

# GREAT RISKS; POOR PAY

Positions Held in Which Error Means Loss of Life.

## RESULT OF ONE MISTAKE

If Man in Washington Failed to Press Telegraph Key at a Certain Time the Loss to Shipping Would be Enormous. Other Places of Grave Importance.

Scattered throughout every city and in many of the smaller ones are hundreds of men earning small salaries and facing huge responsibilities. They are the men who "dare not make mistakes." A single blunder made by them may result in great loss of life and vast damage to property.

In almost every great business enterprise there is some one man who, while not being considered among the important men in the works, would disarrange the whole machinery of the establishment if he were to make even the smallest mistake in the performance of his duties.

Suppose, for instance, that one of the minor officials in the weather bureau at Washington should fail to press a telegraph key at certain stated intervals each day.

This duty may seem unimportant, yet were he to fail in it the entire shipping business of the Atlantic coast would be disarranged and vast sums of money would be involved. This official is the one who takes the time observations for the bureau every day. At a certain time he watches a little star creeping slowly across the field of an instrument called the transit, and when it reaches a thin line made by a cobweb stretched across the lens he presses a key.

Each time he touches the key he regulates and adjusts the clocks by which the time for the entire Atlantic coast is set. Captains of the outgoing steamers set their watches by this and if they made a mistake even of a few seconds their calculations would be badly out of the way by the time they reached the other side.

Some time ago, in England, a terrific explosion occurred at the powder mills at Ross. The loss of life was appalling and the loss of money great. Yet this accident would not have happened but for the carelessness of a man who received something like \$10 or \$8 a week. He was stationed at the entrance of the mill. His work was to make a thorough search of every person who entered, and to prevent any one carrying in matches or pieces of metal.

The workmen were provided with dressing-rooms, where they were obliged to change their clothing and put on soft felt shoes instead of the ones they wore out of doors. The watchman had been in the service of the company for a long time, and was reliable. But one day he failed to notice that a new workman, unused to the routine of the plant, had failed to remove his shoes and put on the felt slippers. A spark from the nail in the shoes of this man caused the explosion.

The responsibility upon the shoulders of railroad men is well known and thoroughly appreciated. The switchman in the tower carries the lives of hundreds in his hands. The watchman at the otherwise unguarded railroad crossing is security for the lives of scores. Especially the latter is not a well-paid workman. Usually he is a veteran in the service, a man who has given his best years to some other branch of railroad work, who has been injured and now is being provided for by a position as watchman. Upon him depends the safety of street car passengers and pedestrians.

Suppose there was a fire at Van Buren and State streets. The policeman who discovers it sends in the alarm immediately. This alarm, which rings a certain number of bells to show the number of the box, is received and noted in the electrical bureau. It is then the duty of one of the employees to resend that alarm to the firehouses. Should he make a slight mistake and instead of ringing the box which calls for State and Van Buren streets, should turn in an alarm at Madison and Halsted, there would be "some doings" and a spectacular finish.

At four places in England and at many in other European countries there are men who perform important duties on a pay of \$4 or \$5 a week.

These are the men who guard the great dams.

Every day of their lives, they are supposed to make a thorough inspection of the walls and to repair and report even the slightest sign of a leak.

One would think that such a monotonous duty, performed year after year, would make these men grow careless or forgetful of the importance of their missions, but that does not seem to have been the case.

Four years ago the watchman at the great Scroby dam, in Lancashire, saw a tiny leak that would have escaped the notice of most men.

He reported it immediately, and the experts who were sent to make an examination reported that if he had not been so prompt another twenty-four hours would have brought 20,000,000 tons of water sweeping the valley.

This would have meant a loss of hundreds of lives and millions of dollars worth of property.

In the same way laws have been discovered in the great Merton dam at Sheffield, and each one would have brought a terrible calamity.

One of these accidents was prevented by the discovery that a small stone had bulged about an eighth of an inch.—Chicago Tribune.

## A FIRE THAT WON'T GO OUT.

Phenomenon Exhibited at Railway Station in Scotland.

It is not generally known that in Scotland, not more than three miles out of Glasgow, there is a fire raging at a railway station which has been going on for months, and notwithstanding that tons of water have been poured upon this insidious fire, it cannot be put out.

Several months ago a waste piece of ground close to the station was wanted by the railway company as a siding. The level of this ground was too low, so truckloads of refuse were "dumped" on it to bring it to the necessary level. A large proportion of this refuse consisted of rotting vegetation, and in the course of a little time it heated to such an extent that combustion set in and started not only a smoldering fire but flames actually burst through the ground.

