ABOUT ALCOHOL HEART.

IF YOU HAVE ONE YOU'D BETTER LEAVE DRINK ALONE.

Alcohol Not Always Injurious—Up to a Certain Point it is Beneficial to the Physical Condition—After That, Poison—Under Any Circumstances it Would be Well to Give Alcohol a Wide Berth.

Alcohol heart is a term which is frequently used by physicians to describe an ailment which is rapidly increasing, especially in cities. The public probably usually understands by the expression a generally debilitated condition of the patient, manifested by a quavering or fluttering of the heart, and due to excessive use of strong drink. This conception is quite correct as far as it goes, but it does not cover the case. In some elaborate experiments recently performed abroad by T Sander Brunton, Fellow of the Royal Society, it is shown that alcohol, together with some other anæsthetics, has a peculiar effect on the heart. This effect is not generally understood by physicians.

Alcohol, ether and chloroform are all poisons. This statement does not amount to much unless you know precisely what is meant by the word poison. Almost every substance may be said to be poisonous if you take enough of it. When doctors use the word poisonous they mean that the body having that quality is an enemy of the body of man. If pure alcohol be poured into a cut it will irritate the sensory nerves and burn

LIKE A RED-HOT IRON,

while it will coagulate and kill the blood, muscle or any albuminous tissues, rendering them hard and unfit for the functions of life. This shows that pure alcohol is a poison. If you mix a little beef juice with alcohol the whole of the albumen, one of the essential components of the beef, will be precipitated or separated from the juice, and deposited on the bottom of the vessel. What we thus see happening in this experiment has also been supposed to occur in nerve cells. The anæsthetic, or benumbing quality of alcohol, has been supposed to be due to its causing a sort of coagulation or congestion of the nerve cells, or, at any rate, such a change in the substances composing them as to render them sluggish and incapable of performing their functions.

Those who have taken pure alcohol into the mouth with a view to cleaning out a pipe or for any other purpose have no doubt experienced a very disagreeable sensation, as if they had begun the operation of swallowing a quantity of liquid fire. The action of the alcohol on the mucous membrane of the mouth irritates the membrane of the cheek and makes it turn white by causing a sudden hardening or coagulation of the albumen it contains. If chloroform could be used instead of alcohol the experimenter would have a very fine illustration of the more powerful action of the former, for it not only causes much greater irritation but much more rapid and excessive whitening. Even when applied to the exterior skin of the body it causes a similar whitening.

If alcohol or chloroform be applied to a piece of skin which has been deprived of its epidermic, or outer covering, a sensation is experienced like that which would be caused by contact with a red-hot iron. If alcohol be applied to the skin and its evaporation be prevented by covering it with oil silk it will also cause

A FEELING OF BURNING.

This is still more marked in the case of chloroform, and the burning may become so painful that it can hardly be endured. All these experiments show that pure alcohol is a poison.

If, now, instead of putting liquid alcohol or chloroform in the mouth the vapor only is inhaled or if the liquid be swallowed in a diluted form no pain and no whitening will result. This is a very important and a very fortunate circumstance for those who use strong drink, for if alcohol should have the same effect on the membrane when diluted as it does in an undiluted form it would inevitably cause death. Alcohol, ether or chloroform will destroy any of the tissues if applied in a concentrated form, but when diluted will act rather as a stimulant and will produce no marked injury. When chloroform is injected into the artery of the limb it will coagulate all the muscles and make the limb as stiff as a board. When injected into the heart the muscular substance of the organ will be coagulated and its motion suspended or arrested. These heart experiments are usually performed upon frogs. After a frog has been properly cut open its heart may be easily seen to beat for a long time before death.

The effect of swallowing diluted alcohol is much the same as that caused by inhaling chloroform, as far as the physical manifestations are concerned. An overdose of diluted alcohol will cause insensibility, and the same is true of the fumes of chloroform breathed too freely. But the sensation between a state of perfect sensibility to one of insensibility is more or less stimulating. The diluted anæsthetic does not have the peculiar power above noted of coagulating the blood and hence interfering with its proper functions. Consequently, when the blood has taken up a sufficient quantity, the

RESPIRATION IS PARALYZED,

while the heart continues to beat. In this respect the action of alcohol is precisely the same as that of the ordinary asphyxia produced by a clogging of the mucous of the bronchial tubes. The heart action remains unimpaired, but the respiratory or breathing system is interfered with. It has been found that a period of time, longer in some cases and shorter in others, elapses between the stoppage of the respiration and the stoppage of the heart.

