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Many explanations of the terrible disaster at the Iroquois theater in Chicago will be given by the newspapers and echoed by excited readers, and much of their scolding of managers and architects and city officials will probably be deserved. So it would seem like "carrying coals to Newcastle" for us to give particular attention to any of the causes for these over-late criticisms.

But there is one explanation which is barely likely to be given through the usual channels of criticism, and to that we invite a little common sense attention. We refer to the impossibility of making an auditorium safe when the builders are forced to wedge it in among other buildings, as theater builders in large cities are forced to do. This is an explanation which lies back of all others. This is a condition which makes such catastrophes inevitable, no matter what minor precautions may be taken.

No such disaster could occur in the Mormon Tabernacle at Salt Lake City. Why? Because an abundance of exits on all sides open immediately into "all out doors." There are no windings and turnings leading into one narrow alley at the rear or one narrow doorway in the front. Let a fire break out or an explosion occur in that structure, and unless the structure itself were destroyed within three minutes, every person in it could reach a place of safety.

Of course it may be impracticable to build theaters in large cities

out "in the open," as the Mormon Tabernacle is built; but it is not impracticable to surround them with open alleys, so that numerous exits may make of all four sides of the building a clear way to the street when occasions of danger require. Nor are architects altogether to blame for not building theaters upon that plan. The Iroquois theater, for instance, had to be built in the form of an L, if built at all upon the chosen site; and one stem of the L was so narrow as to afford only reasonable room for the regulation entrance. Moreover, sites are so inordinately dear in locations appropriate for theaters, that the space necessary for alleys would create a burden of cost so great as to be in itself a formidable if not impossible commercial obstacle.

Therein lies the fundamental cause of such disasters as that of the Iroquois theater. By encouraging investments in sites merely for the purpose of securing the advantages of higher prices, an abnormal scarcity of sites is produced and abnormal concentration results. It is this abnormal concentration, more than anything else or all things else together, that makes of what ought to be but an accident to a building a calamitous destruction of human life. And this is a condition the fault of which lies at no particular man's door. The responsibility rests upon us all, for our persistent and unreasonable ignorance of the natural laws of municipal development.

Public sentiment in Chicago is being stirred to its depths by a "citizens'" movement for the suppression of crime. A large committee has been formed, which is bespangled with prominent names. Sub-committees have been carved out of the larger commit-

tee, a princely fund is being collected by popular subscription, and through the local press a hue and cry is raised.

This is good work. No community can exist in reasonable comfort—much less can it flourish—where crime is rampant. Protection for life, liberty and property is the first essential of civilized life; and none of these rights are secure where crime holds sway. That crime does hold sway in Chicago is evident. It flourishes in many forms, from mere "touching" and pocket-picking all the way up through the various grades of hold-up, house breaking, and city hall "graft," to the tentative traction ordinance now pending before the city council. All are criminal, for each kind is in some way a menace to the security of some one's rights of life, liberty or property.

The only objection to the "citizens'" movement against crime in Chicago is that it is not directed against crime and criminals on principle. It is directed against only some kinds of crime and some grades of criminals. Let us not be misunderstood. We do not criticize the movement and its patrons for confining their present crusade to particular crimes and particular classes. Such criticism would be unjust and foolish. Very often it is necessary to do only one thing at a time. This is especially true of rooting out crime. It must be attacked in detail. The indictment that does lie against the projectors of this movement is not that they are assailing only the lower grades of crime, but that they are not assailing crime, as crime, at all.

The movement is animated by no principle of hostility to crime in general. It is only against cer-