

THE
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FRANCE AS A MISSION FIELD.

THE Rev Dr Leonard Bacon, in the "Congregationalist," urges the American Board to immediately occupy the Republic of France in large force. He considers it in many respects one of the best mission fields now open to a pure gospel ministry. He speaks of the present forward movement there as "the greatest fact of cotemporary religious history," and is confident that the first society that comes to the help of the movement already organized will "win a magnificent prestige of success which it would be no sin for all its peers to covet earnestly." If this splendid people were evangelized they would contribute much towards the salvation of the world.

He refers to "the memorable letter of M. Bouchard, a country gentleman of dignity and ability—formerly sub-prefect of his department—addressed to his bishop, in which he asked that official note might be taken of the withdrawal of himself and family from the Roman Church, in order to connect themselves with the Protestant Church. M. Bouchard was one of that countless multitude of Frenchmen who renounce with scorn and detestation, the peculiar tenets of modern popery, but who up to this time have been accustomed to remain in nominal connection with it, and be counted in the vast sum-total of adherents of which it boasts."

This gentleman felt it his duty as a patriotic citizen to break off from the Romish Church because of the "active hostility of the clergy to the constitution and liberties of the Republic." This patriotic movement in France has been inspired with the breath of a vigorous religious life. The earnest men who have come under the simple teachings of the gospel are going through the land preaching with the power of the Holy Ghost, and the hearts of the French people are swayed "as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind."

Dr. Bacon says: "The hour of the glorious revenge of the persecuted church of the French Reformation has arrived. The blood of the martyrs, that has lain buried long in dust," is germinating at last, and the soil of France, from the Channel to the Pyrenees, is heaving with its lusty growth."

He gives the following incidents which recently occurred, as illustrating the character and extent of this great religious revival:

At St. Just, a considerable town some fifty miles due north of Paris, the movement was initiated by some of the well-to-do citizens of liberal sentiments, and taken up by the majority of the population. Two public meetings were held which were addressed by M. Eugène Réveillaud, editor of the Protestant newspaper, "Le Signal;" after which a petition was drawn up, and signed by 200 names, demanding official authority for building a Protestant church. On the 31st of October a lecture by M. de Pressensé was delivered in the Roman Catholic church, which was really a sermon pointed at the conscience, and was listened to with eager sympathy by an assembly of 1,200 persons. From all the neighbouring villages have come requests for similar discourses.

I give this not as a peculiar case, but as one of a multitude. The other incident is of a more dramatic character.

On Sunday, November 2, by the sanction of the authorities, Protestant worship was held in a hall of the Palace of Louis XIV., at Versailles. The place chosen was under the hall of the Oeil-de-Bœuf, not far from the chamber where, in 1715, the *Grand Monarque* expired. It is the vast room decorated by Cotelle with paintings of the royal residences. Before a great canvas representing the palace and park of St. Cloud, had been set up a temporary pulpit; and through the crowded congregation passed the President of the Consistory of Paris, and the pastor of Versailles, each bearing a copy of the Holy Scriptures, and with them the officers of the congregation. A young French poet, who was among the worshippers, utters the sentiments which the occasion could not but inspire: "Not without a glow of honest pride we passed before the colossal bronze statue of Louis, stretching out its hand as if to defend his palace against the intrusion of modern and heretical ideas. And when we heard the Bible and the Huguenot liturgy read in that building in which, just overhead, Madame de Maintenon had induced Louis XIV. to sign the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, well nigh 200 years ago, we were thrilled with emotion, and blessed God from our inmost heart. At that solemn moment, our thoughts seemed to bring back the dead. On the one side, Bossuet acclaiming, in his mighty voice, the new Theodosius and the new Constantine, under the very roof in which we were singing forth the old 138th Psalm,—that court in which superstition and immorality joined hands to hold France in subjection; those courtiers, beribboned and beplumed, amongst whom the King moved about as a god come down to earth—these on the one side. On the other side, our proscribed forefathers of the "pretended reformed religion," forced to quit the ruins of their churches, hunted and tortured by the dragoons, gathering in caves or forest-clearings; those glorious *camisards* who perished and foiled the troops of Bavière, and Villars, and Louvois, that had vainly dreamed of exterminating the Reformation. The day of our vindication was come! What would have been the rage of the ore, what the joy of the other, could they have foreseen that in two centuries the very palace of Versailles would resound with the worship of a Protestant congregation."

THE MISSION FIELD.