But—and this point is the saving clause for all those who are fond of an occasional glass of beer or a nip of something stronger—another feature of the action of alcohol must be accounted for before we stop the patient's breathing entirely. Long before the danger point has been reached alcohol reduces the blood pressure. This is not dangerous, but, on the contrary, is rather associated with a rapid circulation and consequent stimulant effect which is so well known in the case of alcohol. This fall of blood pressure may be useful instead of injurious in the case of a feeble heart by lessening the resistance it has to overcome.

The action of alcohol on the heart is quite well shown by means of an electrical instrument which is fitted to the body and so arranged as to make a tracing on a sheet of paper. This tracing shows the force of the main beat of the pulse, of the intermediate or reflex beat, and the length and regularity or irregularity of the interval between the successive pulsations.

Therefore, instead of tending to stop the action of the heart, alcohol, insomuch as it reduces the blood pressure, actually gives the heart freer scope and causes it to

BEAT MORE VIGOROUSLY

and frequently. In a normal case, then, the administration of an anæsthetic, or the swallowing of an alcoholic beverage, is quite harmless. It is hardly necessary to add that this fall of blood pressure is carefully to be distinguished from that which occurs in an overdose, for if the administration of the anæsthetic be pushed too far the blood pressure will fall continuously, and its depression, at first slight and harmless, will finally become so great that the blood will cease to circulate and the animal will die.

This is what is likely to occur when a man becomes afflicted with an alcohol heart. He has taken the drug so freely that all of the functions have begun to collapse, and the anæsthetic no longer acts as a mere stimulant. A few more doses will, when the patient has arrived at this condition, almost always result in death. In the case of a hard drinker the heart action has become impaired and is consequently abnormally liable to the "alcoholic" condition.

Used in moderation, alcohol has no evil effect on the physical constitution. What effect it may have when used even in minute doses on the moral temperament is a totally different matter. But, considered with regard to its effect on the physical constitution, there is a point beyond which a person cannot well go. Beyond that point diluted alcohol becomes a poison.

To regard morals and habits and not money in selecting their associates.

SOMEWHAT CURIOUS.

Divorce is greatly on the increase in England.

A Maine mother has an old slipper, still in use, which has spanked six generations of her family.

There is a man in Missouri whose feet are so large that he has to put his trousers on over his head.

In marching soldiers take seventy-five steps per minute, quick marching 108, and in charging 150 steps.

The telegraph wire used in the United States would go around the world something like fifteen times.

Pennsylvania produces 100,000,000 tons of coal every year—more than half the output of the entire country.

When a snake has gorged itself with a large meal, its skin is so stretched that the scales are some distance apart.

A South Carolina widow became her own mother-in-law recently. That is to say, she is now the wife of her husband's father.

More mountain climbers have been seriously hurt in the Alps this season than ever before in an equal length of time.

A Swiss scientist has been testing the presence of bacteria in the mountain air, and finds that not a single microbe exists above an altitude of 2,000 feet.

A West Virginia man is so peculiarly affected by riding on a train that he has to chain himself to a seat to prevent his jumping out of the car window.

Wheat can be grown in the Alps at an elevation of 3,600 feet; in Brazil, at 5,000; in the Caucasus, at 8,000; in Abyssinia, at 10,000; in Peru and Bolivia at 11,000.

A Minnesota girl of 15 can distinguish no color, everything being white to her, and she is compelled to wear dark glasses to protect her eyes from the glare.

Fruit cools the blood, cleans the teeth and aids digestion. Those who can't eat it miss the benefit of perhaps the most medicinal food on nature's bill of fare.

A Minnesota judge was due in court at town some miles distant. He adjourned a referred case to the car, heard evidence en route and granted the petition before getting off the train.

