

# The Most Dangerous Thing in the World

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What is the most dangerous thing in the world?

If you happen to be visiting in New York, nine chances in ten you will say dynamite or aeroplane. If you are a manufacturer or mill man you will say buzzsaw or flywheel. If you are familiar with insurance matters you will say the bit of fruit skin on the sidewalk or the falling brick. If you are a farmer you will say grade crossing. If you are a woman of the home loving type you will say pistol or snake or sailboat. If you are an observant business woman you will say the revolving door or slippery pavement or, frankly, the surreptitious dinner. If you are a physician you will say the public drinking cup or the corn razor. If you are an old lady you will say the automobile in the hands of the joy rider. If you are an old gentleman you will say the loose rug on the parquet floor.

And you are all wrong. You might just as well have said picnic friendship, or a flyer in Wall street, or the bunny hug dance, or the Black Hand, or—widows. The most dangerous thing in the world is a ladder.

## The Slippery Ladder is the Direct Cause of 200,000 Accidents and 6,000 Deaths Annually in the United States. Devices to Make It Reasonably Safe.

But it takes years to get a national start toward accident prevention, especially where accidents are regarded as quite unimportant. It takes a good many years to educate workmen and employers to see the truths of their mutual relationship. Our American people are stupidly slow in encouraging and supporting disinterested efforts for their own protection and betterment.

### Designs of Safety Ladders.

All the world except America knows that dangerous things ought to be painted bright red, and has done so. If that idea becomes general here, as it should, Marx will think we are suffering from a national hemorrhage for we have something like five million ladders in this country which ought to be labeled dangerous with the fiery color. That's the first step in sterilizing a ladder.

Most of the ladder accidents come from slipping feet; so the safety experts have devised feet which will not slip. One shown at the Museum of Safety is a copy of the German idea, having base-wood shoes to create friction, fastened on the feet of the ladder. Where the ladder is to be used on concrete or cement floors a friction sole of slag is substituted for the wood sole. This ladder is so safe from slipping that photographs of it are shown in which it is slanted at an angle of ninety degrees with a man at the top rung. The only criticism of it is that the attachment of the shoes may cause increase of lateral shakiness.

Two other excellent patterns of safety ladders are in use abroad. One has a shoe into the bottom of which are set small spikes, and the other has a rubber disc set into the shoe. But here again the criticism of a tendency to cause shakiness at the foot of the ladder is made by the inventive Yankee. Clever patterns of safety ladders are welcomed by the Museum of Safety, and there is reason to believe that such an invention would make one of the biggest commercial successes of history.

There are something like two patents a day registered at the Patent Office in Washington, having to do with ladders, and the most inventive people of the world ought not to have to import safety devices.

A very simple and thoroughly effective method of making almost any ladder reasonably safe from slipping is to cut a section of rubber hose into short lengths and securely fasten these pieces "lengthwise" over the full area of the feet of the ladder. Such a device will not scratch even the finest floor, and is probably the cheapest insurance so far discovered by man.

For outdoor use, similar pieces of heavy cloth or a section of the spiked metal known as "cut teasers" are excellent. It is a good plan to cover the upper ends of the ladder with sections of rubber hose, too, for a great proportion of the accidents caused by ladders are due to the slipping of the top of the ladder where it has leaned against some support. And all ladders used out of doors, or for safety emergency purpose, or for access to garrets or roofs, ought to be equipped with hooks at the top.



What after the fashion of the fireman's scaling iron. The man who makes a wide-base Eiffel tower sort of ladder, with feet that will not slip and that has no chance to become wobbly in the feet, and fitted with non-slipping top and hooks that can be used or folded out of the way, will do more to prevent pain and suffering and death than all the fortunes lavished on peace conferences and Hague missions.

At least paint a bright red dab on the ladder. It is one of the few things brought down from the ancients which civilization has entirely failed to civilize.

Paying the Penalty. The subject of indemnity, accident insurance and responsibility looms large in the story of the ladder. Nowhere in the world is human life and property valued as highly as it is in the United States.

Metal Feet with Blocks of Soft Rubber, an Austrian Safety Device.

Life is no more as sacred as it is here. We hold world's records for financial valuations of human life, of an eye or a hand or a finger. Thus it is that we pay more than any other nation of the world when the court upholds the claim of the injured for damages. Other wiser nations long ago learned the superior advantage and larger justice of compulsory insurance with which to meet the as full bill which accidents create.

