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About 25 minutes past 12 a.m. on Saturday 1st July 1882 both firebells rang out an alarm indicating a fire in Leith Ward. There was a huge glare in the sky at the time, and it was found that a 15-roomed house in Cumberland street, near Dundas street, was completely enveloped in flames. The Fire Brigade were quickly on the spot, and from a few bystanders it was soon learnt that there were some who must have perished. The house was, however, in such a perfect blaze that nothing could be done by the Brigade to rescue any of those said to be inside, and water was at once played on the building by three branches— two from the front in Cumberland street, and another at the rear of the burning building from Dundas street. The house was well known as the residence of Mr M. W. Green, M.H.R., but recently it had been occupied by Captain H. **Kitchener** and as his family was known to comprise six children, while three only were seen to escape, it seemed extremely probable that three children had been burnt.

The movements of the Brigade were therefore watched with the greatest anxiety by the crowd of people who had assembled, but it was some considerable time before the fire could be got under control - indeed the flames could not be brought under anything like subjection until the lapse of fully an hour. The surmise made as to the loss of life then proved to be only too true, the bodies of the three children being found by the Brigade.

The first persons present at the scene were a Mr Robertson, draper, carrying on business in George, street, and his daughter, who were crying out " fire," when Constable Dwyer ran up about five minutes before the firebells commenced ringing A young man named Colwin also appeared about this time, and the back door of the building was burst; open, but no entrance could be gained on account of the smoke and flames, the latter even then having a thorough hold of the upper storey.

Mrs **Kitchener** was observed at one of the front windows, and the constable caught two children and the baby, who were thrown down. Mrs **Kitchener** followed, and the servant, Bridget Mullins, escaped through one of the windows of the lower storey. Mr W. H. Ash, a boarder, then jumped down from the verandah, and shortly afterwards Captain **Kitchener** followed his example. All were very much burned and Captain **Kitchener** also got severely bruised by his fall.

None appeared to have been awakened from their sleep until the house was pretty well all in flames, and each had barely time to escape without clothing. The servant states that she was awakened by the noise of the crackling timber. She went into the kitchen, but found the fire to be in the upper storey. Mrs **Kitchener** was in the habit of keeping a fire on all night, and the servant is of opinion that some linen placed before it must have ignited. Capt. **Kitchener** directly after he left the building, was taken to Hutchinson's Hotel. in George street, where he was attended by Dr Coughtrey. He has sustained a severe shock, and at 2 o'clock was delirious.

Mrs **Kitchener** and the surviving children, with the servant, were accommodated by the Rev. A. R. Fitchett, at his residence in Cumberland street, and attended by Drs Copland and Gillies. Mr Ash went to the house of Mr Jago, in Leith street. We understand the burnt building, which was completely destroyed, was insured in the National Office for £700.

RECOVERY OF THE BODIES.

It was some time before the fire and dense smoke would allow of any search for the bodies of those who were supposed to have been burnt. About 1 o'clock the firemen began to clear away the debris from some of the upper rooms. By the aid of their lanterns they came across what appeared to be the remains of a bed in one of the rear upper rooms at' about 1.20, and after searching a little further they discovered the first body. This was at once wrapped in cloths and conveyed to an outhouse by one of the firemen. The search was then continued, and a few minutes later one of the firemen discovered another body lying near the bed. This was wrapped in sheets, and one of the firemen, taking it in his arms, descended the ladder and laid it beside the other. Both bodies were* much charred, and as in some places the flesh was burnt so as to render the bones visible, it was impossible to recognise them. The probability is that the remains are those of Susan, the eldest girl, who "was about 11 years old, and her younger sister Edith, aged six. This supposition seems to be correct, for these two girls, along with the little baby who was saved, slept in Mrs **Kitchener**'s room, and this is the room where these two bodies were found. As it was known that Sydney, a lad of eight years, who slept in a room by himself, was missing, the search was continued ; but for some time no traces of a body could be found. It was then deemed advisable to turn on the water again, as some of the timber was beginning to blaze up afresh, and there was a good deal of rubbish to be cleared away. One of the firemen while searching on the ground-floor then chanced to remove some of the sheets of galvanised iron which had fallen from the roof, and he noticed what appeared to be another body lying at the foot of the staircase. Upon closer examination

of the spot with the aid of his lantern, he was able plainly to discern the third body, which was forthwith conveyed to the outhouse, and placed side by side with the others.