OVERRUN BY RATS.

An Army of Vermin Takes Possession of the Island of Tropic.

The island of Tropic, twenty miles south of the Florida coast has been invaded by an army of savage rats, and the inhabitants have been forced to flee for their lives. Tropic is three miles long and two mile wide and the soil is very fertile. A dozen families have settled on the island and engaged in growing vegetables for market. George Butler, one of the settlers, tells a thrilling story of the invasion and subjugation of Tropic by the rats. Up to a month ago, according to Mr. Butler, there were no rats on the island. At that time the advanced guard of the rodents arrived, and were quickly followed by others, until in two weeks there were fully 10,000 on the island.

The rats came from the mainland, which was only two miles away, and Mr. Butler affirms that they swam across. He says he has seen them coming out of the water by hundreds. At first the rats contented themselves with attacking the vegetables, which were soon destroyed. Then they invaded the homes of settlers. The latter made war on the rats, killing hundreds of them. Mr. Butler says he has killed as many as 100 at one shot, but others would rush forward and attack him, biting him viciously on the legs.

In spite of the slaughter the rats got into the houses and attacked the women and children. Several of the latter were badly torn by the sharp fangs of the rodents. One baby was so severely bitten about the face that its life is despaired of.

For three nights, Mr. Butler says, not a soul on the island slept, as that would have meant death. At last the people, in terror and worn out, fled in their boats to the mainland, where they are now camped in a destitute condition. Mr. Butler says the rats pursued them to the water's edge, and the women and children were repeatedly bitten before the boats could be pushed off. Every vestige of vegetation had been destroyed. The rats are described as gray in color and monstrous in size being larger than squirrels.

COFFEE AND THE DIGESTION.

Experiments Indicating That Two Favorite Beverages are Injurious.

To inveterate tea and coffee drinkers, says the London Graphic, we would commend the study of some interesting experiments made recently by an eminent German scientist, Prof. Schutzsenstein, who has been investigating the effect on processes of digestion produced by these beverages. For this purpose the Professor prepared an artifical gastric juice and mixed it with coagulated egg albumen, with and without additions of tea and coffee infusions. The results obtained are extremely instructive, for while the gastric juice by itself was able to digest 94 per cent. of the egg albumen in the space of eight hours, when tea was added the proportion digested was reduced to 66 per cent., while, when a decoction of coffee was mixed with the albumen, the gastric fluid was only able to digest 61 per cent., or less than two thirds of the albumen. The digestive power of the gastric juice appears to vary with the strength of the infusion, the disturbing effect being less when the solution of tea and coffee were weakened. The professor is of the opinion that the deleterious effect produced is due to the tannin, which is extracted during the process of making, and not to the presence of thein and caffein, and he mentions that tea, which has not been allowed to stand more than two or three minutes is less injurious, because a smaller quantity of this undesirable ingredient, tannin, has been produced than when it is boiled up or left in contact with the leaves for a considerable length of time. But it should be remembered that the weaker infusions, besides containing less tannin, also contain less of all the poisonous properties contained in the tea leaf and coffee berry, and that it is not only the obnoxious tannin which is thus kept in subjection.

A 900 Year Old City.

It is not every city in Europe that can boast of records extending back 900 years. The goodly burghers of Krems, on the Danube, in Lower Austria, with its quain churches, houses and towers within the pent-up space around which the city moat ran, have, on the strength of a certain document in their archives referring to Kreme as a "stadt," and signed by Emperor Otto III., in the year 995 A.D., been celebrating in royal style the nine hundredth anniversary of the event. The celebrations lasted a whole week, favored with pleasant weather. There were battles of flowers and flower parades, bicyclist processions, fire brigade exhibitions and rifle competitions at the butts. On one evening an ox's carcass was roasted, and on Thursday the climax was reached, when the pageant illustrating the history of the city during the past 900 years moved from the Exercierplatz to march through the various streets. Krems has a population of 10,000 souls, well to do, hospitable people, whose plenteous vineyards, lying all around the city, are profitable sources of income.

Walnut Ice Cream.