Prevention of a benefaction; compensation an apology! is the splendid sentence of Dr. W. H. Tolman, of the Museum of Safety, which fairly sums up the broader view now being taken by progressive economists everywhere.

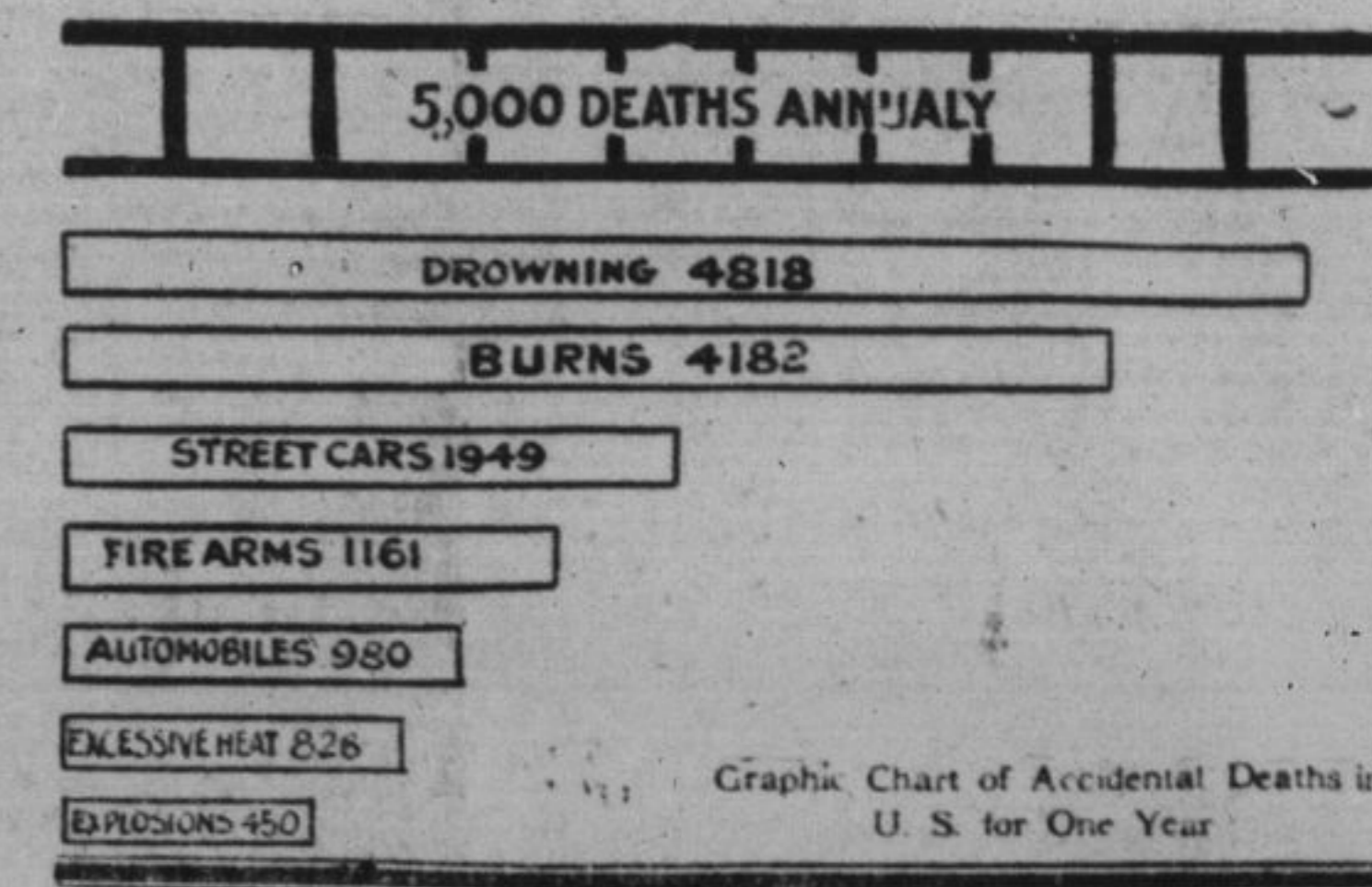
Gladstone said it was the function of government to make it hard to do wrong and easy to do right. It is the function of honorable business to make it hard to get hurt and easy to be safe. Lord Herschell recently epitomized the situation when he said, in the British Parliament that the employer was bound in common law to carry on his business so as not to expose workmen to unreasonable risks. The Code Napoleon, that wonderfully omniscient national statement of personal rights, said just about the same thing long before.

