

THE VOICE OF PUBLIC CALAMITIES.

THE fire in one of the theatres of Brooklyn, which, in a few hours, converted the gay building into a mass of blackened ruins, and sent with awful suddenness over three hundred souls to the judgment seat of God, is an event of no ordinary kind. It is an event that will henceforth rank with such public calamities as the fires of Santiago and Chicago.

The Pulpit and the Religious Press of the land have shown wisdom, and good feeling, in refusing to make this calamity a text whereon to hang homilies in regard to the character of theatres in general, and the foolishness of frequenting them. There is a time and a season for every thing, and there ought to be a time and a text to speak of the evil of theatres, but it is not now. The voice of the Brooklyn fire is a voice of much louder range than to be confined to theatrical things, or theatre-going people. The voice of that fire cries aloud to every city and town and village in the United States and in our Dominion. If, according to Shakespeare, there are "tongues in trees, books in brooks, sermons in stones, and good in every thing" God has created, it is surely not God's intention that there should be neither tongue, nor sermon, nor book, nor good in the sudden summons away from earth of so many people in this mysterious providence, at such a time, in such a place, in such a way. We have not heard the whole lesson of the voice, though that is certainly a part of it, when we have widened, like the Romans of old, the outlets or *vomitories* of our places of public resort, and narrowed the inlets of fire. The true range of meaning of sudden and awful public calamities Christ gives in his remark on the fate of the men on whom the tower of Siloam fell, and of the men who were so cruelly slain by Pilate, while they were in the very act of sacrificing. There was a lesson in these public events—not a lesson of uncharitable denunciation as if these men were notorious sinners, nor a lesson of self-complacent exaltation as if the men that escaped were better than those that perished. That was not the lesson. Nor was it a lesson for architects to build