Madagascar.—The missionaries in Madagascar made the first translation of the Bible in Malagasy, in 1835. In the rising against Christianity which followed, and which resulted in driving the missionaries from the country, nearly all these Bibles were destroyed; but some were buried, and thus preserved until the missionaries were permitted to return and resume their duties. This Bible is now being revised. The work has been going on two years, and is participated in by three missionaries of the London, one of the Propagation of the Gospel, one of the Quaker, and two of the Norwegian, Missionary Societies.—A missionary relates the following incident. One Sunday he preached from the text, Gen. xxviii. 22, "And of all that Thou shalt give unto me, I will surely give a tenth unto Thee." At the close of the service one of his hearers, named Tobaccowell came forward and said: "Me plant big corn-field next week. Me make it ten pieces; plant all, then one piece be the Lord's corn." He did so; the part of the field to be devoted to the Lord was ploughed and planted with great care. But when the time for hoeing had arrived, our neighbour hoed his own corn, but did not find it convenient to hoe the Lord's. As the season advanced the Lord's corn, uncultivated and dwarfed, and Tobaccowell's tall, well-hoed, and thrifty, produced a strong and striking contrast. The Missionary says the sight of that corn-field has been a life-long lesson to him, and whenever he finds himself more devoted to his own personal interests than to the glory of God, he says to himself, "I am neglecting the Lord's corn."

South America.—The Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States has eighteen mission stations in Mexico, seven American missionaries and fourteen native ministers, teachers, colporteurs and four lady missionaries. They have a theological seminary, an orphanage, and a printing house. Their missionary paper "El Abogado Cristiano" is illustrated, and has a circulation of 2,000.—The President of Mexico is a friend of missions and a staunch protector of religious liberty. The persecutions and massacres of the Protestants by the priests of the Roman Catholic Church have turned the sympathy of the best men more and more in favour of Protestantism. The public men abhor the conduct of the Catholic priests and are ready to protect the missionaries in their work.—There are two Baptist churches in South America. One is located in Santa Barbara, Brazil, and is chiefly composed of

after-the-war emigrants from the Southern States. The other is in Demerara, Guiana, and is composed of Chinese immigrants, gathered and presided over by a zealous and efficient brother from the Canton Baptist church in China. In 1878 this church numbered 156, and sixteen or more have since been added by baptism. These brethren have built chapels for themselves, and have taken steps towards carrying on mission work in their native land.

India.—The South India Missionary Conference did not approve of surrendering anything to caste. It adopted a resolution declaring that Hindoo caste "is diametrically opposed to the Christian doctrine of the oneness of human nature and the brotherhood of all true Christians, and that it is the duty of all missionaries and Churches to require its entire renunciation, with all its outward manifestations, by all who desire to enter the Church of Christ."—In 1846 Father Gossner, of Berlin, Germany, sent out six missionaries to the Kols, of Nagpore, India. In three years four of the six had died, and the two men worked on alone, yet without any sign of spiritual success, though the natives had come to show themselves very plainly. They persevered, and in the fifth year there were indications of religious awakening, and eleven converts were baptised. The next year there were nineteen more, then the conversions were counted by hundreds, and now there are forty thousand Christians among these natives of Nagpore.—The Free Church of Scotland proposes to raise a Jubilee Fund of \$100,000 in six-penny subscriptions, to mark the semi-centennial of its mission work. It was in 1829 that Dr. Duff went as the first missionary of that Church to India. His ship was wrecked upon an uninhabited island, thirty miles from Cape Town. No life was sacrificed, but Mr. and Mrs. Duff lost their effects, including 800 valuable books. Proceeding on their way in another vessel, they were dashed ashore in a cyclone at the mouth of the Ganges, thus having a decidedly rough introduction to their work.—Rev. John Ross of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, has now translated about half the New Testament into the Korean language. The Korean peninsula, northeast of China, is supposed to contain a population of twelve or fifteen millions, and thus far they have had no portion of the Bible in their own tongue. Until lately the country has been closed against foreigners, but the Japanese have now forced them to open one of their ports.

Africa.—There is now an unbroken chain of communication by steam from England to the northern end of Lake Nyassa in Central Africa, excepting seventy miles of the Murchison Cataracts in the Shire River; and it is ascertained that Lakes Nyassa and Tanganyika are but 130 miles apart, instead of 250.—Sir Garnet Wolseley's letter to Bishop Schroeder in regard to excluding missionaries from Zululand does not at all dispel the fears of the missionaries. The letter makes it quite plain that the various chiefs have the power to exclude the missionaries altogether from their respective districts if they choose. Formerly it was only necessary to get permission from the king to settle in any part of Zululand. Now there are thirteen independent chiefs having jurisdiction.—Last year the Church Missionary Society completed the transfer of all the congregations in Sierra Leone, Africa, to the native Church of that colony, with one exception, that of Sherbro, which is expected to be transferred shortly. The Native Church is almost self-supporting, the Society granting only \$1,500 a year to it. The Native Church has fifteen congregations, fourteen clergymen, and 4,874 communicants. The number of native Christian adherents is about 14,000 and there are thirty-eight schools, with 4,037 scholars.—The Society supports stations at Sierra Leone and Port Lokkoh for Mohammedans, and has in charge the higher education of the colony. The missionaries report that they have access to the Mohammedans, and have under instruction some earnest inquirers. Much is hoped for from the mission at Port Lokkoh, among the Timnes, who are a peaceable, rather indolent people, holding somewhat loosely to a religion which is a mixture of Mohammedanism and heathenism. They come to the church when they are invited.