The names of the three children who were burnt are : — Susan **Kitchener**, 11 years of age ; Sydney **Kitchener**, 8 years of age ; and Edith **Kitchener**, 6 years of age. < The following are additional particulars regarding the fatal fire which occurred in Cumberland street on Saturday morning:— Mrs **Kitchener**, with two of her daughters and the baby, occupied one bedroom; while Captain **Kitchener**, with two of the boys, slept in another. Mrs **Kitchener** was awakened by experiencing a feeling of choking, and hearing the children coughing. She immediately jumped out of bed, and found that the flames were making their way from the back of the house upstairs. She called out to her husband, and, taking the two girls and the baby, made an endeavour to get through the smoke and flames down the staircase. The girls were suffocated on the way and fell, and Mrs **Kitchener** and the baby were dragged out of the burning building by Constable Dwyer. Captain **Kitchener**, on being alarmed, took his two eldest boys to the front of the house, and, opening one of the windows facing Cumberland street, placed them on the verandah, from which place they jumped into the arms of persons below. He then endeavoured to gain access to the room of his boy Sydney, who slept by himself, but the flames and smoke were impenetrable. Finding that any attempt at the child's rescue was hopeless, he returned to the window, got out on to the verandah, and jumped thence to the ground. Captain **Kitchener** is now at the Hospital, and is getting on fairly, and Mrs **Kitchener**, who is very badly burned, is improving. The two surviving children are also progressing as well as could be expected, but the baby, which has been taken charge of by Mrs G. W. Elliott, is in a critical state. Mr W. H. Ash, who was staying with the **Kitchener**s, when he awoke had no idea that the house was on fire, his first intimation of that fact being received from hearing a cry of " fire " outside. Lighting a candle, he went into the passage with the intention of giving assistance in getting the children out of the house, but a rush of smoke and flame drove him back, and he had to make his escape by getting out of the window on to the verandah. In jumping down he was saved from receiving possible injuries by Constable Dwyer. The bodies have been removed to the Morgue, where an inquest will be held at 11 a.m. ! to-day. I Captain **Kitchener** served_ for many years in the 41st Regiment, and during the greater part of that time was with his regiment in Jamaica. In 1874, owing to changes made at that time in the army regulations, he sold his commission, and was offered the management of his uncle's (Colonel **Kitchener**) property at Waihemo. He accepted the offer, and came to the Colony accordingly. About two years ago he relinquished the management of the estate, and brought his family to town. At first they resided at Opoho, but about six months ago took the house in which the fire occurred. We understand that Captain **Kitchener**'s furniture was uninsured, and that the fire leaves him absolutely penniless,

The inquest on the bodies of the three children was held in the morgue on Monday morning, and resulted in a verdict of accidental death. The Jury recorded their approval of the conduct of Constable Dwyer, who so pluckily saved the lives of Mrs **Kitchener** and her baby, and then tried to effect a second entrance to the burning building. Captain **Kitchener** is recovering from the injuries he received at the fire, as also is Mrs **Kitchener**. The baby, however, is not making satisfactory progress, and indeed is not likely to recover.

Tuesday. We are glad to hear that, owing to the foresight of a friend, an insurance to the amount of £150 was effected on Captain **Kitchener**'s furniture. A fund has been raised, through the exertions of a few friends, which to-day amounted to £350, in order to provide to

some extent for the needs of the family, and it_ is expected the amount will be considerably increased.