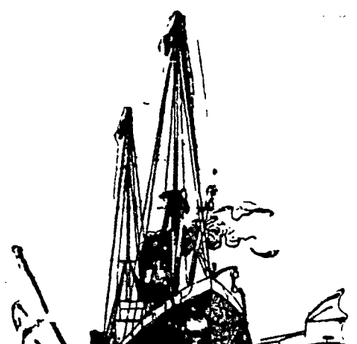
NOTES FROM GOTHAM

THE AWFUL CALAMITY STILL THE TALK OF THIS TOWN.

A Great Wave of Pitty for the Sorrowing—Great Losses Close to Port—Rewards of Courtesy—Echoes From the Kansas City Convention.

The awful destruction of life and property by the Hoboken fire is still the subject of continued comment and will be for some time to come. It is seldom that a catastrophe is of such proportions that the reality exceeds the imagination of those who witness it and who, in the first shock of horror at the spectacle, have to make some sort of measure of it and tell the world how awful they think it is. Yet this seems to have been the case with the North German Lloyd fire at Hoboken. The later facts have added to rather than detracted from its grewsomeness; and the final list of losses, if it ever



be complete, is likely to foot up higher in humanity and property than even the initial estimates suggested. A hundred thoughts arise in the contemplation of such a calamity. Many emotions strive for predominance. A great wave of pity for the sorrow and strangely and inhumanely a thrill at the spectacular features of the event. Then surges over you, with the story of a futile cry for aid or of a woman's vain fight with death, a passionate anger and resentment against the permission of conditions that make so terrible a disaster possible.

The Calmer After Thought

In the calmer after thought, one fact stands out pathetically and curiously. It is the strangeness of the circumstance that these great vessels which have braved so many dangers of the deep, which have triumphed over so many perils of sea and storm and darknes, should have been baffled and worsted at last tied up at their docks, with thousands of men and boats around them, and with the bright sun of a summer afternoon shining serenely down. The hundreds who were soon to sail on them had no thought of danger yet. The thousands who prayed for their safety did not ask explicitly that they be safe-guarded then. When the Hook had been rounded; or when, at most, the ships had been lost to sight in the haze and traffic of the bay, we would ask God's care for them. But now—there was time enough! Yet how often it happens that the great losses of the sea are close to port. Of the latest the Elbe sank with all on board though the land was hardly out of sight, and La Bourgogne went down with the fishing boats around her and New Foundland very near. The Oregan, having feared no battle and rounded the Horn, has grounded on a little rock close in shore. What wonder that the sailors say they fear most when near the land, and that the captain breathes easy when the storms beat upon him in mid ocean and he has a thousand miles on every side in which to rock and toss? "Oh, when peril comes do not pray," the fishermen cry, "for those who are close to shore." With the great liners, it is as with the little fishing smacks. The foreseen danger is provided against and so unarmed, the big vesels were ready for wind and wave; they were prepared for fire from within, but not from without. The unexpectedness, the unfitness—if one may ay so—of the end which came, adds a pathetic touch to the loss of the ships. If these great material monsters, then, move one with such a thought, how much more must one be moved by the realization of what this end means to the men and women who lost their lives all unprepared—brave at sea but weak at port, ready to face death with no help near but piteously pleading for life when help was all around them. Cruel death was doubly cruel.

The Pathetic and Touching Side

For after all, sifting and sorting the emotions that so fearful a calamity can raise, the personal side of it is its pathetic and touching side, the side that really counts. Over against it a loss of noble ships, of splendid piers, of valuable corgoes, of property counting into the millions of dollars, is a matter of little moment. Fifteen months ago the writer was a passenger on the Saale, and to-day he read that of the 255 men employed upon her only half have been accounted for. Officers, sailors, stewards have been lost. On the deck was found the body of Captain Mirow, burned beyond recognition save by a knife that was with the body and a mass of molten gold, which is believed to be the remains of a heavy gold chain he wore. It is no surprise to learn that death revealed him at his post of duty, that the flames wrapt around him while he was giving an order to a panic stricken crowd. Perhaps more than any other ship captain, Captain Mirow fulfilled one's ideal of what the commanding officer of a liner ought to be. He was tall, erect, handsome, with fair hair and long fair beard, and a face that was full of strength and character. He walked his deck with firm, deliberate step—in every sort of weather a Teuton prince upon his throne, sure of his subjects and sure of himself. And yet, beyond most men, he was the very son of courtesy—in pleasant weather a gallant who talked to the ladies with such air of respect that none ever ventured to pierce his armor of self-poise and dignity. After the German custom, too, he unfailingly touched his cap to the men among the passengers, and down the long decks he would pass, bowing right and left, with here a smile and there a word, here a handshake and there a sympathetic inquiry, that scarcely omitted any one.