Courts of appeal, the world over, are

Ingenious Practical Safety Shoe for Ladder Feet German Origin. A Heavy Rubber Ring, Set in Wooden Shoe, Has the Advantage of Section as Well as Friction.

Get an Safety Device for Feet of Ladder, Wooden Shoe with Flat, Smooth Wood-sole. Creating Great Friction.

German Safety Device for Feet of Ladder, but Having Less Friction Than Rubber or Base-wood Shoe.



struggling with the meaning of the word accident. And their decisions mean much to every householder as well as to every employer of labor. In March, 1910, the House of Lords of England decided that a workman tightening up an ordinary nut with an ordinary wrench, from which exertion he ruptured a blood vessel, could recover damages or compensation, even although it was shown that he was a sufferer from a heart affection. The Court of Appeals in New York State has decided that personal injury by accident may result from mere fright or shock received in the course of employment. Employers are even held to be liable for an infection from materials handled in the ordinary course of employment. The ladder, then, may be and probably has been one of the most expensive and controversial things which the administration of law ever has discovered. It ought to be muzzled and sterilized, and chained to the useful laddering of man, not, to

charged to the account of the ladder. This class makes alone estimate that the loss occasioned by ladders breaking glass windows is more than \$5,000,000 annually.

But while we do estimating Germany states facts. She keeps records of superb accuracy and inestimable value. In 1910, for instance, she has accurate record of 28,310 accidents, fatal and non-fatal, caused by ladders in agriculture, forestry and fishing pursuits. She can't risk the world with graphic charts where every accident has a story, and it is from her mass of splendid records that the careful estimates are made for countries whose records are meagre. Germany has a wonderful chart of one year's accidents chargeable to the ladder on farms alone. It shows 14,945 men injured and 632 killed by falling from ladders in hay mows during the twelve months. It shows that ladders lead all other causes of accident in agricultural pursuits. Just here, incidentally, it may be stated that agriculture is far from being the safe thing it has been credited with being. Farming is to-day one of the most dangerous occupations in the world. The American farmer, of whom there are something more than 10,400,000, is much more liable to accidents than his German cousin, for he is often a pioneer clearing the forests, building houses and cellars, doing mason work and carpentering and roofing and odd jobs of all kinds. France, Austria, Great Britain and Australia tell much the same story concerning the ladder, but, as usual, the figures in America lead the world.

### Yankees Lead in Accidents.

Wherever there is a competitive showing the American always gets close to the top, whether it be deaths by ladders or pie-eating. The American beats the world for accidents. We have anywhere from two to ten times as many as any other civilized country on the globe, and the ratio is increasing so fast that the statisticians almost doubt the accuracy of their own proven figures.

We have in the United States twice as many accidents, proportionately to the population, as occurs in Great Britain, in almost every line of occupation. On our railroads we kill three times as many and injure five times as many as Great Britain. We kill two and one-half times as many and injure five times as many as Germany. We kill three times as many and injure five times as many as Austria-Hungary. And we are proud of it, instead of being ashamed of it.

We are the most utterly reckless people history has ever produced. We don't danger, laugh at death, throw dice with fate, and stake our destinies on a turn of the wheel, both privately and nationally. A skyscraper ironworker has been seen to stop in the middle of a girder twelve inches wide, with nothing under him nearer than Broadway, three hundred feet below, pose on one foot, lift the other, and calmly strike a match on the sole of his shoe as he stood there balanced on one foot. Any window cleaner will lean his heavy ladder against the middle of a big plate of glass in a Broadway store front and go thumping his heavy sash up the sash incline.

Now the fact is that most of these ladder accidents are unnecessary. Fifty per cent prevention and fifty per cent carelessness would almost bring the ladder back into decent repute. Statistical geniuses like Professor Irving Fisher, of Yale, say that of the three billion dollars annually lost to the United States through accidents, sickness and death, one-half is preventable. German statisticians, after a searching investigation of 15,970 accidents, reported that fifty-three per cent were avoidable. In many lines of industry in the United States it is a conservative estimate to say that we could reduce the accidents and the economic loss which they entail, seventy-five per cent.

