

HEROES FIGHTING FIRE.

THE DANGER A FIREMAN IS ALWAYS IN ON DUTY.

Some instances of how those who fight fire have died in the discharge of their duty—the danger of stone columns, water tanks and air shafts.

Jacob A. Riss, author of 'How the Other Half Lives,' and other studies of tenement house life, contributes to the Century, in the series of 'Heroes of Peace,' an article on 'Heroes who Fight Fire.' Mr. Riss says of the fireman:

His life is too full of real peril for him to expose it recklessly—that is to say, needlessly. From the time when he leaves his quarters in answer to an alarm until he returns, he takes a risk that may at any moment set him face to face with death in its most cruel form. He needs nothing so much as a clear head; and nothing is prized so highly, nothing puts him so surely in the line of promotion; for as he advances in rank and responsibility, the lives of others, as well as his own come to depend on his judgement. The act of conspicuous daring which the world applauds is oftenest to the fireman a matter of simple duty that had to be done in that way because there was no other. Nor is it always, or even usually, the hardest duty, as he sees it. It comes easy to him because he is an athlete trained to do such things, and because once for all it is easier to risk one's life in the open, in the sight of one's fellows, than to face death alone, caught like a rat in a trap. That is the real peril he knows too well, but of that the public hears only when he has fought his last fight, and lost.

How literally our every-day security—of which we think, if we think of it at all, as a mere matter of course—is built upon the supreme sacrifice of these devoted men, we realize at long intervals, when a disaster occurs such as the one in which Chief Brennan and Foreman Rooney lost their lives three years ago. They were crushed to death under the great water-tank in a 24th street factory that was on fire. Its supports had been burned away. An examination that was then made of the water-tanks in the city discovered eight thousand that were either wholly unsupported, except by the roof-beams, or cropped on timbers, and therefore a direct menace, not only to the firemen when they were called there, but daily to those living under them.

Seventeen years ago the collapse of a Broadway building during a fire convinced the community that stone pillars were unsafe as supports. The fire was in the basement, and the firemen had turned the hose on. When the water struck the hot granite columns, they cracked and fell, and the building fell with them. There were upon the roof at the time a dozen men of the crew of Truck Company No. 1 chopping holes for smoke vents. The majority clung to the parapet, and hung there till rescued. Two went down into the furnace from which the flames shot up twenty feet when the roof broke. One, fireman Thomas J. Dougherty, was a wearer of the Bennett medal, too. His foreman answers on parade day, when his name is called, that he 'died on the field of duty.' These, at all events, did not die in vain. Stone columns are not now used in supports for buildings in New York.

So one might go quoting the perils of the firemen as so many steps forward for the better protection of the rest of us. It was the burning of the St. George Flats, and more recently of the Manhattan Bank, in which a dozen men were disabled, that stamped the average fire-proof construction faulty and largely delusive. One might even go further, and say that the fireman's risk increases in the ratio of our progress or convenience. The water-tanks came with the very high buildings, which in themselves offer problems to the fire-fighters that have not yet been solved. The very air-shafts that were hailed as the first advance in tenement-house building added enormously to the fireman's work and risk, as well as to the risk of every one dwelling under their roofs by acting as so many huge chimneys that carried the fire to the open windows opening upon them in every story. More than half of all the fires in New York occur in tenement houses. When the Tenement House Commission of 1894 sat in this city, considering means of making them safer and better, it received the most practical help and advice from the firemen especially from Chief Brennan, whose death occurred only a few days after he had testified as a witness. The recommendations upon which he insisted are now part of the general tenement-house law.—N. Y. Dispatch.

Mouse and Diamonds.

The Western New Yorker, of Warsaw, New York, tells a very singular mouse story. Mrs. Corning of that city, being engaged with some household duties, took off two diamond rings and put them into a cup in the china closet. Shortly afterward she opened the closet door, and screamed at the sight of a mouse or rather

at the sight of a ring in the mouse's mouth. The mouse vanished, and then Mrs. Corning looked into the cup. Both rings were gone. A carpenter was summoned in haste, and taking up a part of the floor and making a prolonged search, he found the creature's nest. In it were the two rings. If Mrs. Corning had not happened to open the door at that moment, what a detective could ever have guessed what had become of the diamonds? And as it is, who can guess what the mouse wanted of them?

CUBA'S INFANT WARRIORS.

Native Boys of Ten who are fighting the Battles Like Veterans.

'Spanish warfare has made soldiers of babes.' This remark from the lips of Marti referred to the ten years' struggle which ended so disastrously for Cuban freedom. Had Marti lived through the present war his epigrammatic utterance could have been applied even more appropriately to the existing insurrection. For never in the history of warfare, ancient or modern, have children been forced to fight for freedom as have the boys of Cuba. Every insurgent camp is witness to this, and Gomez, Garcia, Lucret, Mendez and the host of other brave leaders have found it simply impossible to restrain the boys of ten, twelve and fourteen who insist on handling rifles and machetes.