Attempts were made to quell this fire and it was thought, after several weeks of hard work and tons of water that it had been put out. What was the surprise however, to see it break out afresh in another place and nearer the station. Fears then began to be felt for the safety of the station buildings especially as the main double line to important coast and country towns led through it.

Fresh energy was then brought to bear, and much more water was poured on this fire, which seemed to have its stronghold in the bowels of the earth, but from the volume of steam and smoke issuing from innumerable crevices it was seen that the fire-demon was resisting all efforts and was slowly creeping nearer and nearer to the foundations of the railway station. It was now whispered and soon became known that the station had originally been built upon a sort of shale, which came out of the mines in the near neighborhood years ago. These shale mounds have been known to take years burning right through, and the stench from them is anything but pleasant.

The fire gained ground every day until by and by it reached beneath one of the platforms, and any day thereafter might be seen the novelty of a crowd of people waiting on a platform from the chinks and crevices of which were arising in many places jets of steam from the fire below. Such a volume of water was kept continually playing upon it that actual flames were prevented from showing above ground but any casual observer could see the evidences of the great heat below.

In time it was observed that the foundations of the station were settling and cracking and twisting in many places, and all sorts of efforts had to be resorted to keep the buildings from being permanently injured. At this present moment as these lines are being opened the fire has reached under the main line of the track, and it is one of the curiosities of the neighborhood to see the jets of steam and smoke issuing from between the sleepers.

It is now a foregone conclusion that the fire cannot be extinguished, and it is being left to have its own sweet way and burn itself out. When this will happen nobody knows as there is a large part of the foundation of the station not yet reached and as this has been going on for many months, it is quite probable that this fire in the bowels of the earth will go on sapping under the station until the buildings tumble about the passengers' ears.—Tit Bits

## Freight Car as a Lock-Up for Tramps

A novel jail delivery occurred near my home recently, remarked a suburbanite. "I live in an incorporated town within ten miles of this city. We have a Mayor and a town council and all that sort of thing and consider ourselves a very progressive community. With the coming of cold weather the authorities voted to conduct a crusade against tramps, and the town sergeant was instructed to take into custody all members of the gentry in question who invaded the town. For want of a better jail the law officer imprisoned the tramps arrested in a freight car that had stood on a railroad siding for many months, until their cases could be disposed of by the Mayor. He secured the door of the car with a padlock. When darkness arrived one afternoon only a few days ago three tramps were imprisoned in the car. When the town sergeant went after them the following morning he was greatly surprised to find that prisoners, jail, and all had disappeared. During the night or the early morning an engine had backed in and moved away with the car. That is the last we heard of the prisoners, but I'm curious to know when and where they secured their release."—Washington Star.

## Brainwork Doesn't Kill.

In the lecture on longevity delivered last week before the Royal College of Physicians, Sir Hermann Weber, himself an octogenarian, gave official support to the doctrine which we recently set forth in this column—that brainwork does not kill, but rather the reverse. A few of his instances are Sophocles, Plato, Galen, Cleo, Moltke, Bismarck, Mommson, and Gladstone, to whom we might add Hobbes, Carlyle, with Spencer and Kelvin among living men. The facts are that brainwork increases the supply of blood to the nerve cells, and promotes their nutrition and health. Mosso, an Italian, laid a man on a delicately balanced table, and showed that the head end sank whenever the subject did a mental sum or any other brainwork. The increased weight of his head was due to the life-giving blood. The truth is that brainwork, as such, never killed anybody.—London Chronicle.

# THE BEST SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

## A CATHOLIC WEEKLY—A CATHOLIC MONTHLY

THE IDEAL ARRANGEMENT FOR THE CATHOLIC HOME.

THE CATHOLIC JOURNAL (Weekly). Regular Price, One Year, . . . . . \$1.00

MEN AND WOMEN (Monthly). Regular Price, One Year, . . . . . 1.00

### Our Special Price, \$1.50 for Both.

All of our readers know  
**The Catholic Journal**  
and how necessary it is in the homes of our people. As a weekly Church paper it has no equal.

## Men and Women

The National Catholic Home Journal  
Not a devotional magazine, but a high-class family journal, edited especially for Catholic homes. Safe and sane without being dry. Interesting without being frivolous.

