

FIRES IN DWELLINGS.

FEW HOUSES HAVE MEANS OF ESCAPE EXCEPT THE DOORWAYS.

A Trapdoor in the Roof Seems to Be the Only Suggestion For a Means of Escape in Case the Stairways of a House in the City Is on Fire During the Night.

Two deaths from suffocation in a burning dwelling have again called the attention of all thinking people to the fact that dwelling houses are not provided with any practical means of escape in case of fire occurring in the lower floor during the night. Investigation by a reporter shows that the law is quite on the subject of escapes from dwellings. Neither the laws governing the bureau of building inspectors nor those applying to the bureau of fire-fighters on the subject. Both bureaus agree in saying that some means of exit other than the stairways should be provided, and both favor the introduction of trapdoors in the roofs as the most feasible and most effective plan. It is stated on good authority that these trapdoors, while one of the best means of escape, cannot be found in more than one house in 200 on the average through the city.

Chief Baxter of the fire department and president of the bureau of fire escapes said: "There were 1,531 fires last year, and 485 of these were in dwellings. Fortunately but few people met their deaths from dwelling house fires during the year. This is not always the case, however, and I have seen quite a large number of fatal results from such fires—the deaths a few years ago in the result of the fire in the King residence at Seventeenth and Pine streets, for instance, and many others not quite so appalling nor of such prominence. In most of these cases the fatality would not have been so great had some means of escape, other than stairways, been provided.

"There certainly should be some new clause in our fire-escape laws, and the most important one would be one requiring trapdoors in the roof of every house, or some equally feasible means of exit. The present laws are particularly stringent regarding fire escapes on hotels in the city, but neglect altogether the dwellings. It would seem more proper to take care of the permanent population than transient visitors to the city, from which class the hotels derive their income.

"Of the dwelling house fires which occurred last year," the chief continued, "146 were caused by defective flues. It is fair to presume that the majority of fires from this cause occur at night after the flues have been fixed and the family has retired. In fixing heater fires for the night the general method used is to open wide the flue draft and close the bottom draft. The heat ascends up the chimney then, and any defect in the flue may cause a fire. Before the family are awakened the whole lower room may be in flames, and escape by means of the stairway may be impossible. The family would then probably have to jump from the windows, unless the house had one of the illegal frame kitchens in the rear.

"They could then jump on that and from there to the fence. If trapdoors were provided in the roof, however, they could easily ascend and escape either to an adjoining house or at least escape suffocation by running along the roofs out of danger until the fire department arrived. These trapdoors have been suggested, but it is claimed that they would furnish means for burglars to enter the houses from those adjoining. The popular sentiment, though, would seem to indicate that most people prefer to take chances of being robbed of a few dollars than to take the risk of being burned to death.

Harmon Boorse, a member of both bureau of building inspectors and the bureau of fire escapes, said he had always been in favor of building trapdoors in every house. "The law," he said, "forbids the erection of frame kitchens, but at present these furnish the only means of escape from a dwelling after exit by the stairway has been cut off. Statistics prove that fire very seldom occurs in these outside kitchens. A prominent insurance agent told me only a day or two ago," he continued, "that the majority of dwelling house fires were caused by defective flues in the cellars where the heater flue enters the chimney."

James C. Moore, a prominent builder erecting from 200 to 500 dwellings a year and a member of the Operative Builders' association, denounced in outspoken terms the present system of building without providing a means of escape from the upper floors except by the stairways. He said: "It is an outrage on the community.

"As dwelling houses are built in these days, not one in 200 on the average is provided with a trapdoor or scuttle in the roof. I have always favored this manner of building."—Philadelphia Press.

Noncommittal Praise.

One of an admiring group around a certain conscientious woman of boundless tact recently asked her what she found truthfully to say when adoring parents exhibited unpromising infants or their pictures. The tactful woman smiled with justifiable pride at the score of anxious feminine faces turned toward her. "I always exclaim ardently, 'Well, that is a baby,' and," with dancing eyes, "it is, you know."—New York Times.

Criticizing Boston.

She was from out of town, and when the conductor on the Columbus avenue car called, "Albany Station," she said: "I want to know if that's the Boston and Albany station! It's nothing to the one that the Boston and Maine are just a gait to tear down."—Boston Commonwealth.

Typical Fire Escapes.

Guest—What precautions have you here in case of fire?
Hotel Clerk—We have fire escapes from every floor. All you have to do is to make your way to one of them and fall off.—New York Weekly.

SHE WORE THE SHOES TO BED.

A New England Girl's Unique Way of Stretching Tight Footgear.

When Mr. Simpson returned from Boston, he brought a beautiful pair of shoes—laced shoes, with neat heels and pretty toes—for his daughter Ethel, and a unanimous sigh of disappointment swept over the Simpson family when it appeared that these shoes were too small. No one was more sincerely grieved about it than Ethel's youngest sister, Evelyn, who liked pretty shoes as much as Ethel did, and who had been wearing a pair that could not have been described as anything but "serviceable, though plain."

Evelyn was filled with conflicting emotions when her father said: "Perhaps you can wear a No. 3, my dear. If so you may have these."