Rewards of Courtesy.

I have before spoken of the beautiful moral conveyed by the stories of nurses who have been handsomely remembered in bequests left by persons whom they had at some time nursed. And now Mrs. Schly who died not long ago, among other bequests of a substantial sum left several thousands of dollars to clerks employed in New York stores with whom she had dealt while shopping. In several instances she did not know the Christian name of the parties she meant to benefit. The fortunate salespeople had shown her marks of courtesy, and attention, and those little amenities of business tact that are certain to please even the most capatious customer.

Always Celebrates.

Tammany Hall always celebrates the Fourth of July and, although all the big guns were absent this year at the Democratic convention, the ceremony of celebr. n was as full and complete and the attendance and enthusiasm as great as in any former year. The long talks and the short talks inspired the braves, and although the weather was hot and uncomfortable the spirit of '76 was strongly in evidence everywhere.

The Ice Trust.

These sweltering days and nights serve to help in the minds of the people the operations of the ice trust. Although public sentiment has forced the trust to recede from its position in attempting to advance the price of gas and temporarially accomplished all that was desired, the end is not yet for the trust. It has just scored a victory in obtaining an order from Justice Herrick of Albany postponing all action in the courts until a decision is given on certain poin's on which appeals have been made to the appellate division. As this decision will r handed down until September, ight that the subject will then mitted to die, and it probably will, for then the public mind will be full of politics and the ice trust with all its injustices will be forgotten.

Unveiling of the Lafayette Statue.

The unveiling of the statute of Lafayette at Paris on the Fourth was the occasion of much rejoicing among the members of the National society of the Daughters of the American Revolution as it formed an important epoc in the history of the organization. The society has been active in raising funds for the monument, and the appointment of Mrs. Daniel Manning, a New Yorker, who was especially commissioned by the President to assist at the unveiling of the statute made the occasion one of special interest to her many friends in this city.

The unveiling ceremonies were held in the court of the Louvre. Mrs. Manning, at the request of the Continental Congress of the Daughters, appointed the following members of the society to represent the National Society at the unveiling: Mrs. Adlai Stevenson, Mrs. John W. Foster, Miss Eugenia Washington, Mrs. Ellen Hardin Walworth, Miss Mary Desha, Mrs. Mary S. Lockwood, Mme. la Marquise de Chambrun, Mrs. Robert Stockwell Hatcher, Mrs. Charles Carlyle Darwin, Mrs. Sara Tompson Kinney and Mrs. Mary P. H. Cameron.

Personal Antagonisms.

The personal antagonisms that developed at the convention were chiefly between the New York State leaders and this is nothing new in National conventions. In fact, in almost every convention of either party which has been held for forty years, New York State delegations have been present with a fight. When Lincoln was nominated it was because of a quarrel in New York. When Tilden won a nomination it was after a determined protest from some of the most prominent Democras in the State, and the Conkling struggle, the Cleveland and Hill incidents and the turning down of Morton are all recent history. In this great State the membership of the parties are so large, that there is plenty of room for disagreement in both parties. The refusal of the New York delegation at Kansas City to permit Former Senator Hill to go on the committee on platform, was a bold move on the part of his political opponents, and it has brought out into more marked prominence the man who secured this position—Judge Van Wyck. There have been many predictions of a break in the Democratic party this year. But those who make them forget that the tendency in presidential years is to compass all difference and present a united front. It is the off years when party revolts are the most numerous and most effective.

AFTER ALL.

Tom Barclay and Elizabeth Murray never understood each other very well, and yet they had been engaged for a year. They had known each other long before the engagement, too, but although a man seldom quite understands a woman, Tom was even more dense in this respect than most men, and Elizabeth, more difficult than most women for any man to comprehend, unconscious of the fact, wondered at Tom's many failures in this direction.

They were very good friends, however, and thought they loved each other—had even said so in strict confidence; and, as I said, were engaged to be married. In fact, Miss Murrap was already at the mercy of dressmakers and milliners, for it was December—late December—and the wedding was set for the 10th of January.