## A Test of Quality

Some of the Contributors who make MEN AND WOMEN:

His Eminence James Cardinal Gibbons, Father Coppens, William Jennings Bryan, Clement H. Congdon, Rev. Edwin Drury, Anna C. Minogue, Hester Price, Governor LaFollette, Julian Hawthorne, Richard Harding Davis, Madame Schumann-Heink, John G. Lloyd, Ethel Shuckford, William Allen White, Paul de Longpre, Murat Hulstod, Bellamy Storer, Grace Keon, Prof. Will Van Scherbrant, Hamilton W. Mabie, Maurice Francis Egan, A. J. Boes, Scimus McManus.



REPRODUCTION OF JANUARY 1908 COVER. A life-size cover every month, beautifully produced in colors.

Twelve Numbers of MEN AND WOMEN Equal Six Ordinary \$1.50 Books and contain the most all-around assortment of home literature ever presented by any \$1.00 magazine, every bit of which breathes forth the spirit of Catholicism. Sample Copy Free on application to us.

## Take Advantage of Our Greatest Offer.

For \$1.50 we will send THE CATHOLIC JOURNAL and MEN AND WOMEN both for one year. Send your subscription today.

# THE CATHOLIC JOURNAL, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

## PEARL FISHERS QUARREL.

Objected to Machinery in Competition for the Gems.  
The officers on board the Alameda, which arrived in this city bringing the startling intelligence that the natives of the island of Taumotu, one of the smallest of the South Sea group have seized the diving apparatus brought to their country by a party of enterprising Americans who aimed to monopolize the oyster pearl-diving industry of that neighborhood. The Americans arrived at the little island some time ago with an elaborate diving apparatus and quietly set to work to rid the seas of a lot of the pearl oysters so abundant thereabout. The natives did not comprehend at first what it all meant but soon they began to observe that pearl oysters were getting scarce and they at once pointed out the foreigners and their "devil machine."

The Americans were routed quickly. The natives have since kept a sharp watch and there seems little chance of the enterprising divers encroaching on the beds. It is said that the Americans were deriving a profitable income from their thrift, but it is probably at an end now.

The divers are cruising about the South Seas in a little schooner in command of an old seaman named Maxwell, well known in that part of the globe. Maxwell became wroth when the natives of the island drove him away and he at once entered a protest with the Tahiti Government. As a result the gunboat Zeele was sent to the scene of the trouble and may be heard from soon.

The natives of the island are deemed the best pearl divers in the world and for years they have made a living at their craft. But when the Americans appeared on the scene with their patent machine they nearly monopolized the industry of the natives, who depend almost entirely on pearl diving as a means of livelihood.—San Francisco Call.

## An Oriental Stratagem.

Many a man has failed to guess an easy riddle because the simple solution looked like a trap to him. V. C. records an instance in which this trait of human nature was cleverly played upon by a Japanese nobleman. The old lord had been forced to flee with only three hundred men before an enemy with ten thousand, and barely had time to reach his castle ahead of his foes. There were no reinforcements near at hand, and he knew that if an attempt was made to storm his defenses he and his men would be dead before help could come. The enemy's forces advanced rapidly, and scouts rode up near the castle to reconnoitre. To their amazement they found the gates, doors, and windows open, and all the appearance of a holiday celebration. They rode hastily back to inform their master that the foe was dancing, and that bands were playing music in the castle. The powerful enemy was too wise a man to put his lord into any such trap as that. The defenders of the castle must have some plan to slaughter his forces by wholesale, or they would never invite him in that way. He drew back a safe distance, and encamped to await developments. Soon the re-enforce-

## LONELY WHITE CHILDREN.

Conditions in the Islands of the Southern Pacific.

Of all the lonely white children on the face of the earth, the most lonely, probably are two boys who live on the faraway, famous Christmas Island which is so tiny that it hardly makes a dot on the map. It lies in the Pacific Ocean, more than 200 miles away from the coast of Java, and belongs to England, says the Chicago Little Chronicle. These two white boys are much like two Robinson Crusoes for, while there are 550 inhabitants on Christmas Island, most of them are Chinese and almost all the rest are Malays. There are only four white men there and three women so the two boys grow up pretty wild and must care for their own clothes and cook their own food and attend themselves to all the other wants for which most boys look to their mothers and other women.

Almost as lone as these boys are four white boys who live on one of the twenty small coral islands known as the Cocos or Keeling group, that lie about 1,200 miles from Singapore. These four boys are better cared for because they have a school to go to, but on the whole they are almost as lonely as the Christmas Island boys. There are sixty-eight other boys on the island, but they are scattered over the whole group, and it often is a day's sail from one island to the other, unless the weather is unusually good. So the boys do not see much of each other. Besides that, all except these four boys are natives or Chinese, and there is not much in common between them and the English boys.

