

DEWEY ARCH COLUMN ABLAZE.

Fire Interrupted Rescue Army Meeting,
but Was Soon Extinguished.

An open-air meeting of the American Rescue Army was in progress yesterday afternoon at the corner of Twenty-fifth Street and Fifth Avenue when the lecturer, Chaplain Frederick Rotzler, noticed an unwonted craning of necks to the eastward. He had been making appeals to the crowd about contributing 15 cents each, which would send some of the park "benchers" to a lodging house.

"We have sheltered," he said, "in fifty-seven months 19,710 men at 15 cents a bed. Some of you people hereabout may be situated one day just as these men here are."

His gesture indicated a circle of some twenty poorly clad men grouped with him about the lamppost upon which the fire alarm box is set.

"You people—" he continued, but every neck in the crowd was set at a sharp right angle to its owner's body. The chaplain's eyes sought the direction indicated by the craning necks. Out of one of the columns forming the approach to the Dewey Arch a cloud of flame and smoke was issuing, which lapped greedily at the wings of the figure of Victory.

"Under the circumstances," continued the lecturer, "we'll adjourn the meeting, and if my friend on the right will send in the alarm we'll give place to the fire engines."

The man on the right stepped to the centre of the circle and pulled the handle, while the crowd of bed seekers, reinforced by the family parties from Madison Square Park across the way, gathered around the pillar of flame.

Within a few minutes seven pieces of fire apparatus had answered the call. From an engine drawn up on the spot occupied a moment before by the bed seekers a hose was run to the column, while firemen's axes made larger the openings begun by souvenir seekers. Twenty minutes' drenching drove out the fire that had sapped the inner framework of wood.

Then while park cleaners carefully gathered up the chunks of mortar loosened by the firemen the bed seekers circled once again about their lamppost, and the chaplain renewed his appeals on their behalf.