The economic loss occasioned by accidents for which the ladder is directly responsible almost passes belief. Mr. Frederick L. Hoffman, probably the leading life insurance statistician of the United States, estimates that the net economic gain to society from the life of a male wage-earner in the mechanical or manufacturing industries averages \$200 per year, his normal period of individual activity extending from fifteen to sixty-five. On the basis which Mr. Hoffman approves, but reducing the value of the individual one-third, he has \$20,000,000 as the annual economic loss in the United States occasioned by fatalities. But there must be added to this the loss through non-fatal accidents, in which the economic non-productivity of the man, as well as the cost of maintaining him during the period of convalescence, reach a total of something over \$20,000,000. No account is here made of the economic loss which inevitably accompanies work done by men who are recovering from illness and injury. Millions of men return to work before they are able to do that work justly.

Professor Seager, of Columbia University, one of the leading statisticians in such matters, estimates that the annual economic loss to this country due to fatal and non-fatal accidents is \$250,000,000. Of

## What the Doctors Say About Raynaud's Disease--Facts Concerning the Treatment of Chicken Pox

RAYNAUD'S disease is a strange affection which was more particularly studied by Dr. Raynaud, of Paris, in 1862. It is characterized by a symmetrical and successive mortification of the extremities—the fingers, the toes and sometimes the ears and the nose.

This disease, which is observed principally in adults of from eighteen to thirty years, often occurs at the age of forty and even at sixty-five and seventy. Raynaud's disease, which is the name usually given to the affection, is known to all doctors and presents three periods in its evolution.

The first period, which is generally incipient, lasts from a few days to a month, and is characterized by paleness and insensibility of the skin. The patient experiences a feeling of tingling and a sensation of "dead finger" analogous to what is felt after great cold. Thus the frequent chilblains of which people complain are often not true chilblains, but merely the small accident connected with this disease.

At other times the ends of the fingers become livid instead of remaining pale; there is a venous stasis; a veritable local asphyxia occurs, and by this name of "local asphyxia" Raynaud's disease is also indicated. The parts affected are symmetrical. On the thermometer they show a fall of temperature of from 15 degrees to

18 degrees centigrade. These accidents at first occur by attacks, then the intermittence disappears and the troubles become continuous.

In the second period the tingling experienced at first give place to acute pains, and the affected parts assume a vivid violet tint. The mortification is sometimes preceded by the formation of vesicles which burst, leaving an ulceration. The mortification is generally superficial and very limited, not extending deeper than the superficial layer of the skin, and the nails do not always fall. But there are cases in which the entire phalange is attacked and the mortified parts become as black as coal. This second period lasts for ten days and even more.

The elimination of the parts affected and the cicatrization belong to the third period, this is an operation which lasts for several months. When the mortification has been very superficial, the end of the fingers becomes the seat of whitish, parchmentlike scars. The ends of the fingers assume a conical and pointed form. In more serious cases an inflammatory furrow forms at the base of the mortified part and is the seat of a suppuration which favors the fall of the part affected.

In a few exceptional cases the lesion is not limited to the extremity of the fingers and the toes. It also attacks the ears and the end of the nose.

Though the manner in which Raynaud's

disease evolves is well known, the causes which produce it are far from certain. Anatomically it is due to a contracting of the small arteries which irrigate the extremities, and this contraction, it is thought, is provoked by a tetanic state of the nervous system which commands the nutrition and the sympathetic nerve.

But and what influence is this tetanic state? To this question there is no precise reply. All that one can say is the impudens, leprosy, pericarditis, diabetes and tuberculosis have been given as the causes of Raynaud's disease, or of local asphyxia of the extremities, as it is often called.

There is another cause which is often brought into question, but about which perhaps not enough has been said; this is ergotism. And this cause was very marked in a patient, a judge, sixty-two years of age, whom I had under treatment. The extremities of his fingers and toes became detached symmetrically after presenting the different phases of evolution which I have described. I was greatly perplexed, but ended by learning that this patient had for a number of years used rye bread exclusively, and I have every reason to believe that this bread was made with flour damaged by ergot.