Little wonder, however, that these boys are fighting for freedom, for as a rule, they are the last of a name, all that is left of the heroic families that died of starvation or by the bullet of the Spaniard. They know no pity, for they were accorded none. They are men in trials, and the only fear is that when the war is over they will be desperadoes of the next decade.

Grover Flint tells the thrilling story of a boy of eleven who fought by his side like a hero of Balclava. Nor is this the only instance, for these young fellows fight with all the determination and desperation of men. Few of them realize the full import of the strife, for to them it is a war for vengeance, and even if they are not properly recruited and entered among the soldiers, they yet manage to keep in touch with the leaders, and seem to sniff a battle as a dog does its game. When the moment for action comes they are in the middle of the strife, lying low if the rest of the troop is advancing cautiously, and dashing forward at the right moment to kill or be killed. To them life seems to have no value, but to end it as did their fathers and brothers.

As spies they have proved of inestimable value to some of the insurgent chiefs. One of General Maceo's most ardent followers was a young mulatto barely fifteen years old. He was killed in the last charge the great leader made before he met his own death. It was to him that Maceo intrusted some of his most important communications for Gomez, and invariably the boy successfully eluded the Spanish troops. He knew every hill and dale every plantation and shelter in the Western provinces, and there it was that his services were most largely called into requisition.

At Bayamo there were found on the field of carnage at least a dozen of these brave little fellows, each with his machete still firmly gripped, heroes whose lives had hardly begun before the bullet of the Spaniard ended them.

THE SIMON WIDOW'S GRIEF.

It Clustered Around the Rifle After Her Husband Had Been Eaten.

The Samson will give away anything which he possesses when another member of the family comes along and asks for it. This makes personal property a most fluctuating matter. One thing, however, is never given away under any circumstances, and that is the rifle which each man keeps in good order and in readiness for the outbreak of hostilities. No attempt has been made by the European officials to disarm the natives, but a close watch is kept on the importation of any new munitions of war. When the yacht John Williams of the London Missionary Society returned from a tour of the stations in New Guinea, which are served by Samoan pastors, it brought the sad news that Neemis, a respected native missionary in a remote nook of the Gulf of Papua, has been eaten by his imperfectly converted congregation.

The mission vessel arrived too late to save the pastor, but just in time to rescue his wife Masina, who was defending her house with a single rifle against a horde of savages. Masina was brought back to Apia in the John Williams, her grief somewhat tempered by the knowledge that for some time to come she would be a central figure at all district meetings of the mission, where she would be expected to tell her story. In a few days the treaty officials received from King Malietoa an official communication signed with the

royal sign manual and duly sealed with the great seal. In it he recited the cannibalism which had been practiced upon Neemis and the bravery of Masina. In consideration of these sad events and the great grief into which the widow was plunged, he had given her permission to retain the family rifle and her store of ammunition and to bring it ashore with her. The mischief had been done and was beyond repair. All that remained for the official board to do was sharply to remind the king that he had no power to grant landing permits for the contraband munitions of war and to assure him that the Berlin treaty took no cognizance of rifle so profaned that it must be assuaged by rifles.—New York Sun.

Red and Yellow Snow.

An interesting report has been issued by the officials of the Grand Ducal Observatory at Heidelberg concerning recent red and yellow snow falls in Germany. A fall of yellow snow occurred in the Eggenine on March and red snow fell to the depth of eight centimetres on the same day at Kardi in Kaern'en province, also all over the plateau on which the Konigsstuhl stands; on the Odenwald, too, colored snow fell, the wind driving it into every nook and corner, so that the drits presented a color varying from rosewood to that of brown. An examination showed that the tint exhibited was due to mineral dust, and the latter has not been finally investigated, it reveals the presence of chalk elements—this, too, notwithstanding the fact of there being no chalk in existence for a long distance from the place where the snow fall was deepest. Of course, this phenomenon is well known to naturalists, snow of a really red color having been found occasionally in polar and Alpine regions, some of the chemical experiments revealing the presence of a certain vegetable substance, like the pollen of a plant.—The Pathfinder.

The Nose Lasts Longest.

Bone and cartilage enter so largely into the structure of the nose and determine its characteristics, that it undergoes little perceptible change, as a rule, with the lapse of years. The brow becomes wrinkled, and crow's feet gather round the eyes which themselves gradually grow dim as time rolls on; cheeks lose the bloom which cosmetics cannot replace, and lips their fullness and color. The chin, dimpled in youth, develops angularities or globularities, as the case may be, and the eyebrows become heavy with the crop of many year's growth. The nose shows no mark comparable with these familiar facial indications of the approach of old age, and practically enjoys immunity from the ravages which time makes on the other features of the face. Next to the nose, probably the ears, as a rule, show the fewest and least obvious signs of old age.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

What others have done you can do.

Most men who make their mark in life came from the smaller town and country. Their chances were limited, but they worked days and studied nights and conquered difficulties. Rich men's children seldom amount to much—they have no chance—they are hampered by the luxuries of home life and surroundings. If you want to amount to something and are willing to work send for my little book. You can learn shorthand by mail for \$10; practical bookkeeping \$15; Art Penmanship \$10. S. P. SNELL, Truro, N. S.

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