

'What have you been doing there?'

'Trying to find a decent job,' said Burke.

'Have you kept a good grip on the religion you told me about?' inquired the sheriff.

'Yes,' answered Burke, looking him steadily in the eye. 'I've had a hard time, sheriff, but I haven't lost my religion.'

It was then the tide began to turn.

'Burke,' said the sheriff, 'I have had you shadowed every day you were in New York. I suspected that your religion was a fraud. But I want to say to you that I know you've lived an honest Christian life, and I have sent for you to offer you a deputyship under me. You can begin at once.'

He began. He set his face like a flint. Steadily, and with dogged faithfulness, the old burglar went about his duties until men high in business began to tip their hats to him, and to talk to him at their clubs. Moody was passing through the city and stopped off an hour to meet Burke, who loved nobody as he did the man who converted him. Moody told how he found him in a close room upstairs in the court-house serving as trusted guard over a bag of diamonds. Burke sat with a sack of the gems in his lap and a gun on the table. There were \$60,000 worth of diamonds in the sack.

'Moody,' he said, 'see what the grace of God can do for a burglar. Look at this! The sheriff picked me out of his force to guard it.'

Then he cried like a child as he held up the glittering stones for Moody to see. Years afterward the churches of St. Louis had made ready and were waiting for the coming of an evangelist who was to lead the meeting, but something happened and he did not come. The pastors were in sore trouble, until one of them suggested that they send for Valentine Burke to lead the meetings for them. Burke led night after night, and many hard men of the city came to hear him, and many hearts were turned, as Burke's had been, from lives of crime and shame to clean Christian living. There is no more beautiful or pathetic story than that of Burke's gentle and faithful life and service in the city where he had been chief of sinners. How long he lived I do not recall, but Moody told me of his funeral, and how the rich and the poor, the saints and the sinners, came to it; and how the big men of the city could not say enough over the coffin of Valentine Burke. And to this day there are not a few in that city whose hearts soften with a strange tenderness when the name of the burglar is recalled. And now Moody and Burke are met, no more to be separated. When I was a boy, an old black 'mammy' that I greatly loved used to sing for me a song with words like these:

'Through all depths of sin and loss,
Sinks the plummet of Thy cross.'

Letters from the Front.

(By one lately a scholar in Haslemere Sunday-school, now with Lord Methuen's force at Modder River, and who was engaged in the terrible battle at Magersfontein.)

'My Dear Father,—By the mercy of God I am spared to write a few lines to you, which I hope will find you well. I am pleased to say I am well myself, but, dear father, I never expected to be alive now; but it's God's will that he has spared me to come out of the battle alive and not hurt. I was lying down and dared not move for bullets and shells bursting around me. I saw my comrades cut down, killed and wounded, and me spared to come out untouched. I thought of the tender mercy of God towards me, a sinner, and yet he

spared me. After it was over, I had to fall down and thank the Lord for his mercy. I never thought of it before, not till the time I was in danger, when I thought it was too late; but the Lord was good, and brought a wretch like me safe out of the hand of the enemy. The first chance I got, I took a Bible that I carried with me, and there I saw a verse, as I opened it, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being." I never felt so full as I have since. I have asked the Lord to lead me the way that He wants me to go, and, dear father, since then I have thought of the last words you said to me, your prayers for me every night, and the Lord has answered them. When I was lying in the jaws of death, I thought of my past days, I could see all my faults, and I said, "The Lord can never spare me as I am," and then I thought of the words, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Dear father, I hope this has taught me a lesson. I feel at times I should like to go away and hide myself where I could not see anyone. I am glad the Lord has not struck me down in the midst of my sins, like I have seen young men falling at my side in the prime of life. It was a dreadful day. We lost 1,060 killed and wounded, and the Boer lost nearly 5,000. I never want to see a sight like it again—never in my life. If that would not make anyone think of their souls, I do not know what would. I hope the Lord has something for me to do, and I hope to make better use of my days to come (if I am spared to get out of this) than I have done before. Dear father, I cannot tell you quarter of the sights I saw; it was dreadful! poor fellows' hands, arms, and legs shot to pieces. A person has no idea of war if they have not been in it. We had three hours' sleep out of forty-eight, and then it was hardly safe to lie down. I did not have a chance to wash or pull off any clothes for three days and four nights, and sweating, with the heat of the sun and sand-storms, you can guess how we felt; but never mind, we must not grumble at that, we must be thankful to our Lord and Maker for bringing us through the danger. I hope I shall be like David, and sing praises to him as long as I live. I must close now, dear father and God be with you and all of us, and hoping to meet again, I remain, your loving son, Ben. 12th Lancers, South African Field Force, South Africa. Modder River, Dec. 14, 1899.—'Christian Herald.'

