

facing certain defeat at the hands of over-whelming odds, the brave admiral sailed for Minorea with his small fleet. The outcome was that Byng, defeated, and taking advantage of a decision of a council of war, withdrew to Gibraltar; and the little English garrison in Fort St. Philip, after a brave resistance, were compelled to surrender. The consequent loss of the island angered the people of England, so much that the ministry, in order to save themselves from popular obloquy, made a scape-goat of Admiral Byng, who was tried and condemned by court-martial and shot on March 14, 1757, on the quarter-deck of his own flag-ship, the "Motarque," at Portsmouth. It was in writing of this event that Voltaire penned his famous *mot*: "*On a fusillé l'amiral Byng pour encourager les autres.*"

But the vicissitudes of the island did not end with this French conquest. In 1763 it was restored to England by the Treaty of Paris. Eighteen years afterwards it was attacked by a large combined force of French and Spanish soldiers, estimated at about 15,000 in number. General Murray, the governor, sent his family to Leghorn, and retired into Fort St. Philip with his garrison of a little over 2,000 men, a large proportion of whom were invalided, and 200 marines from a sloop-of-war, which had been sunk at the entrance of the harbor to block the entry of the hostile fleet—a precedent which was followed by Admiral Sampson recently at Santiago de Cuba. Governor Murray, with his garrison rapidly decreasing in number and efficiency by scurvy, held out for six months against the siege, until at last, as the historian says: "A capitulation was arranged, and the remnant of the garrison, 600 decrepit soldiers, 200 seamen, 120 artillerymen, and 45 Corsicans, Greeks, Turks, Moors and Jews, marched out between two lines of 14,000 French and Spanish troops, and laid down their arms on the glacis of George Town, declaring 'they surrendered to God alone, as the victors could not plume themselves on taking a hospital.'" In 1798 the English captured the island once more; and in 1803 it was again given back to Spain under the Treaty of Amiens. It has remained under Spanish domination since.

As the occupation of the Philippines was bound to bring American interests in contact with those of the principal European Powers, there would have been nothing strange in the United States securing a foothold in the Balearic Islands. Had our great republican neighbor done so, what a change would have immediately followed in the attitude towards Great Britain of Russia and France and Germany in regard to China! With Great Britain firmly established in Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus, and with her friend and tacit ally, the United States, in possession of a powerful naval station at Port Mahon, the entire commerce of the Mediterranean would be at the mercy of both.

## FIRE AND PANIC.

(Lessons therefrom).

We have received, with the compliments of the Executive of the British Fire Prevention Committee, a copy of the paper prepared by Mr. Thomas Blashill, fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, etc., on the lessons conveyed by fire and panic. The paper in question forms a very important contribution to the numerous publications of the B. F. P. C. The writer, Mr. Blashill, is the superintending architect to the London County Council, and anything from the vast experience of the chief building official of the greatest city in the world is deserving of close attention. Mr. Blashill says:—

When I undertook this subject the fatal fire at the Paris Charity Bazaar had not happened, nor did we anticipate that great disaster among the warehouses at Cripplegate, which has added its own unnecessary lesson. Indeed, neither of these events was necessary, for they conveyed no warning not already known, and they were useless, for by this time they are practically disregarded.

The fact that the destruction of a building by fire is an improbability removes it from the class of considerations with which the architect usually deals. In proportion to the number of buildings fires are exceedingly few, considering the variety of risks I might say surprisingly few; and if it is a hundred thousand to one against a fire in a particular place on a given day, the ordinary man, environed by more threatening perils, will scoff at precaution and take his chance. But after a calamity the general public with all its tongues asks why the precaution was not taken, and looks out for a victim. By the standard then set up, and not by any doctrine of chances, the architect may expect to be judged.

It is a question whether danger from fire is not increasing in spite of Building Acts. Our buildings are getting more lofty, more closely packed together, and more thickly inhabited. In commercial buildings the rooms are larger and more encumbered with goods, among and over which manufacturing processes are carried on. There is more machinery actuated by heat. The timber we use is more easily combustible, fittings are lighter, and everything is kept warmer and drier. All our arrangements for obtaining light, from the lucifer match to gas and mineral oil and electricity, are novel and productive of new dangers. The proportion of window openings to wall space is much increased, and with the growth of honesty outside, or trustfulness within, shutters have been abandoned. The old-fashioned solid window frame that stood flush with the face of the wall, and being dangerous had to be abandoned, is through modern fashion being brought out again from its reveal, and made in thin casing which will catch fire and fall into the street. Lifts going through several stories neutralize the advantage of fire-resisting floors, lighting areas common to different premises do away with the security of the party-wall. Unrestricted skylights bring ridicule on the incombustible roof covering of the Building Acts. In fact, the most scrupulously legal building of brick or stone and slate may be no more than a kind of grate in which its internal structure and its contents can be most conveniently burned. So in the Cripplegate fire, the progress was about as rapid, and the destruction over its limited area no less complete than in the Great Fire