

which takes for granted that crookedness and corruption are the normal conditions of most governing bodies. When once this idea takes possession of the public mind national decadence is inevitable.

Out of the confusion and moral shock caused by the disclosures of the Panama Canal frauds the reactionaries apparently discern a possible opportunity for the advancement of their designs for the subversion of the republic. That they will succeed can hardly be imagined. The public have been startled and shocked by the revelations made, and it is humiliating to them to find that the form of government to which they are undoubtedly attached has been unable to shield them from the loss and disgrace that plausible schemers have entailed. It is not clear, however, that the French people are, in a fit of virtuous indignation, about to re-erect the shattered thrones of either Orleanists or Bonapartists. Should such an unlikely thing occur, it may be taken for granted that the Roman Catholic Church would endeavour to become a power behind whichever throne the factions might succeed in restoring. Although it is impossible to forecast what the French people might do in a time of intense excitement, it is improbable that the end of the existing republic is near.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN RUSSIA.

IT is not easy to arrive at a clear and truthful estimate of the real condition of Russia. Visitors to that country see things from different standpoints; they go there with different objects in view, report what has come under their own notice and give the impressions they have individually received. Though these accounts differ materially it does not necessarily follow that those who have travelled in Russia intend to give inaccurate accounts of what they have seen. Dr. Talmage's estimate of the condition of the Muscovite Empire differs in most respects from the graphic and powerful narratives of George Kennan. These two men are very differently constituted and the reasons that took them to Russia were diverse. The pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle went with American contributions for the Russian famine fund. He came into contact mostly with the official class, and had an interview with the Czar himself. Most of what he saw was rainbow-tinted. He was in that frame of mind to put the best possible construction on whatever came under his notice. Besides, Dr. Talmage is a very busy man. It may be doubted if he is in a position to take a calm and comprehensive view of any subject. He has no time to waste on bothersome details. His judgments are apt to be intuitive. The official class in Russia have the reputation of being very astute and plausible gentlemen, and it would be an easy matter for them to convey the impression to the American preacher that the stories of discontent and extreme cruelty were the inventions of the unscrupulous enemies of law and order. The general belief is that Alexander III. is personally a very estimable and kindly man, and since he is absolute it is easy to convey the impression that under so benign a ruler, the crimes attributed to the Government cannot possibly exist.

George Kennan went to Russia to investigate the political problems that have given rise to Nihilism, and to ascertain from personal observation the actual working of the exile system. He had introductions to prominent Government officials in St. Petersburg, in the Provinces and in Siberia. He had ample opportunities to learn their views. He had access to the official returns bearing on the subject of his investigation. His object was to learn the truth. He did not go to Russia prepossessed in favour of the exiles and the cause for which they suffered. He started out with an American's love of freedom and hatred of anarchy, and therefore with a prejudice against the "politicals." It was from what he saw and from personal experience that he was constrained to change his opinions. No reader of his forceful narrative can honestly come to the conclusion that it is fictitious. He simply speaks from his own knowledge. There can be no doubt that Mr. Kennan possesses the faculties requisite for patient and careful investigation. It is no disparagement of the Brooklyn divine to say that George Kennan's work on Russia is a more trustworthy authority than the hasty picture presented by Dr. Talmage.

The accounts of religious persecution in Russia, coming from so many and varied sources, leave no room for doubt. Who that follows the course of public events would care to call in question the uniform statements that for several years past the Lutherans of the Balkan provinces have been

harassed and persecuted with a persistency indicative of a determination to suppress their form of worship altogether? It is difficult for one to believe that the Czar, the ostensible head of the Greek Church, is ignorant of the hardships imposed on his subjects in these provinces on account of their religion. It is acknowledged that M. Pobedonitseff, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, has avowed the determination to force them into orthodoxy, as he understands it, by depriving them of the last vestige of religious liberty. Is it, or is it not, true that the Jews in Russia have been subject to forms of persecution that recall the intolerance and barbarity to which their race was exposed in medieval Europe? It seems to be the determined purpose to compel the entire Russian population to avow adherence to the Greek Church. The propaganda is not carried on by learned argument. The priests do not attempt to convince the Lutherans that the doctrines of the Reformation are wrong; they do not take the best way to convince the Jews that Jesus Christ is the Messiah the ancestors of their race hoped for; neither are they capable of convincing the Stundists that they are living in deadly error. Their polemics are of a simpler and more primitive character. Their arguments are of a material, not of a spiritual kind.

