

ing a preacher's house when he died. His death was a severe blow to the work. The school is now closed, and when I reached the place I found his wives in great trouble. His brother, his heir, had come from Natal to claim them as 'his' wives and to take them back to heathenism. They resisted, but he had brought a witch doctor to 'doctor' them, so that they would consent. The women summoned the man before me. The man was terribly angry. 'You are my goods, my things. You are the property of my father who bought you, and I have inherited you, and what right have you to refuse to let me do what I want to with my own?' The women ask God's people to pray for them and their children.

The next day Plant, the preacher, and I go down the valley to Daniel, the Msutu's kraal. This is a man of great influence in the region. He is the chief counsellor of Ihashi, the chief of the region. As a boy he came from Basutoiland, and was for a time at a mission station in Maritzburg. Leaving there he wandered to this place. He has four wives, a large kraal, and evidently goes into all heathen practices. How different his history from that of this good man, Plant. But he is coming under Plant's influence, and has a desire for better things for himself and his family. Our talk is turned to Christian things, and some good straight talk is given. We then go home over the beautiful hills. On the next day I start for home, and find it easier riding a bicycle down hill than up.

Two things impressed me deeply on my visit. First, the fact so vividly demonstrated here that the truth keeps its grip on the Zulus when their environments would all tend to cause them to revert back to heathenism. Second, that they have the power of initiative in Christian service. This power, with the Spirit of God to quicken it, means much for Africa.

### Christ and Charity.

We would urge opponents of Christianity to consider for a few moments what the condition of our large cities would be without those noble organizations for the relief of want and suffering which are the direct fruit of the teachings and influence of the Divine Redeemer. Even many Christians have but a limited knowledge of what some of those institutions do to reduce the sum of back-street misery. Mr. Sydney Holland, the Chairman of the London Hospital, Whitechapel, recently stated that last year 13,160 in-patients, and 162,147 out-patients, and 3,500 children were treated, the expenditure being £300 a day, or £12 10s. per minute. He added: 'If the people were placed in a line, and a man started on his bicycle at a quarter past three to go along that line, he would not get past them until a quarter past nine; sixty-six miles of people standing closely side by side.'

Those who sneer at the Christian faith may reasonably be asked, What would have been the lot of that huge army of suffering men, women and children if it had not been for that practical obedience to the commands of Christ which underlies so large a proportion of modern philanthropy?—'The Christian.'

### The Chicago Theatre Fire.

('Northwestern Christian Advocate.')

In October, 1871, the city of Chicago was the scene of the most widespread and, so far as the loss of property was concerned, the most destructive fire in the history of America. On Wednesday afternoon, Dec. 30, the same city was the scene of the most destructive fire, so far as the loss of life is concerned, in the history of America. The first fire swept over several miles of territory, consuming thousands of buildings as if they were paper and destroying, perhaps, 200 lives. The last fire was confined to the interior of a building not more than fifty yards square, and the flames and smoke were unseen beyond the walls. Yet in that small compass perished nearly six hundred human beings, and three hundred others were injured, many so seriously that they will die.

This dreadful horror resulted from the burning of the Iroquois theatre during a performance of the play 'Mr. Blue Beard.' The nature of the play and the fact that the new Iroquois theatre, which had cost about \$2,000,000, was described as the finest structure of the kind in the country, had made the play a sort of 'fad' of the day. The 'children's holiday matinee' for Wednesday afternoon had been extensively advertised and parents were urged to bring the children. The place was thronged with women and children from Chicago and near-by cities, standing room even in the third or highest gallery being all taken. Among the features of the play were representations of fairies. While one of these was to appear to fly through the air, all the lights in the theatre were turned out, while the bright rays from an arc light gave the effect of a moonlight scene. Suddenly the flimsy hangings over the stage were seen to be ablaze. An effort was made to lower the asbestos curtain, but it was unsuccessful. The entire auditorium was soon ablaze. The upper part of the building was filled with gas, which ignited, consuming the oxygen in the air, and in all probability instantly suffocated many in the second and third galleries before they were able to leave their seats and thus saved them from the agony of a death by fire. Panic seized the audience, and a rush was made for the exits. There were said to be more than twenty of these, but nearly all were locked or fastened. In the rush for the narrow exits at the front and rear some stumbled and fell and others piled on top of them, until it is said that in some parts of the building the rescuers found the bodies six and eight deep. Men, women and children climbed over the heads of tangled masses of people, and thus escaped. Of the audience scarcely one-half escaped alive or uninjured. Several entire families perished, while of others the mother and all the children were killed. Such a calamity this country has never before known. In almost an instant a number of human beings representing a town of a thousand inhabitants was taken out of life. Thousands mourn the loss of loved ones and scarcely a household but has lost a friend. This is especially true of the school-children of Chicago and its suburbs, one or more of whose teachers (34 of whom were killed), companions or acquaintances are among the victims.

In striking contrast with the cowardice and incompetency of the employes of the theatre was the courage and presence of mind of a number of children. Among these were two little boys of ten or twelve years of age, who, when they saw there was no chance of escape with the crowd, got down on the floor and, the space being too shallow to crawl on their hands and knees, wriggled their way under the seats to an opening and got out. Never have those heroic servants of the public, the firemen and policemen, displayed greater courage and faithfulness to their trust than in their efforts to rescue the living and remove the dead. Many lives were saved at the risk of their own. Many citizens, among them Bishop Fallows, entered the burning building and assisted in the work of rescue. Among those who deserve praise was a little unknown news-boy, who, after helping a little girl, from whose body nearly all the clothing had been torn in the mad scramble, gallantly took off his overcoat and wrapped it all around her. Physicians and nurses were prompt and tireless in their service.

One of the most wonderful acts of heroism was that of a little boy fourteen years of age, Byram Green, son of A. W. Green, chairman of the board of directors of the National Biscuit Company. Little Byram first guided his mother's party to safety through the struggling throng of frenzied people fighting fiercely in the aisles, and then, though half-suffocated and dazed by the merciless buffeting in the crowd, he fought his way back through flame and smoke and deadly gas and carried and dragged to safety a helpless little girl who was in his mother's party. 'I was not brave,' he said, to a reporter of the 'Inter Ocean,' 'I was scared to death. I had to help mamma. I was not able to do much, but I stayed near her. I saw Lester fall under the seat when the flames came out. I knew she would die unless someone helped her. So I went back. Oh, it was awful! I shut my eyes and tried not to breathe, for the air seemed to be on fire and burned my throat. I stepped over a lot of people who were dead, I think. The seats were on fire, and when I caught hold to keep from falling I burned my hands. In front of me everything seemed to be blazing, and I was afraid it would get to where we had been sitting before I could get there. I wanted to turn back and run away from it, but I could see little Lester lying under the seat and I could not leave her there. I fell over something, I think it was a woman. She did not move, and I was scared. I could not breathe. I looked around. All I could see were the backs of the people fighting like mad at the doors. The flames seemed to be everywhere, and when I saw where I was I got sick. Then I reached Lester. I remember dragging her up the aisle. Through the smoke I saw a door where the crowd was not very big. We got through between the seats. They were hot and burned us. I fell down when we got outside and felt glad. Oh, how glad I was!' This brave boy was himself terribly burned.

Friday was to Chicago the saddest New Year's day in American history. Sorrow, like a pall, rested over the city. A smile was rarely seen upon the face of adult or child. The anguish of those who had lost loved ones and had recovered their bodies, terrible as that anguish was, did