## Dining With John Adams.

In the year 1818 Henry Bradshaw Pearson, an Englishman, dined with John Adams, second president of the United States, at the Boston home of the fine old statesman, then 84 years old. The Sunday dinner was as follows: "First course, a pudding made of Indian corn, molasses and butter; second, veal, bacon, neck of mutton, potatoes, cabbages, carrots and Indian beans, Madeira wine, of which each drank two glasses. We sat down to dinner at 1 o'clock, and I nearly all went a second time to church. For tea we had poundcake, sweet bread and butter and bread made of Indian corn and rye. Tea was brought from the kitchen and handed around by a neat white servant girl." Pearson says further: "The establishment of this political patriarch consists of a house two stories high, containing, I believe, eight rooms, of two men and three maidservants; three horses and a plain carriage."

## Old Time Rate Wars.

There used to be rate wars in the old stagecoach days. At one time, early last century, one stagecoach company not only cut the price from Lewes to London to a very low rate, but gave also other inducements. As the coach started from Lewes at a somewhat uncomfortably early hour in the morning, by way of tiding over the difficulty the proprietors allowed the more slothful of their passengers to go overnight to Brighton, where they were accommodated with good beds free of expense and could proceed comfortably to London by the company's morning coach.

## POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

Some women are not half as bad as they are painted.

## A Home Library

Subscribing to MEN AND WOMEN is like subscribing to a library containing books of interest to every member of the family. The numbers for a year contain the following and scores of other valuable features:

- 600 Large Pages, equal to 1,500 ordinary magazine pages.
- 1,000 Finest Illustrations.—A veritable picture gallery.
- 12 Pieces of Music.—Choice and original.
- 12 Double Pages of Pictures.—Selected with care.
- 12 Great Illustrated Articles on vital questions of the day. Equal to many a book sold for \$1.50 to \$2.50.
- 100 Stories.—The best fiction of the day. Strong continued stories. Short stories, unequalled in freshness, originality and heart interest.
- Fashions and Patterns.—Up-to-date practical fashions—100 patterns.
- Religious History.—Articles dealing with epoch-making events in the history of the Church.
- The Question Box.—Questions which perplex many concerning the Faith are treated in a popular and satisfactory manner. A most valuable feature.
- Children's Department.—Stories, puzzles.
- The Cooking School.—Twelve extensive lessons each year.
- Chats with Authors. Book Reviews. The Correct Thing. Fancy Work. Embroidery. Crocheting. Humor. Gardening. Flowers. Games. Exercises for Special Occasions, and a large number of other varied departments.

## The Ingenious Inventor.

All sorts of queer devices are offered the army board of ordnance and fortifications as engines of destruction. One of the strangest suggestions of this kind yet presented to the consideration of the board contemplates the use of large fish, preferably sharks, for the propulsion of submarine torpedoes. According to the plan proposed a shark is to be imprisoned in a tube at the rear end of the projectile, and is to be controlled in its movements by the active application of wireless telegraphy. In case the shark became restless and attempted to swim away on his own account it was to be given an electric shock, and in that way kept on its course until the torpedo had reached its target. Another remarkably ingenious proposition emanated from the same fertile brain, and contemplated the employment of large and powerful birds for the movement of war balloons in any desired direction. In this case also the birds, harnessed to the aerial vehicles, were to be controlled in their movements by a system of wireless telegraphy. These balloons were to be provided with torpedoes or bombs, which could be dropped at any desired point by the use of wireless telegraphy.—Washington Star.

## Life on Other Planets.

Upon the question whether life-bearing planets can exist in other solar systems than our own the answer of science is clear and distinct. It is precisely the same which Prof. Newcomb recently gave concerning the possible inhabitants of Mars. "The reader knows just as much of the subject as I do, and that is nothing at all." Within our solar system we can indeed form some crude estimate of probabilities; beyond it, nothing.

All the amazing progress of modern science, all the revelations made by the spectroscope or by photography, all the advance in biology have not brought us one step nearer an answer to the question. "Is this the only inhabited world?" We stand essentially where Whewell and Brewster did half a century ago, or we might indeed say where Galileo and Capocano were three hundred years ago. We can indeed spin out the discussion at greater length than our predecessors, and can introduce a far larger number of more or less irrelevant facts, but of serious argument, either for or against, we are entirely destitute.—Prof. Maunders, in Knowledge.

But for the frames some pictures wouldn't be in it.

You can't always tell a milk train by its cowcatcher.

A good memory often comes in handy to forget with.