The ice cream freezer is a permanent fixture in so many homes that most house wives will be glad to know of choice desertha tis made from frozen cream and walnuts. Crack and pick over enough nuts to make a pint of the meat, then pound them into a paste, and mix with a quart of sweet cream, adding a little at a time. Make a boiled custard from a pint of milk and four eggs, add a cup of sugar when it thickens, then add the cream and walnuts, and freeze. It is a great convenience if a bag of stout burlap or sacking is kept in the house in which to crush ice.

One of the commercial new women has at one of the seashore resorts an electric fan for drying the hair of women bathers and is overrun by customers.

PRACTICAL FARMING.

The Best Food for Pigs.

"While the pig and sheep are the best scavengers and gleaners on our farms, we do not get the best results when we keep them wholly employed as scavengers," says Mr. Bonham. "They can make a living where the horses and cattle would starve. The pig can utilize the waste of the kitchen, the dairy, the garden, the orchard, the barnyard, the feed lot, the grain field, the grove or forest, and will not confine his feeding to what is above ground. His taste and smell and vision are so acute that he can utilize everything he can eat, even to brickbats and waste coal. From this fact we learn the pig's tastes and needs. He is omnivorous, and must have a great variety of food if he is to be kept in perfect health and highest thrift. The nearer we come to securing for him the relished variety, the better he will grow and the less will be the cost per pound of pork, and the more wholesome.

"The fact that the pig has found a place on every farm and around every dairy and mill where there are wastes to be utilized, along with the fact that he has shown wonderful power to adjust himself to his environments, has led to such neglect as to impair his health and to abnormal development. He has even been confined in a narrow pen, to feed and sleep in his own filth, and limited to corn middlings, and yet has paid for the food consumed. Even a hog will die if fed only on sugar or fat, but our pig has lived on a fat-former and made muscle and bone and paid for keep. Because he can and has so long endured semi-starvation in a bed of ease with a trough full of food, his rations have been narrowed and his health and value impaired. It seems hardly necessary to say that middlings is a good food for pigs and for their milk-giving dams, but it is not enough. There are only two complete foods, and they are milk and grass, as nature made them.

"And there is no best food for pigs, where neither of these are part of the pig's daily allowance. I may go further; there is no cheapest food for growing pigs or shoats without grass. Grass and clover are the foundation of healthy and profitable swine husbandry, and without them I doubt if pig raising and feeding can long be conducted successfully. Confining pigs to filthy, uncomfortable pens, and to corn or mill food and kitchen or dairy slops must, from the wide demands of the nature of the animal and the narrowness of the ration, sooner or later produce disease and loss. On the other hand, where these articles of food are supplemented by free range in the grove, clover field and grass lot, and such other variety as the orchard, garden and farm can cheaply supply, to fairly meet the demands of an omnivorous animal, we then have the best pig food, and the healthiest pigs and savory, wholesome pork.

"Until there is a radical reform in the method of raising pigs in filthy pens and barnyards, and limiting them to the narrowest possible ration, without exercise and pure water, fresh air and sunshine, we cannot hope to successfully meet the objections at home and abroad against the American corn fed pork. We can and have raised the best pork in the world, and every farmer should see to it that his herd has the best food to produce the best pork and last pay.

"Middling and corn are valuable, and so essential that on our farms we cannot profitably grow pork without them; yet neither, nor both, can be considered a safe ration. If our pigs can run on a good grass lot or clover field with shade and pure water, we can feed all the corn or middlings the pigs can assimilate with profit.

"The essentials of profitable pig growing are grass and clover. After twenty-five years in the business, I would not try to raise pigs without both, and of the two, blue grass is my preference because it is available so many months in the year. With all the grass or clover a pig will graze, he is always ready to assimilate all the corn, oats and middlings he will eat. Grass is not only a complete ration, but it is a great corrective and distender of the stomach, enabling the pig to better digest the richer food. For the young things we save the milk, which like grass, is not only invaluable alone, but enables the pig to digest a larger per cent. of his grain rations. The best pig feed, then, is all the milk, grass and grain he can eat."

Selecting Seed Potatoes.

