

that invites its patrons to death-traps where a similar disaster is dependent on a hundred contingencies. A flare of gas, a grounded wire, a spark in tinselled drapery, a senseless panic, might anywhere produce similar results. Our churches and our public halls should be rigidly inspected and made to conform to the strict requirements of the law.

The condemnation by the American press of the theatre management is strong, but not too strong: "Deliberate and wicked recklessness," "There is not the shadow of a shade of an excuse for the men who neglect needful precautions," "Managers are not men of murderous intention, yet in their recklessness or ignorance they may be almost as dangerous as an insane person with homicidal proclivities."

Yet these awful scenes have been gilded with gleams of heroism that give alleviation to the sadness of these tragedies. The railway engineer in the disaster at Dawson, Pa., who, scalding to death, cried out in his agony to flag the following train, was as true a hero as ever found death upon the battlefield. The captain of the "Clallam," who went down with his ship, trying to save his passengers; good Bishop Fallows and the firemen and police who risked their lives to save the victims of the Chicago fire, ennoble humanity, and are the more striking by their contrast to the cowardice and imbecility of the theatre ushers who, leaving locked the exits of which they were the guardians, sought safety in flight when they might have saved hundreds.

GENEROUS GIFTS.

The gifts to colleges, hospitals, libraries, and the like in the United States for 1903 have amounted to over \$73,000,000, about \$1 per head for every man, woman, and child in the country. Of this Mr. Carnegie took the lead with a total of nearly \$26,000,000. Yet this is not equal to the year's income, leaving intact his principal. Mr. Rockefeller comes next with about \$3,000,000; Pierpont Morgan, with only \$10,000. This great sum does not include the large givings to home and foreign missions and church work. The sense of stewardship and duties of wealth are realized in no country more than in the United States. Were Canada to give proportionately there would be nearly \$6,000,000 for public philanthropies and probably as much more for church and

missions. We have not accumulated capital like our wealthy neighbours, but there is a growing sense of stewardship to God. The most generous bequest ever made in Canada was that of \$2,000,000 by the late Hart A. Massey, which has brought succour to many struggling causes, and in its aid to many philanthropic and religious purposes will be found a blessing for all time.

While the most generous of people, our American friends are also the most reckless. The death of six hundred in the Chicago fire awakens a widespread horror, but the loss of life by railways in 1903 was 3,554, with 45,977 injured, an increase of nearly 7,000 on the previous year. This is far more than all the fatalities of the Cuban war. There were 5,219 railway collisions, about fourteen a day. In England collisions are almost unknown and fatal accidents very, very rare.

ENORMOUS LOSSES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AMERICA.

The Berlin Germania, one of the most influential Roman Catholic journals in Europe, has attracted considerable attention lately by a series of articles, signed "A German-American," on the subject of the decline of Roman Catholicism in the United States. In that country, this writer says, the "Church" has suffered enormous losses. She is proving herself incompetent to hold her own. The following are a few extracts from these articles:

"The number of Roman Catholics in the United States in 1900 was 10,774,932, with 13 archbishops, 80 bishops, about 12,000 priests, 10,427 churches, 3,812 parochial schools, 183 higher educational schools for boys, 688 similar institutions for girls, 8 universities, 76 seminaries, and 247 orphans' homes. These figures ought to be double what they are. Within the last century fully 8,000,000 Roman Catholics have emigrated to America, and their descendants must number 24,000,000. The reasons for the enormous losses are many, among them chiefly the great expense entailed by the maintenance of Church and School in America, as contrasted with the State-established church systems of Europe. It is also necessary to take into account the great confusion of nationalities and languages, the practical materialism that prevails, the influence of the several orders to which the Church