Relieving the Famine in India

(By Rev. James Smith, in 'Congregationalist,' missionary of the American Board.)

The present famine is the most widespread of the century. Although the most gigantic efforts are being made by the British Government, it will be impossible to relieve more than a tithe of the distress. The famine affects many of the large native states where the organization for relief is imperfect and where inefficiency is the rule in the ordinary administration of affairs, and therefore in a crisis like the present utterly fails.

There are millions who will suffer and die of hunger rather than ask for relief. It is not because they are used to it, rather because they are used to better things in better days. There are thousands of families in India now living on the most meager income who, a few years ago, were connected with a princely house. They have in the vicissitudes of the times 'lost all but honor.' They cannot dig, to beg they are ashamed.

I distributed thousands of dollars during the famine of 1896-97, and should like to bring some of my readers into the scenes that I daily visited then. In British territory charity was organized and responsibility was sub-divided. The missionaries were invited by government to choose their field, and if they wished funds were put at their disposal. One of my departments was the relief of the 'weaver caste.' They numbered some 5,000 in the city of Ahmednagar, but half of them had fled from the plague or wandered away in search of employment elsewhere where the famine was not so sore. Among the rest there were many who had something to fall back upon. These were eliminated and work was offered to every remaining weaver who was only a journeyman and did not operate his own

loom. A list of these was easily obtained from the managers of the ordinary weaving factories. In all 111 looms were set a-going, employing 550 hands, counting the women and children who labored in some capacity, and nearly 2,000 who were supported, including the helpless dependents, children, etc.

There remained to be provided for the families of sick men, orphans, those too old to work, probably 600 more. How were these reached? Come and see! Here is an idle loom to-day. Where is Ganesh, the operative? No one knows. Let us go to his house. He is at home sitting by the side of a sick wife. There has been no breakfast to-day yet. The children are crying for food, the mother dying. The father is dazed. He has no money, no clothes, no furniture. It is winter, and the nights are cold. The neighbors are all at work from daylight till dark, earning enough to keep soul and body together, so they cannot be expected to know that anything is wrong here. Here is a case for gratuitous relief.

As you pass along the street you see a group about a door and see a policeman breaking into a house. Let us stop and see what is the matter. It turns out that the parents put their children to bed last night and then locked the door and left in search of something to eat. The children woke up in the morning and, finding no one in the house, began to cry. Their cries roused the attention of passers-by. A year passed by before those parents returned.

Another weaver is missing from his loom. He is a new hand, and was much emaciated from the start. His brother explains that he has not been well since the 'hard times' began. His family is large, and he has not been able to get anything to eat some days, and as he never was strong he is failing. When we visited him he says that he is 'all right,' and 'will be at work to-morrow.' Still we leave a rupee and tell his family that is four days' pay and if he is not better then we will give him some more. After two days we call again and find him dead. Was it starvation? Undoubtedly, and slow starvation at that. His brother hands us a half rupee with the explanation that he only lived two days so half the money is left! Do not think this is an exceptional case of honesty. At least 10,000 rupees were doled out in dribbles of a quarter of a rupee each, and I can only recall two instances of dishonesty in spite of the terrible temptation to which they were always exposed.

Here is a young woman with a baby less than a year old. Some people are digging a well, and she has asked the foreman to put her on the work. She, too, is a 'weaver,' hence in our care. She is as thin as a shadow and has had 'nothing to eat for three days.' This is a common enough experience in famine times, and her looks confirm her words. We gave her work—carrying earth and stones for the new well. In a few days she looks like another woman and the baby greets us with 'da,' which is baby for 'salaam,' and the mother is proud of the notice taken of her child. Like a score of other women in my care, her husband deserted her at the beginning of the famine, and she had to take care of herself and her child.

These famines are testing times. They bring to light unsuspected qualities, both good and evil. Where selfishness prevails, it is stimulated and promoted till the human is lost in the brute, but where the Spirit of Christ rules it ripens and enlarges it.

The Find-the-Place Almanac.

TEXT IN NUMBERS.

April 1., Sun.—Tht Lord bless thee and keep thee.

April 2., Mon.—The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.

April 3., Tues.—The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

April 4., Wed.—Come thou with us and we will do thee good.

April 5., Thurs.—The Lord went before them.

April 6., Fri.—When the people complained it displeased the Lord.

April 7., Sat.—The Lord is long suffering and of great mercy.