The *Christian World*, published in London, some time ago received two letters from Stundists living in the Province of Kieff. So startling and terrible were the details they contained, that the conductors of that paper at once instituted enquiries as to the truth of the statements made in these communications. The result shows that the writers in no degree exaggerated the sad condition of affairs. The following extracts will give an idea of how these poor people are treated, simply because they are dissenters from the national creed:—

The letters from the village of Kapustinski are true in every particular of their contents. Men, women and children have undergone treatment, the women especially, which is indescribable. The horrors mentioned in these letters are not a tithe of what has been endured.

Kapustinski is only one of many villages where similar deeds have been enacted. Another is Skibentz, also in the Province of Kieff. Here the priest simply ordered the people and village elder to "thrash the Stundists." In Gavril Vdovitchenko's hut the inmates were beaten with thick sticks until they were senseless, and then their hair was torn out by handfuls. Timothy Zaitz and his wife were attacked in a house not their own, and beaten so terribly that they could hardly crawl to their own cottages on all fours. Simon Kotsyub had forty strokes of a thick rod on his bare body. Fedor Shumtchuk was waylaid by five men, thrown on the ground, and held down by four of them while the fifth administered forty blows of the stick. He was then ordered to drink vodka, and when he refused he had another beating. The wife of Theodosia Zaitseff when in the family way was beaten so badly by four of these village fiends that she gave birth to her child prematurely. The child was so injured, so bruised, that it died after three days. Although the Stundists were closely watched lest they should flee from the village two men managed to steal away in the night to the railway station thirty miles distant. They went to Kieff where the Governor-General lives, and made a complaint of the horrible conduct of the village authorities. In two weeks' time an official arrived in Skibentz to investigate the matter; but the priest was prepared with five witnesses, who swore that no such events as were complained of had happened in the village. It is said that the priest's witnesses at first demurred to perjuring themselves, but this "man of God" made their minds easy by promising to take their sin upon his own conscience and to give them absolution. Of course, the official returned to Kieff and reported that the Stundist complaints were groundless.

In a neighbouring village a man called Kirik had forty-five blows of the stick administered to him by order of the village elder for refusing to drink vodka. Still refusing, his boots were pulled off, iron rings were fastened to his ankles, and in this guise he was tied to a post in the middle of the village, to be made sport of by the Orthodox. At the suggestion of the priest he received a second beating, and was liberated.

In another village, the wife of a Stundist called Dolman was so badly beaten that she fell senseless to the floor. Her tormentors revived her by pouring water over her out of a huge jug. Then they smashed the jug and every other vessel in the house.

It may serve some good purpose at least if these things were more generally known. At a recent meeting in London it was stated that the least expression of public opinion in Russia itself is ruthlessly repressed by a Government that in no way represents the people, but the Czar's Government dreads the civilized public opinion of Europe and America, and is influenced by it. Thus, George Kennan's exposure of Siberian prison horrors led to important reforms. The necessity of this outside pressure—the only pressure that can be applied—is its justification. The Anglo-Saxon race ought to be thankful that they enjoy civil and religious freedom; they ought to manifest their principles by living up to them and giving their sympathy and aid to those who are struggling to secure the right of worshipping God according to the dictates of enlightened conscience.

Books and Magazines.

THE DOMINION ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY. (Montreal: Sabiston Litho. and Pub. Co.)—The December number of this magazine is to hand. We notice a decided improvement, and the *Dominion Monthly* now takes rank among the leading periodicals of the day. This issue contains as a supplement an excellent portrait of Hon. A. R. Angers, ex-Lieut. Governor of Quebec, who has just been taken into the Cabinet at Ottawa as Minister of Agriculture.

