

CAUSES OF FIRES.

New York's Chief Finds Most Blazes Due to Inexcusable Carelessness.

Edward F. Croker in the World's Work.

Every day in the year there are close to 30 fires in Greater New York. At least fifteen of these are due to carelessness, caused by some body disregarding the fire peril in a way that should be reckoned as a crime, in 1910 the money loss to property from fire in New York was \$3,936,3330 There were nearly 10,000 fires. Of the most serious of these the factory fires were in a majority. But the factory owner is not to be singled out and blamed for conspicuous carelessness. The great causes of fires may be put down in this order:

Carelessness in factories, which in most cases means dirt and rubbish and oily waste.

Carelessness in the use of matches. Do you stop to watch where a lighted match falls after you have lighted your cigar?

Bad electrical wiring.

Careless housekeeping.

Dark and dirty hallways. People at night scratch matches to find their way about, throw the match in a corner into a pile of rubbish, and a few hours later there is a call for the firemen.

Dark basements. Tenants go down after coal or wood with a candle or with matches. A startling number of bad fires occur this way.

Oil stoves.

Old-fashioned oil lamps.

Cigar and cigarette stubs.

They are petty things taken one by one, but they are the principal reasons for the great number of fires occurring in the city like New York.

From the firemen's standpoint the worst sort of fires are what we call "oil fires," that is, fires where oil breaks loose from a tank and spreads over floors. Fires in large factories, where there is a great bulk of material stored; fires in any building having a great area; and packing house, dock and lumber yard fires follow in the order named. The tenement fire is not a bad fire to fight, comparatively speaking, nor is a blaze in a skyscraper. Of course if fire in a tall building ever gained complete possession of a lower floor, shutting off access to the floors above, there could scarcely be a worse catastrophe imaginable.

These ugly fires—oil factory, packing house or lumber yard—are practically all caused by inexcusable carelessness. This is one of the facts that makes the experienced firemen feel strongly against our national habit of playing with fire.

NORTH CAROLINA IN THE YEAR 1781

Autograph Letter of Gov. Nash Describes Colonial Conditions

An interesting letter from Abner Nash, governor of North Carolina, and member of the continental congress, to General Nathaniel Greene, Granville county, May 24, 1781, brought \$26 at auction in Philadelphia a few days ago. Nash, whose autograph is rare, gives in the letter an account of the deplorable condition of affairs in this state at that trying period, when General Greene was trying to defeat the British forces under Lord Cornwallis. Nash writes:

"All my endeavors to raise the militia, even to obstruct the march of Lord Cornwallis through this State, proved in vain. I was myself, in their front most of the way, but able to effect nothing. They have not passed over Roanoke into Virginia, where the joined enemy are greatly an overmatch for Marquis (LaFayette). His forces is not only small but he mentions in the letter of the 15th that he knows nothing of the Pennsylvania troops.

"The Virginia militia are for the present fresh and spirited, and I hope they will prove of great support to the Marquis. Our militia, especially of the lower parts, are good for nothing. I congratulate you sir, on your success against the enemy to the southward, their being compelled by the judicious methods you took to abandon their strong posts in the heart of the country.

"The Marquis is very public spirited and disinterested. He wishes me to have much more at heart the reinforcing of on than himself. Great numbers have taken protection on parole of Lord Cornwallis on his march through the country, and parties of robbers, commanded by officers of his commissario are ranging through the country committing murders, robberies and every species of enormity. Could you permit Gen. Sumner to remain a while to assist in punishing the guilty and in recovering Wilmington, it would be of the greatest consequence to this poor, distressed

and wretched country. In the course of nine months General Greene recovered from the British the three Southern states, North and South Carolina and Georgia, and at the close of 1781, had all of the enemy's forces south of Virginia hemmed within the cities of Charleston and Savannah.

THE AUTOMOBILE

Greensboro Record.

One often hears that the purchase of the automobile will yet break country. While on the other hand, up bobs a man who says that the new vehicles save the people more than they cost and that they enhance the value of real estate by enabling business men to live in the country and to reach their office quickly and pleasantly. He argues that they especially add to the value of suburban property, making it possible for the man of moderate means to have his home out side of the city.

On this claim The Columbia State makes his comment—"Let us examine this argument by supposing that a bookkeeper in Columbia, now paying a monthly rental of \$30, buys a home ten miles in the country and a motor car. For \$2,500 he may purchase a two-acre lot, bore a well upon it and erect a cottage with convenience attached equal to those of his rented city home. The car, let us say, costs \$1,000. Interest at 6 per cent, will be \$210 a year. Twenty dollars will cover taxes in the country and insurance. 50 dollars will be required for the upkeep of the premises. The annual deterioration of the car will amount to \$250, and the maintenance of the car, including cost of gasoline, will be about \$20 a month, or \$240 a year, the owner being his own chauffeur and a competent one at that. These items aggregate \$770. On the other side the city dweller would pay \$360 a year in rent, \$8 for water, and about \$60 for street car fare for himself and family—a total of \$428. According to these figures, the city dweller would save \$342 a year as compared with the suburbanite, but the city man would not own an automobile and would live in a rented house on a lot one-twentieth of the size of that of the countrymen. Undoubtedly the expense of living would be less in the country, fuel would cost less, as would light and a number of other necessities. At the same time the countryman would be deprived of many of the conveniences that the city man and his family enjoy. The comparison would probably work out about the same way, if the city man owned his \$2,500 cottage. The homeowner, whether in town or in the country would probably profit by a steady advance in the value of his property, but skillful cultivation of the two acres of country land might help substantially to reduce the cost of living."

