

up the tile from a roof when the house is in danger. One would think that a moment's reflection would show them that these thick brick tiles are a great protection against the falling embers, and that as soon as the tiles are removed, there is nothing to prevent the boards beneath taking fire. Nevertheless the custom seems to be universal. It was probably in keeping with this that the tiles were torn from the roof of St. Andrew's Church.

Again, it is the custom for those who have been burnt out, to camp along the street until a new house is erected; or, if they accept hospitality, it must be from a relative only. After the fire on February 10th, many were pressed to enter Archdeacon Shaw's or the Bishop's, to give them time to rest, take some food, and collect their wits, before again setting out in life to recover their losses. Only a few of the lowest accepted the invitation, and even these remained but a very short time, and then left, taking with them whatever they could find.

Another much more reasonable custom is the following: If your house has been in danger and has escaped, for the next two days you will be besieged with callers offering their congratulations. Or if your house has been burnt, even more will come, as if a death had taken place in the household, and offer their condolence. Not only are such thanked personally for their sympathy, but it is usual now to insert, in one or more of the daily papers, an acknowledgement of such kindness. Such an acknowledgement runs thus:—"Mr. So-and-so begs to return thanks for the fire."

What is very strange also, is that there seems to be a feeling a-kin to pride, about a large fire. This pride, of course, is in those who are not directly interested financially. While on the other hand there appears to be for a small fire, a contempt reflected in some degree on those who were connected with it. On several occasions I have spoken with some of the lower classes about a small fire in which only one or two houses had been consumed, and the answers I got, coupled with the look and tone seemed to imply that those living in the neighborhood, who had such a grand opportunity for a large blaze, should be ashamed of themselves, and they at least owed an apology to those who had gone to see the fire.

To show, apparently, how far they were from being ruined by the fire, and the shop-keepers not to lose their custom, building is begun at once. Early on Ash Wednesday morning houses and fences were being erected in Ligura machi in all directions; and before evening of the same day more than one store was open for business as it had been the evening before.

In another sense these fires are a blessing in disguise. Only a few years ago, the ideal of a street in Tokyo was about ten to twelve feet wide, so that you might walk down the centre

(they have no side walks), and see the wares displayed in the shops on both sides at the same time. Now the authorities are trying to widen the streets in every direction, and a fire gives them the desired opportunity.

There are a few other health regulations which we should like to see introduced into Japan, but at present we must make the best of what we have.

Although they are eager to embrace Western civilization, the Japanese nation, as a whole, seems yet to have missed the spirit of it all. They may adopt American and European institutions, but true knowledge will come to them as to all others, only through the preaching of the Cross of Christ.

---

WE have a thousand encouragements in missionary work that our fathers never had. Steam and electricity have reduced for us the dimensions of the world to one-half its size fifty years ago. Commerce and diplomacy have opened to us countries that were barred against our fathers. Until recently the Chinese empire was closed against the Christian religion. The people of Japan killed the missionaries who first carried to their shores the glad tidings of salvation, and sent their bodies in sealed barrels to the countries whence they came. For ages slavery and the slave trade proved an insuperable barrier to the introduction of the truth as it is in Jesus into the heart of Africa. For generations, philosophy and caste kept the Gospel from the teeming hordes of India. Until a recent date cannibalism forbade the entrance of the heralds of salvation to the South Sea Islands. The papal states, Spain and Austria, have refused, almost to date, to allow even a colporteur to sell a Bible to their people. But what do we see to-day? The walls of China have been levelled with the ground, and the old lethargic empire is heaving with the throes of a new life. Japan has flung open her thrice-barred gates, and is receiving all the light of western civilization and religion. Through the explorations of Livingstone and Stanley the dark continent is being prepared for the reception of Christianity. English courts and railroads are breaking up caste, and carrying modern civilization into the walled cities of India. The navies of Europe and America have put an end to cannibalism in the islands of the sea. Printed copies of God's Word are freely sold in the streets of Madrid, the book stores of Vienna, and under the shadow of the Vatican.

---

It is said that for what it costs to fire one shot from one of our largest cannons a missionary and his family can be supported over two years in Japan. Comment is needless.