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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-

tain species of crime that its projectors are excited and valiant. The crime genus does not arouse their hostility. Some of them, indeed, are even vigilant to protect their own favorite species of this genus. Boastful as they are about their crusade against crime, what they are really fighting is only the "other fellow's game." They are like the little girl of the oft-told but very pertinent story who prayed, "O, Lord, make Martha Smith a good little girl, so that I may take all her playthings away from her and she won't make any fuss about it."

Let the generous doubter compare the attitude of these crime chasers towards vulgar "graft" and pistol hold-ups with their attitude toward the "graft" and hold-up of the Chicago City railway, for instance, of which some of them are expectant beneficiaries. Yet there is really no moral difference between the two kinds. The hold-up man relieves you of your pocket-money and your watch at the point of a pistol. The traction company holds up the city officials with threats of unconscionable litigation for a prize of at least \$200,000,000. Where are these virtuous crime-chasers when that kind of crime flourishes? Do they denounce crime then? Surely it is pertinent to call upon them, before they expand too much with a sense of their virtue, to consider what crime is before they begin to chase criminals, and then to ask the guiltless among them to lead in the chase?

Let us repeat, however, that we are raising no objection to the suppression of vulgar forms of crime. By all means eradicate them. But eradicate them in the right spirit. Eradicate them, not because they happen to disturb you, but because they are a species of the genus crime. Thus you cultivate a disposition to eradicate the whole genus, the species of your own household as well as the species of the slums. Not only is this the right spirit, but it is the only

spirit which can crown any movement against the vulgar species of crime with success. Crusades against all crime can abolish all crime, step by step, if intelligently and sincerely prosecuted; but crusades with one-sided motives, against the crimes of the lower classes of criminals only, can never succeed. So long as trespasses upon the life, liberty and property of the masses are permitted under forms of law, so long will the masses breed vulgar criminals to defy the law.

When you commend your policemen for boasting of "violating the law in order to enforce the law," what are you to expect of men who suffer from what seem to be unfair discriminations? When the police forbid lawful public meetings of the "lower classes," as they have recently done in Paterson, N. J., or break them up, as they did in Chicago prior to the anarchist episode, what are you to expect of the "lower classes" who are thus denied one of the most fundamental of rights? When prisoners without influential friends, arrested without warrant and confined without legal authority, are tortured into making confessions (true or false as may be) in utter defiance of law, and this official criminality is publicly approved or condoned as necessary to successful criminal chasing, what are you to expect of the prisoners and their friends as they begin to realize that the safeguards of the law, nominally for the protection of all, are not for the protection of such as they? These are but surface suggestions. To go fully into even so much as a bare enumeration of the various approved species of crime that tend to produce the species that excite the ire and stimulate the civic enthusiasm of your polite crime-chaser, would require much more space than we can spare. It would take us back to the traction ordinance hold-up and "graft" which some of the wealthiest people of Chicago are coercing the city council's committee into approving. It would

take us even beyond that. We should have to point to the various other sources of unearned incomes of the respectable sort, which are extorted under forms of law from the working forces of society. There is a great measure of truth in the general feeling and common talk among the proscribed criminals that "all is graft," and that their proscribed practices are "in kind the same as those of the respectable gangs who chase them, and in degree milder."

Until the present crusade against crime in Chicago vitalizes itself with a better civic spirit, it will neither deserve nor command success. It cannot command even respect, except in the limited class out of which it springs, while it represents nothing more than it seems to now. Not even a citizens' committee for the suppression of crime can divide its allegiance and yet be worthy of confidence. It cannot be trusted to exterminate the vulgar crimes of the poor while condoning the gilded graft of the rich. Crime is crime, be the criminal rich or poor, of high station or low, official servant or private citizen. Nor is it any the less crime for having been legalized or having become respectable. It consists essentially in depriving men of their natural rights to their own life, their own liberty and their own property. Do the Chicago committee agree to this? Then let them declare their purpose. Do they purpose exterminating crime wherever and however it raises its head, and whether it be sanctioned by law and custom or not? Or are they only sportsmen on a man-hunt in the slums?

Good tidings are brought back to the East by Cornelius N. Bliss, from a trip he has been making over the continent. He says that he found evidences of prosperity everywhere. Travelers generally can find prosperity everywhere—in Pullman cars. But scores of thousands of discharged workmen in the West, who did not ride