STUFF DREAMS ARE MADE OF Slightest and Most Natural Happening Can Create Violent Imagining In Mind of Sleepers.

It was a personal experience of a singular character that first impressed upon me, some years ago, the importance of dreams as a subject for serious investigation. Until then I had shared the opinion prevailing, among laymen—and, it would seem among most scientists also—that dreams are entirely fanciful and meaningless. But my experience was such that I could no longer believe this.

To state it briefly, it involved the recurrence of a most bizarre dream. At least 20 times during a period of six months I had the same dream—namely, that a cat was clawing at my throat. The stage setting and the minor incidents might vary, but always the center episode was the same, and usually the fury of the dream cat's onset was so great that it would awaken me. Naturally this recurrent dream puzzled me, so much so that I spoke about it. But ascribing it to indigestion, and classifying it with ordinary nightmares, I did not let it worry me at all.

Then, one day the accident of a heavy cold that settled in my throat led to a medical examination which, much to my surprise, revealed the presence of a growth requiring immediate treatment by the surgeon's knife. Some time afterward it suddenly occurred to me that since the removal of the dangerous growth I had not once been troubled by the cat-clawing dream. Its significance now began to dawn on me.

I had suffered no pain, not even inconvenience, from the growth in my throat. In fact, I had not consciously been aware of its presence. But unquestionably the organic

changes accompanying it had given rise to sensations which slight, though they were, had made an impression on my sleeping consciousness sufficient to excite it to activity. My recurrent dream consequently was to be regarded as a symbolic representation of the disorder in my throat—an attempt to interpret it, to explain it. And indeed even in the dream, for all its fantastic imagery and symbolism, the seat of the trouble was indicated plainly enough, as I could appreciate after the surgeon had completed his labors.

An experience was reported by Alfred Maury, one of the earliest scientific investigators of the phenomena of sleep who dreamed that he was living in Paris during the Terror, and had been put on the proscribed list. After many exciting adventures he was captured, tried and sentenced to execution. He saw himself dragged through the streets amid a clamoring multitude and forced to mount the scaffold and bare his neck to the fatal blow. In that instant, as the guillotine knife descended, he awoke to find that a piece of the cornice of his bed had fallen and struck him on the neck.

Testifying even more impressively to the twofold action of the dream process and to its rapidity is a dream experience of my own. In this dream I was walking alone at night along a country road. It was lined on both sides by trees, which, as I learned from a man who presently joined me, were heavily laden with fruit. I picked some pears and ate them as we walked and talked. The road seemed to overlook a broad valley, in which, at perhaps half a mile's distance, I saw a solitary light. My companion told me that it was his home, and invited me to pass the night with him. After a tiring walk in the dark across meadows we reached the house, a small two-room cabin. He retired into the inner room, I went to bed in the outer.

I had not been long asleep when, in my dreams, I was awakened by the noise of somebody running, and the thought instantly flashed into my mind that my host was making off with my money. I leaped up shouting: "Stop! Stop!"

Then I veritably awoke, and as I did so distinctly heard on the pavement below my window the sound of hurried footsteps and a voice crying excitedly: "Stop! Stop!" At once it was clear that these two words, penetrating to my sleeping consciousness, had provided the necessary stimulus to set up a dream process which, in the fraction of a second, had interpreted them as best it could and had presented the result of its interpretation in the form of a curious little narrative of nocturnal adventure.

More frequently, however, I believe it is safe to say, the dream excitant is connected directly with the state of the sleeper's physical organism. Mention has already been made of the expert mental demonstration of the ease with which dreams may be presented by the use of artificial irritants. One sleeper, whose nose was lightly tickled with a feather, had a horrible dream of a mask of pitch being alternately applied to and drawn violently from his face. Another, at whose feet a hot water bag was placed, dreamed that he was walking over hot lava. In a second experiment of the same sort, the acci-

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dental slipping of the cover from the hot water bag led to an elaborate dream of capture and torture by Rocky Mountain bandits, who insisted that the dreamer knew how to convert copper into gold, and held his naked feet in a fire in order to compel him to communicate his valuable secret. Similarly, the application of a slight degree of heat to the feet of a patient with paralyzed limbs was followed by a dream of being transformed into a bear and taught to dance by being placed on red hot iron plates.

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