Most potato growers delay the selection of seed potatoes for next year's planting longer than they should, says the American Cultivator. It is not enough, as some say, to select the hills in the field as they are dug. The careful farmer will go through the field while the potatoes are still in the most vigorous growth and choose the hills that have the most thrifty appearance. These should be marked by setting a stake beside each of the most thrifty hills and digging these first. As potatoes are never dug until the tops have died down, it is impossible then to know by the vines which held their thrift longest.

Of course, not all of the hill thus first chosen will be left at the finish. The hill that is most thrifty one day may be attacked with blight, and its seed will be worth nothing for planting. But by beginning early and weeding out the hills that fall behind, those that remain will produce seed that has the greatest vitality and will grow the strongest shoots the following season. This cannot be done if the selection is left until the potatoes are ripe. By that time all of the tops will have died and comparative vigor of each cannot be determined. If the best hills and the best seed out of each hill were selected for a series of years, the vigor and prolificacy of the potato crop would be greatly increased.

Besides care in choosing potatoes of vigorous stock, it is important that some regard should be had to the potato itself, its shape, size and position of its eyes. Variety has much to do with this, but there are individual peculiarities, independent of variety, which affect the shape and character of the potato. It is possible to change the shape of a variety to a very considerable extent by careful selection of seed. Each eye of the tuber perpetuates in its growth the characteristics of the parent from which it sprung, modified, it is true, by the circumstances under which the crop is grown. The large, rough-shaped and pronged tubers are generally produced by fertilizing with an excess of nitrogen. These should be avoided in selecting seed. A moderate sized potato of the right shape, a longish oval, will generally produce potatoes that will sell best. Most of the long potatoes begin to run out by growing pointed ends. This tendency to deterioration can be checked by rejecting such specimens when seed is being selected.

An Object Lesson.

The German Emperor has original ideas on many things. He thinks that those of his people who live far away from the coast are at a disadvantage, inasmuch as whatever knowledge they may have of military progress, they cannot but have vague ideas on what is being done in modern naval war tactics. He has had an ingenious model constructed, measuring 13 feet by 22 feet, the upper part of which represents the deck of a great man-of-war, Konig Wilhelm. Everything is complete—the rigging, a siren, a search light, a number of revolving guns, each capable of firing twenty-six shots in succession, flag-signal apparatus, lifeboats, etc. All these are operated by electricity. When a button is pressed the signal lanterns begin to blaze, rockets are sent up, the beam of the search light flashes around and the guns go off. Orders have been given for the construction of sixteen similar battleships for the purpose of giving the inland population some practical ideas of the doings of the navy.

Didn't Order the Carriage.

Little Miss De Fashion—Mamma, my foots hurt.

Mrs. De Fashion—You thoughtless child. You must have been walking on them.

W. H. Ward.

Almost a Hopeless Case.

A Terrible Cough. No Rest Night nor Day. Given up by Doctors.

A LIFE SAVED BY TAKING

AYER'S CHERRY PECTORAL

"Several years ago, I caught a severe cold, attended with a terrible cough that allowed me no rest, either day or night. The doctors, after working over me to the best of their ability, pronounced my case hopeless, and said they could do no more for me. A friend, learning of my trouble, sent me a bottle of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, which I began to take, and very soon I was greatly relieved. By the time I had used the whole bottle, I was completely cured. I have never had much of a cough since that time, and I firmly believe that Ayer's Cherry Pectoral saved my life."—W. H. Ward, 8 Quimby Ave., Lowell, Mass.

Ayer's Cherry Pectoral

HIGHEST AWARDS AT WORLD'S FAIR.

Ayer's Pills the Best Family Physic.

Accommodating Landlord.

A correspondent assures us that he never knew that it was possible for an innkeeper to be too accommodating to his guests until he went down to Nova Scotia recently and put up at a pleasant little hotel in the country. The landlord of this hotel laid it down as one of his principles of action to give people a little more than they asked for—to be "extra accommodating," as he termed it.

The landlord brilliantly illustrated his adherence to this principle the very morning after our correspondent's arrival at the hotel. The guest had to go away on the seven o'clock train that morning, and asked the proprietor to call him at six. The guest went to sleep in the calm assurance that he should be aroused at the proper hour.

