

INTER-MOUNTAIN PRESS  
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**FOREST FIRES**—The lesson which the fires taught is plain and simple. It is simply this—that extreme caution is necessary on the part of every one who goes into the woods these days, even for a pleasure jaunt. The destruction of millions of feet of valuable standing timber has followed a bit of carelessness in leaving camp-fires smouldering or in tossing a match or a cigar into the dry undergrowth of the forest. Year after year, instructions have been given and caution has been urged, but it is known that many of the fires this summer have been started in this neglectful way. The pall of smoke which hangs over western Montana, distressing evidence of fearful inroads into our wealth of standing timber, has been a stern reminder of the danger which lies in carelessness with fire these dry days. The carelessness may be on the part of a camper or it may be the act of a great railway in not protecting its right of way; whichever it is, the appalling loss, resultant from the carelessness, calls for punishment where the offender is known and can be reached. But, by the same token, there should be caution used in assigning the cause of these fires unless there is proof positive. Some of the fires have resulted from natural causes; but enough of them have been started by carelessness to make the necessity for extreme caution very clear.