One night, the dressmakers and milliners having kindly waived their claims for a few hours, Mr. Barclay called to see his prospective bride. He was not in the best possible humor; an ugly east wind drove the sleet into his face as he walked the few blocks from the cable cars to Miss Murray's home, for Tom thought too much of his horses to take them out on such a night; man had failed him in an important business appointment, and it is quite possible tha' was a trifle bilious; at all even e was about as cross as he ever allowed himself to become.

Now it happened that Elizabeth was nearly worn out with the turmoil incident to the preparations for a fashionable wedding. She was nervous and irritable; probably the east wind affected her also. She needed someone to smooth her hair, talk tender, comforting words—in short, pet her until she was rested; for the woman never yet lived who did not like occasional petting.

Now Thomas Barclay was not a demonstrative man, and petting was somewhat out of his line. How was he to know, especially in his unamiable mood, that the young girl soon to become his wife was in no condition to meet impatience patiently?

"Thank fortune," he said ungraciously, kissing her as a matter of course, and dropping into a chair, "this dressmaking row will soon be over. I've scarcely seen you for a month. I won't have a dressmaker on the place after we are married."

Mr. Barclay did not mean anything by this speech; it was simply an ebullition of temper, and Elizabeth should have met it as such. It suited her mood, however, to retort with:—

"Indeed! I mean to have a dressmaker in the house all the time."

"I wouldn't if I were you," disagreeably, "especially against my wishes."

"And if I should?" she returned defiantly.

"Well—" then common sense asserted itself, and he laughed. "Do you know, Beth, we are just ready to quarrel about nothing? My wife will probably do as she pleases."

Miss Murray did not smile. She was morbidly sensitive, and an ugly thought lodged in her brain. She said quietly:—

"Tom, I don't like that remark of yours at all. I wonder if it is possible that after our marriage you would attempt to coerce me in the least?"

Tom was obstinate. It would have been better not to have asked the question. He said:—

"A woman promises to obey when she marries."

"Not always; the word is frequently left out of the marriage service. It would be better left out of ours."

"Do you mean that you will not obey?" asked he, looking at her curiously.

"Just that."

"A man is the head of the family; it is a wife's duty to obey."

"So I have heard. I never thought of marriage in this light before—a bondage. It seems to me that a woman's freedom is somethi not to be given up lightly. I have never been dictated to by anyone since I left school, and do not believe I should take it kindly. Tom, I don't believe I want to marry you or anybody; why," with a sudden flash of passion, "if you laid a command upon me after our marriage, I really believe I should hate you!"

It crossed Tom's mind that it might be as well for a man to curb his temper till after the wedding day. He rose, walked across the room, pushed aside the heavy curtain, and looked out. The prospects was not pleasing; the sky was black, and the driving sleet pelted against the plate glass. He came back to where Miss Murray sat looking into the fire and apparently lost in thought.

"Elizabeth, I thought you loved me."

"Did you? I thought so too, though I have been told often enough that I didn't."

"Who told you so?"

"Mamma for one, Aunt Clare for another. You see, mamma married papa for love when he was a poor man, and Aunt Clare's husband died before the honeymoon was over. She mourns him yet. They always said that 'I didn't know the first principles of love; perhaps they were right.'

Ma Barclay was never so thoroughly astonished in his twenty-eight years of life; he asked rather stiffly:—

"Will you kindly state why you engaged yourself to me?"

"Well, Tom, I always liked you. We've known each other for years. Our families are intimate. What more natural than that you, the only son, and I the only daughter, should marry? Besides," with a little break in the clear voice, "until to-night I thought you loved me."

Tom pulled his chair close to Elizabeth's and drew her head down to his shoulder. He ought to have done that earlier in the evening. Then he said.—

"My dear, what possesses you? You know I love you."

For an instant the yellow head rested where he had placed it; then Miss Murray drew herself away and rose to her feet.

"No, Tom, it is too late to make me believe that. We are not fitted to make each other happy; I am quite certain of it. Let us break off our engagement."

"And all on account of that confounded speech of mine about a dressmaker!" he exclaimed, savagely.

"Not entirely that. I feel that you do not love me, and something tells me that I ought not to be your wife."

Mr. Barclay, man-like, loved the woman who was slipping away from him at this moment better than ever before, and he had loved her always in his way; he had made a mistake in not showing his affection more plainly.

