and lose their charms with age. Far too much of our contemporary literature smells of the lamp, (Plutarch,) since the average writer, faced with a choice between poor, but original, phrasing and the adoption of old but apposite tags, consoles himself with the thought that of two evils the less should always be chosen, (Kempster.) There is a tendency in such cases to make a virtue of necessity, (Chaucer.) However, it is obvious that our indolent author, in his willingness to gain authority from others' books, (Shakespeare,) has got the wrong saw by the ear, (Ben Jonson.) He reclines in a fool's paradise, (Pope,) supinely content that others should build for him, (Wadsworth,) heedless of the fact that the schoolmaster is abroad, (Broughman.)

It is essential that our literary men should turn over a new leaf, (Middleton,) and that soon, for procrastination is the thief of time, (Young.) Life is fleeting, (Hippocrates.) Let them, before it is too late, determine through thick and thin, (Dryden,) to leave no stone unturned (Remedies) in their endeavor to remedy this grievous error, (Marlowe.) Great wits will jump (Sterne,) and if, in a lucid interval, (Burke,) they will think less of the sinews of war (Libanus) and more of the greatest happiness of the greatest number (Priestly) of their long-suffering readers, they will earn the thanks of millions yet to be, (Halleck.) If our popular authors will strike whilst the iron is hot, (Greene,) and labor to improve each moment as it flies, (Johnson,) they should be able, by dint of perseverance, (Milton,) to beat out phrases spick and span new, (Ford.) The more the merrier, (Beaumont and Fletcher,) since the enrichment of the language would bring a new world into existence, (Canning.) Blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds, (Congreve,) and the experiment certainly seems worth the effort, (Virgil.)—London T. P.'s Weekly.

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