

**A FOOL YELLED "FIRE"**

IN A BALTIMORE THEATRE, AND THE AUDIENCE STAMPEDED.

TWENTY-THREE ARE DEAD—KILLED IN THE MAD RUSH MADE BY TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED PEOPLE IN THEIR SEARCH FOR SAFETY.

BALTIMORE, Md., Dec. 27.—Twenty-three persons were crushed and trampled to death at the Front Street Theatre to-night. Several others were injured, some of whom it is believed will die. The United Opera and Dramatic Company, of Boston, under the management of A. Schomgold and Abram Tansman, was billed to present the Jewish opera "Alexander," and the theatre was filled. About 2,500 persons were in the house when the orchestra began playing the overture. A strong odor of gas was noticed in the second gallery of the theatre, and one of the attendants of the place was seen hunting for the leak, with a lighted torch. Suddenly a jet of flame flashed out as the torch came in contact with the punctured gas pipe. Cries of "Fire" were heard in the upper galleries, and in an instant the excitement became intense. Some one rushed to the gas meter and turned off the supply, plunging the main body of the house into darkness. The stage jets alone remained lighted, being fed from another meter. Instead of allaying the excitement caused by the sheet of flame from the leaking pipe, the turning out of the gas and the consequent darkness only served to add to the confusion. The audience arose en masse and made a mad rush for the exits. The actors ran down to the footlights and shouted "Sit down, there is no danger," but the excited throng paid no heed to the advice, and continued their wild scramble for the doors. The gas was quickly turned on at the meter, and as the theatre again became illuminated, an indescribable scene of horror was presented. Men, women and children, crazed by fear, were fighting and struggling in the aisles and on the stairway in their efforts to reach the open air.

The actors on the stage and a few good-headed persons in the audience added to the turmoil by shouting their commands to "sit down" and cursing those who were most vigorous in their efforts to get out. The struggling mass of humanity made little or no headway for a few minutes. Every aisle was congested and every doorway jammed with the frantic folk and Russian Jews, who mainly composed the gathering. Strong men in the rear of the panic-stricken mob climbed upon the shoulders of those in front, crushing the weaker men, women and children to the floor to be trampled to death by those still further in the rear. For several minutes the wild fight continued. Then a few policemen forced a passage way to the main entrance, and began dragging forth those who were jammed in the doors. A rushing stream of humanity flowed out on Front street, till all those who were able to move reached the open air.

The excitement in the street was almost as great as in the theatre as relatives began searching for those from whom they had become separated during the mad rush. Fathers and mothers rushed about, looking for their children, and attempted to re-enter the theatre in their search for missing ones. The crowd grew so great that the police, fearing a riot, ordered the fire engine hoses to be turned on, and in that way the struggling mass was driven back from the theatre entrance. Meanwhile officers had entered the theatre and encountered a sickening sight.

In every direction were found bodies from which life had been crushed. A majority of the victims were young men and girls, and small children. The dead and injured were carried to the front of the house, and removed to the City Hospital and morgue as fast as the ambulances and patrol wagons could make the trips. Great crowds followed the ambulances and patrol wagons, and stormed the entrances to the hospital and morgue in their anxiety to learn if their relatives and friends were among the injured or dead. Twenty-three dead bodies were finally taken from the theatre. Ten persons, more or less injured, are at the City Hospital, two of whom will die. Several others were taken to their homes in private carriages, suffering from contusions or broken bones. The death toll will probably exceed 25 or more.

**WHICH BIBLE?**

Dr. Horr of Worcester, in his sermon on "Religion and the Public Schools," seems at first sight to agree with Bishop Spalding on the possibility of teaching morals without reference to their remote foundation. Dr. Horr says:

"Moral instruction, however, is necessary in our public schools, because the moral side of man's nature must be educated, as well as his intellectual, in order that he may make a good citizen. Religious principles and convictions, in which all true morality roots, may properly be inculcated in their wide and general application without in any way alluding to the particular tenets of any body of religionists."

Thus far he appears to agree with the Bishop. But from this point on they differ widely. The Bishop talking like a Christian philosopher, the Doctor like the sectarian that he is. For the ultimate reason of morals the Bishop goes back to the real and philosophical source—the being and perfections of God, while the Doctor bases the whole teaching of morals on the definite utterances of the holy book. Without such foundation, he tells us, moral teaching would have no authority. Having laid down this postulate—which in passing we repudiate—the Doctor continues:

"I believe that the Bible should be read daily, without note or comment, in all our public schools; we have gained nothing and lost much by discontinuing this practice. It is not a sectarian book, nor a Protestant book, but is recognized as authoritative in all the courts of this Christian nation, and ought to be in all the schools."

Let us suppose, for a moment that all should agree to carry out the Doctor's

suggestion. The first thing to be determined would be, which Bible should be made the text book in schools? The text book must not be a hazy abstract; it must be a real, material, printed book. Which Bible then should it be, the Protestant, the Catholic, or the lately revised Anglican Bible? The three differ very materially. To the Protestant the Catholic Bible is a sectarian book, and to the Catholic the Protestant Bible is a sectarian book. This important question must be determined before the Doctor's plan can be reduced to practice. The Catholic holds, with good reason, that the King James Bible is in many important points, a mistranslation, and that it is incomplete—wanting several inspired books. The Protestant holds that there are several non-inspired books in the Catholic Bible. From the point of view of each, then, the other's Bible is not fitted to be a proper text book of revealed morals. Will the Doctor consent to the use of the Catholic text? If yes, he recognizes several books that he considers uninspired as a proper and authoritative basis of morals. Will the Catholic consent to the use of the Protestant text? If yes, he recognizes a defective and erroneous translation of the Word of God as a proper foundation for moral teaching. Hence, if logical, consistent and honest, neither can consent to the use of the other's Bible as a text book of morality in our schools. We see no way out of this difficulty on the very threshold of our enterprise. Of course, when the Doctor was talking he meant the defective and mistranslated Protestant Bible. But he must remember that there are those who have other views, and who have under our laws equal right to respectful consideration.—A. F. Freeman's Journal.

**NOTICE.**

We wish to inform our friends who have been kind enough to make an offering in aid of our schools, as well as those who may be willing to help us further in this good work, that the drawing of prizes cannot possibly take place on the 31st of December, as was originally intended. There is a large number of tickets throughout the country which have not yet been returned; and many persons holding those tickets have requested us to prolong the time until the end of January at least.

We have, therefore, decided to postpone the drawing of prizes until the 31st of MARCH, 1896.

D. GILBERT, C.M.A.

Card. Paul Melcher is dead. He was a German by birth, born in 1813, and was created a cardinal in 1885.

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All this and next week we offer our choice selection of fine Canadian and Imported Wines at special prices for the holiday trade. All we want now is your presence.

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