He seemed hardly to have fallen into a sound sleep when he heard a terrific pounding at his door. He sprang up, wide awake.

"What's the matter?" he called out.

"Four o'clock! Four o'clock!" came the landlord's voice from the other side of the door; "we haveours more to sleep!"

It is needless to say that the guest slept no more that morning. The landlord's anxiety to be "extra accommodating" failed of its mark that time.

Impudent Professionals.

Mrs. Squills—The doctor has sent in that bill again; it's the fourth or fifth time, too. I really believe he wants us to pay it.

Mr. Squills—Well, I'd be durned! Such impudence! Nex' thing the preacher will be wantin' pay, too.

Adolph Sutro, mayor of San Franscisco, has offered to the California State University thirteen acres of land on which to put up buildings for the university.

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Certain in its effects and never blisters. Read proofs below:

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Yours truly, Chas. Powell.

KENDALL'S SPAVIN CURE.

Canton, Mo., Apr. 3, '93.
Dr. B. J. Kendall Co.
Dear Sirs—I have used several bottles of your "Kendall's Spavin Cure" with much success. I think it the best Liniment I ever used. *Have recovered one Curb, one Blood Spavin and killed two Bone Spavins.* Have recommended it to several of my friends who are much pleased with it and keep it. Respectfully,
S. R. Ray, P. O. Box 248.

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PRICE 25 CENTS AT DRUG STORES.

An Essay on Man.

Man that is borne of a woman is small potatoes and a few in a hill. He rises up to-day and flourishes like a weed, and to-morrow or the next day, the undertaker hath him. He goeth forth in the morning warbling like a lark, and is knocked out in one round and two seconds.

In the middle of life he is in debt, and the tax collector pursues him wherever he goeth. The banister of life is full of splinters, and he slideth down with considerable rapidity. He walketh forth in the bright sunlight to absorb ozone, and meeteth the bank teller with a sight draft for $357.

He cometh home at eventide and meeteth the wheel barrow in his path. It riseth up and smiteth him to the earth, and falleth upon him, and runneth one of its legs into his ear.

In the gentle spring time he putteth on his summer clothes and a blizzard stricketh him afar from home and filleth him with cuss words and rheumatism. In the winter he putteth on winter trousers, and a wasp that abideth therein createth excitement. He starteth down into the cellar with an oleander and goeth backward, and the oleander cometh after and sitteth upon him.

He buyeth a watch dog, and when he cometh home from the lodge the watch dog treeth him and sitteth near until rosy morn. He goeth to the horse trot and betteth his money on the brown mare, and the bay gelding with a blaze face winneth.

He marrieth a red headed heiress with a wart on her nose, and the next day the parental ancestor goeth under with a bump and after a brief sojourn in the gaol cometh home to live with his beloved son-in-law.

BRITISH SHIPS THE BEST.

WHAT A STUDY OF LLYOD'S STATISTICS SHOWS.

Certain Facts That Should Gladden the Hearts of Britons—Steamships Making Passages and With a Regularity Bordering on the Marvellous—Each Year Shows a Decrease in Loss of Life on Vessels Belonging to the United Kingdom.

The statistical summary of shipping losses during 1894 issued by Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping sets forth certain facts that should gladden the hearts of shipowners, and all those who go down to the sea in ships under the British flag, whether as crews or passengers, says the Liverpool Journal of Commerce. Still, these interesting comparisons of losses and casualties can express only a tithe of the superiority which our sailing ships and steamers have over foreign vessels in the matter of safety. For example the United Kingdom shows the smallest percentage of loss, 28 per 1,000 of the vessels owned, compared with France 39 per 1,000, and Norway 64 per 1,000. Roughly speaking, then, so far as this compilation goes, Norway has a little more than double the percentage of losses that the United Kingdom has. Actually, if some system of weighting were introduced for the higher rate of speed attained by British ships as compared with those of Norway, the results would be much more decidedly in favour of our ships. Norway has not a single ship like the Campania, the Majestic, the Scot, the Caledonia, and similar steamships making passage after passage at a speed, and with a regularity bordering on the marvellous. Such splendid specimens of naval architecture run every risk from collision, or from stranding that can possibly be imagined, almost without accident of any kind. Yet, with ships as with men, it is the pace that kills. Hence the good monthly boats under foreign flags ought to show a smaller percentage of loss, cæteris paribus, than the leviathans whose passages are reckoned to