THE COLUMBIAN HISTORICAL NOVELS: Vol. IV., Pocahontas, a story of Virginia. By John R. Musick. Illustrated with full half-tone engravings and other illustrations. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company; Toronto: 11 Richmond Street West.)—Pocahontas is a name to conjure with on this continent, a name that strikes a sympathetic chord in every generous breast, a name which can hardly fail to awaken a passing regret that a race capable of producing so noble a type of womanhood should have been doomed to extinction in the inevitable struggle for race supremacy. Pocahontas belonged to an epoch—the period of the early settlement of Virginia—and she illuminated one page of history, at least, with her charming personality. The author has done wisely in selecting her as the heroine of the historic drama of that period; while historic truth demanded that she and that splendid type of heroic manhood from the Old World, Captain John Smith, should be assigned the leading parts. The author has been pre-eminently successful in the delineation of the *dramatis personae*, calling up from the dead past the real men and women who figured so conspicuously in the thrilling events of that time; and while historic accuracy has been his chief aim, the romantic interest never flags—the brilliant setting of the story fixes historic characters permanently in the reader's memory. As in the preceding volumes of this series, an Estevan plays an important part, the Estevan of "Pocahontas and Virginia," transferred to English soil, becomes plain Philip Stevens. Young folks particularly will be delighted in the possession of a copy of this book, and it will not fail to instruct them in heroism and inspire patriotism. As, one by one, the stories of this series are unfolded, the greater is our appreciation of the comprehensive grasp of the subject and mastery of detail which the author reveals in the ambitious project of weaving the four centuries of American history into one continuous and connected dramatic whole, the story of each separate volume being complete in itself.

BAPTISM: Its mode and meaning at the time of our Lord, historically and philologically investigated by Rev. W. M. McKay, B.A., Woodstock, Ont. (Toronto: William Buggs.)—This is a new book on an old subject, by a well-known author, thoroughly acquainted with the matter on which he writes. When Mr. McKay's book "Immersion, a Romish Invention" first appeared about ten years ago, to many of our Baptist brethren it was like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. Baptists had been allowed to speak long and loud about their favourite dipping, and their statements, however wild and unscriptural, had been allowed to pass almost unchallenged. Mr. McKay at once assumed the aggressive, carried the war into Africa and allowed no assumptions but demanded Scripture proof for every statement. Instead of *Baptizo* meaning "dip and nothing but dip" as Baptists claimed, Mr. McKay made it pretty clear that there was no dip for baptism until A.D. 200, when three-fold immersions, in a nude state, accompanied by exorcism, anointing with oil, lighted candles, palm branches and numerous other superstitions found their way into a corrupt church. Immersion originated in the notion that just as the real presence of Christ was in the elements of the Supper so the real presence of the Spirit, after the invocation, permeated the water of baptism. There was what Tertullian and other fanciful theologians imagined the *vis baptismatis* which must come in contact with every part of the body. However, neither the Latin nor Greek Church ever denied the Scriptural authority and validity of sprinkling or effusion for baptism. In his present pamphlet Mr. McKay takes the same ground as in his former work that *Baptizo* does not indicate any specific mode, but the result or effect. Thus, a man is baptized by the Holy Spirit when he is brought under the power of the Spirit. But in this pamphlet Mr. McKay reaches his conclusions by an entirely new, most logical and, we believe, original line of argument. He claims that we must ascertain the meaning of the word in our Lord's time not from the contradictory definitions of lexicons or from the careless and ignorant concessions of some writers and speakers, but from the *usus loquendi* of the word from the beginning, up to the Christian era. He does not, of course, hold that the Scripture meaning must be the same as the classic import, but he claims that so far as mode and radical import are concerned, it has one uniform meaning throughout. There are, he tells us, just twenty-seven clear, undoubted occurrences of the use of the word up to our Lord's time. These he presents in chronological order and in the original Greek or Hebrew, giving author and date of each instance. Each instance is given in full and accompanied with a literal translation. It is then examined with this crucial test: What was moved in this baptism—the baptizing element or the subject baptized? Baptists always move the thing baptized into the element, but Mr. McKay shows very clearly that in every Greek baptism the element was moved and brought upon the subject. "Our argument," says the author, "is inductive and our conclusion is co-extensive with our premises. We carefully examine each instance of the occurrence of the word and we predicate of the whole what we have proved true of each case, and our conclusion is that there is no sentence in Greek literature, prior to the time of Christ or for 200 years after, when any kind of baptism is effected by the person or thing baptized being applied to the baptizing element. The baptizing element is uniformly represented as applied to the person or thing baptized. Baptism is always a word of power indicating a changed state or condition, and never do we find that changed state or condition brought about after the manner of modern Baptists." The work shows that the author has thoroughly mastered the literature of the subject; that he possesses reasoning powers of no mean order, and that he has an intimate acquaintance with the original languages.