It is far from my thoughts to entertain the belief that ergotism is the only cause, or even the most important factor, in the

production of Raynaud's disease. Nevertheless, in the circumstances I have pointed out, the blame was to be laid on ergotism.

The general treatment of the disease should aim at suppressing in the diet all substances liable to become transformed in the organism into products likely to provoke the tetanization of the sympathetic nerve, and consequently cause the contraction of the small arteries. One ought, therefore, to diminish the amount of animal food, and particularly of meat, in favor of vegetable alimentation, insisting upon green vegetables and cooked fruits.

Before each repast it will be well to take a pill composed of five centigrammes of bicarbonate of lime, of one centigramme of ergotine and of extract of cinchona, in a sufficient quantity to make a pill. To these tonic substances the ergotine will add its action of dilating the vessels when taken in small doses.

These pills should be taken for a week and then should be changed for another—ten drops of tincture of Richey's glands in a little water, to be taken at meals.

This tincture at the same time acts as an aperative and dilates the vessels.

AS is usual at this period of the year, chicken pox or varicella is now prevalent in places where children are numerous. Although this is essentially a benign disease, yet it is eminently contagious. In boarding schools particularly, doctors must redouble their vigilance and take care to segregate for a period of from twelve to fifteen days all the young patients in the establishments committed to their charge. Their task in these circumstances is rendered all the more difficult by the fact that chicken pox often appears without any very noticeable symptoms. Very often it is accompanied by fever, and many affected by it are surprised that because of a few pimples scattered here and there over the body they must be kept apart from their fellows.

Chicken pox is an affection almost entirely peculiar to children, in whom it may be observed from their first year, although it is especially frequent from the ages of two to six. It appears often in the epidemic form and spreads by contagion.

Some doctors are inclined to regard varicella as a very attenuated form of smallpox, hence the name "chicken pox," by which it is popularly known. This opinion is based merely on the analogy between the two types of skin eruptions and the coincidence sometimes observed between two epidemics of smallpox and chicken pox. But the theory falls on considering that on the one hand chicken pox offers no safeguard against infection by smallpox and does not prevent the effects of vaccination, and, on the other

hand, the disease may occur in children who have been vaccinated or who have had smallpox. Chicken pox, too, differs essentially from smallpox in the course of its development.

After a period of incubation extending over a fortnight chicken pox becomes apparent by such symptoms as slight shivering, extreme fatigue and a general but not very intense condition of fever. In less than twenty-four hours small pink spots will appear on the skin, and these after a few hours are topped by a vesicle, and the next day the whole rash shows a vesicular appearance.

The vesicles are sometimes small and pointed, sometimes more voluminous and globular in form; they may attain several millimetres in diameter. They are filled with a limpid or a slightly yellowish liquid. Their base is sometimes surrounded by an inflammatory ring. By the third day the contents of the vesicle has become thicker and tends to become purulent. On the fourth day desiccation commences, and the vesicles shrivel and shrink in and form small, brownish scabs, which fall about the eighth day. Frequently the child will scratch them off with the finger nails before they are entirely desiccated. The vesicles leave small reddish spots, which gradually disappear gradually, almost always without leaving a scar.

An eruption of chicken pox does not burst out all over the body at once, but

appears in successive rashes. It is not confined to any special parts of the body. It may begin and spread at the same time from the face, the trunk of the body or the limbs. A dozen pimples may be seen the first day, while three or even ten times as many may be visible the next day, and so on for several days in succession.

If the intestines are sluggish they may be stimulated by administering a few grams of castor oil. It is advisable to make the patient rinse his mouth two or three times a day with a dentifrice, to which may be added a whole or half a teaspoonful of oxygenated water at twelve volumes. It is also well to apply a lotion around the eyes and the face, consisting of 2 per cent. boric acid water with the chill taken off. Finally, in order to prevent the child scratching the sores, and the consequent danger of inoculation by the finger nails, it is a good practice to rub a small amount of vaseline over the itching parts and to sprinkle them with a soothing powder, composed, for instance, of 90 grams of starch powder, 15 grams of zinc oxide powder and 2 grams of powdered camphor, the whole performed with two or three drops of essence of vanilla.

The child, of course, should not be allowed to rejoin his playmates without having had a good bath, and his clothes must have been completely disinfected.