THE NEAREST SECOND

under the British flag. A north country shipowner not long since said that foreigners can sail their vessels and navigate them as safely as Englishmen, and do not have more losses than the English. Statistics are altogether opposed to this view, which is a discreditable reflection upon the ships and their navigators under the British flag. The more favorable percentage obtained by our merchant navy is not altogether to be attributed to better education or better seamanship. Our carrying craft as a general rule, to which every year there are fewer exceptions, are much more fit for their work than a large majority of the Norwegian woollen vessels. Moreover, they frequently carry larger crews than the foreigner. It is just possible that the superior education of the Norwegian officer and seaman prevents an even more unfavorable comparison for ships of their fatherland. This inference seems borne out by the fact that of the merchant navies having a total tonnage of over a million, the United Kingdom, the British colonies, the United States of America, France, Germany and Norway, as regards steamers, the average percentage of loss for the six countries is 2.3, whereas the percentage for the United Kingdom stands at 2.33. Hence, given better ships, apparently the higher education stands a better chance of coming to the front. For sailing vessels the six countries gave an average percentage of 5.5 against 39, for the United Kingdom. Inquiries into

THE FATE OF MISSING SHIPS

are seldom worth the trouble taken with them. The principal witnesses are full fathoms five, and all else is conjecture. Those who believe that loss of life at sea is on the increase will not find it an easy matter to account for the persistent decrease from year to year of the vessels belonging to the United Kingdom which are abandoned, are missing, or founder. In 1891 such vessels were shown as 62, in 1892 as 68, in 1893 as 62, and in 1894 as only 47. There is decidedly room for congratulation under this head. Strandings are, as ought to be expected, the most prolific source of shipping casualty. Fog shuts down when near the land, a master waits till the watch is about to be relieved and all hands on deck before taking a cast of the lead, and the ship goes ashore. Or perchance the master has left port provided only with a general chart of most intricate passages where too refined detail would be impossible. He either allows too much for the sea surface, or not enough; or he may allow exactly what is laid down on the chart, based on insufficient information, only to find his vessel piled up and the current running by her in just the opposite direction to that which the current chart led him to make the allowance he did. Shipmasters condemned by a court of enquiry for neglect of currents should take care to find out whether the nautical assessors always have the latest and most reliable information before them. No less than forty-two per cent. of the casualties to steamers, and 48 of sailing vessels, are attributable to stranding. In the days to come this should increase, even though the absolute number of casualties decrease. Ships must of necessity become safer as the knowledge of

FLOATING STRUCTURES

is more extended, but accidents cannot possibly be provided against altogether. Coral reefs are growing continually in some parts of the ocean, solitary rocks crop up in the Red sea and elsewhere not far from the tracks passed over by hundreds of fine ships, weather forecasting has not yet arrived at a state of perfection in any part of the world so that the shipmaster may put to sea confident of clear weather, and stranding will always form a considerable percentage of the disasters to ships. Steamers and sailing vessels carrying badly stowed cargoes of grain in bulk are always liable to a short shrift, and apparently the courts of inquiry are not always capable of determining right off a ship's stability, having given precisely similar information to that supplied the shipmaster. Collision again is another frequent source of disaster for the steamships. Much has been written to warn the navigator of the risk attending an attempt to manœuvre in a thick fog by locating a sound signal. Too often the action resolved upon precipitates the very collision it was adopted to avert. Time is so short for decision even in clear weather that the officer of the deck needs to have all his wits about him, and be always well in evidence on a steamer's bridge. Taking everything into consideration this summary of losses for 1894 clearly shows, if any evidence were wanting to that effect, that there are not any ships of the world's merchant navies so safe as those belonging to the United Kingdom.

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