"Beth," he said, "forgive me. I didn't mean it. I was a brute. As my wife you will be free as air; you must know that. Think a moment; it is not an unpardonable offence, is it?"

"I tell you it is not because of what you said," she reiterated. "It is because I know you do not love me, and that I am not at all sure that I love you."

Mr. Barclay's temper began to rise again. He remarked:—

"This is a nice statement for a man to hear three weeks before his marriage!"

"Much nicer than it would be three weeks after," she retorted. "The invitations are not out; no one outside of our families knows that the day was set. I will take my finery," she added, with a smile, "and go to Italy. Take your ring, Tom, and say good-bye," drawing off the diamond.

Mechanically Tom dropped the circlet into his pocket. Suddenly he took a step toward her, caught her in his arms, kissed her once—twice—three times, with all the passion of a man who loves, then, releasing her, turned and left the room, while Miss Murray, white and trembling, sank into her chair, hid her face and cried bitterly.

Much to Elizabeth's surprise, Mr. Barclay made no attempt to see or speak to her again. She exclaimed, where it was necessary:—

"Mr. Barclay and I have changed our minds."

The following spring a panic swept over the United States and Thomas Barclay was one of a dozen large firms that failed. After settling up his affairs he went West and Miss Murray heard no more of him.

One summer two years later, Elizabeth and her mother joined a party who were going to make a tour of the northwest, penetrating even the wilds of Alaska before their return.

It was in Portland that Miss Murray met with an accident, and a treacherous banana peeling was to blame for it. She had gone out alone to make some small purchases, and stepping on the deceitful peel, fell to the ground.

A crowd was gathering. A gentleman offered his assistance, and Elizabeth was taken to the nearest store, while the gentleman called a carriage and then accompanied her home. It was Tom Barclay.

In spite of the pain Miss Murray could not help looking at the man who was to have been her husband. That individual met her eyes and said:

"Well?"

Miss Murray blushed painfully, conscious that she had been staring.

"It is so long since I have seen you, and we used to be such good friends," she replied gently.

"Whose fault it is that you have not seen me for so long?" he demanded; and then, noting her fading color and pale lips, he said, "What a brute I am to question you so when you are suffering pain! I was never gentle enough to win your love, Beth."

"Did you ever try, Tom?"

"I thought I did."

"Did you take everything for granted—that you loved me and that I cared for you, and that in the course of human events it was natural and proper that we should get married?"

"Perhaps so," he answered quietly; and then the carriage stopped, the driver was at the door, and Elizabeth was carried up to her room.

It was an ugly, obstinate sprain, and held its victim a prisoner for six long weeks. The party went on to Alaska, leaving Mrs. Murray and her daughter at the hotel, and quite as a matter of course Tom Barclay called often. As for Elizabeth, she was utterly content and happy during the period of invalidism that confined her to the house.

Elizabeth had been able to walk for a week. Her friends were due in two days on their return trip, and she and her mother were to join them for home.

Mr. Barclay asked the convalescent to take a ride with him. He was thirty-one, Elizabeth twenty-five. Mrs. Murray did not think a chaperon necessary; neither did Tom. They went alone.

They talked of the scenery, of her accident, and then of the coming parting. Suddenly Tom exclaimed:—

"Oh, Beth, my darling, give me a word of hope before you go! You were mistaken in the old days. I always loved you, and now that we have met again, I cannot let you go out of my life for ever!"

"If you always loved me, why have you been silent all these years?" inquired Elizabeth.

"Because I was stunned that night when I left you, realising that by my own stupid blundering I had lost you."

There was a short silence while Mr. Barclay, having made his plea waited for the verdict. At length Elizabeth said softly—

"Perhaps I loved you then, Tom. I could never care for anyone else. I always compared other men with you, to their disadvantage. If you care to come after me, some time, I will be your wife."

Out of an inner pocket Tom took a tiny morocco case, and opening it, Miss Murray saw the solitaire that had been her engagement ring.

"I have always carried it with me," he said simply, "because you had worn it."

Somehow the tears sprang to Elizabeth's eyes when he slipped it on her finger.

Mrs. Murray was not at all surprised when her daughter announced with several blushes that she was going to marry Thomas Barclay.

The next winter Tom went east after his bride. They are happier than they would have been without that quarrel, a blending of comedy and high tragedy, but it does not follow that any one should go and do likewise.

The man who thinks the world owes him a living will be in a bad row of stumps in collecting it. The world owes every man a living if he earns it.