Evelyn knew that though her sister was six years older than herself, yet they wore the same sized shoes—No. 4; but she did not say so. She set her pretty shoe beside her own stout, rusty one. The prospect was discouraging.

A little later Ethel came in.

"Why," she exclaimed in surprise, "you can almost get it on! Try it sometime when your foot is not warm and swollen as it is now, though I suppose papa would never let you wear them if they went on at all hard."

The shoes stood on Evelyn's dressing case all day and suggested to her what must have been the feelings of Cinderella's sisters when they tried to cut down their feet to fit the magic slipper. That evening when she was going to bed she tried them again, and they actually went on. They squeezed the poor little feet as if in a vise, but there they were, on.

About midnight Ethel Simpson was awakened by a soft knock on her door and sitting in the hall outside she discovered her little sister Evelyn.

"Oh, Ethel—don't make a noise—my feet!" she gasped.

"Why, you have your shoes and stockings on, Evelyn. The new shoes! Oh, you poor child!" and in a moment the elder sister was leaning over the sufferer, who had fainted away with smothering sobs and a pair of scissors.

"You see," sobbed Evelyn, reviving and watching the cutting of the shoe lacing with interest, "I thought if I wore them to bed they would be on in the morning and I could show them to papa and he would let me keep them. I went to sleep, and a little while ago I woke up, and I thought I was dying."

"I almost screamed, but I didn't. I felt numb all over, and then it seemed as if arms and legs and head were turning into balloons. When I tried to crawl out of bed, I knew what was the matter. It was my feet and those awful shoes."

"I expect every one will laugh at me. Why, Ethel, you are crying! Don't. My feet don't hurt me any more, and papa will say when you tell him about it, 'it will be a lesson to her.'"

It was a lesson to her. She never wore tight shoes again, but if her father thought so he did not say it when Ethel told the story, and no one of the family laughed or said a word about it. A day or two later a package came from Boston for Evelyn, which contained a beautiful pair of shoes, laced, with neat heels and pretty toes and marked "fours."—Youth's Companion.

The Anthem.

The rustic choir's greatest show was always made in the anthem, in which some bumpkin had generally a solo to exhibit his "lusty voice." It was a splendid musical display—of its kind. People came from a long distance to hear it and felt so satiated that they left without the sermon. No wonder Shakespeare made Sir John Falstaff lose his voice with "hallooing and singing of anthems." To be sure he was guilty of an anachronism, for there were no anthems in the fat knight's time, but it may reasonably be supposed that he had become so impressed with this part of the service in his own day that he dropped into the nod which even Homer is privileged occasionally to enjoy.

The Jack Tar who explained a "hantem" to his mate on the simple principles of verbal elongation was not so far out after all. "If I was to say to you," he began, "'Ere, Bill, give me that handspike,' that wouldn't be a hantem; but if I was to say to you, 'Bill, Bill, Bill, give, give, give me, that, that, that handspike, spike, spike, spike,' why, that would be a hantem." Just after this fashion did the old village choirs tear and toss their anthem texts.—Cornhill Magazine.

But She Didn't Get the Boots.

I was trying on a pair of shoes, not many days ago, in one of the "sample" shoe stores. Finding a pair which particularly pleased me, the clerk laced up one, and looked for the other to do likewise, but it could not be found. After a vain search I was about to give it up and select another pair which did not please me half as well, when I saw the edge of the woman's skirt, who sat next me, bulging out, and, calling the attention of the salesman to the fact, he extracted the boot from under her dress.

It seems she liked the boots as well as I did, and if she did not get them, it was not because she did not possess unbounded assurance.

Some women get through this world on their nerve, and this woman was one of them.—New York Herald.

The Color Question.

Little boy Sterling, 5 years old, was recently having his hair done up for the night. He was restless under the operation, and his nurse tried to interest him by speaking of the colored waiter who had come that day.

"He looks as neat as a new pin, in his white jacket and apron," said she.

"Yes," responded Sterling, "neat as a new black pin."—Kate Field's Washington.

American Architecture.

The distinctive form of American architecture may be seen in the modern office building now so popular in most of our large cities. It combines in the highest degree utility with excellence and is at once a model of convenience and of beauty.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

For Scrofula

"After suffering for about twenty-five years from scrofulous sores on the legs and arms, trying various medical courses without benefit, I began to use Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and a wonderful cure was the result. Five bottles sufficed to restore me to health."—Bonifacia Lopez, 227 E. Commerce st., San Antonio, Texas.

Catarrh

"I was afflicted for nearly a year with catarrh. The physician being unable to help me, my pastor recommended Ayer's Sarsaparilla. I followed his advice. From a state of regular entrance with Ayer's Sarsaparilla and Ayer's Pills completely restored my daughter's health."—Mrs. Louise Thibault, Little Canada, Ware, Mass.

Rheumatism

"I suffered for a long time with rheumatism, and was treated with calomel and other medicines, but did not get any relief. For the last two years, whenever I felt the effects of the disease, I began to take Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and have not had a recurrence since."—E. T. Hansbrough, Ellipton, Va.

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