

spised, the orthodox priest never suffers the loss of his immense power, and when any one refuses him the fees which it is his custom to charge, the retaliations are terrible.

The Russian calendar has no less than a hundred and three holy days, which frequently are times of debauch and disorder; but the Stundists, steady workingmen, only observe a few of them. They have absolutely parted company with laziness and drunkenness, of which the Russian peasant is an habitual slave. Their villages and their homes have an appearance of neatness, order, and prosperity, which is in striking contrast with the orthodox villages and communities. Their farms and those of the German colonists are the best cultivated in Southern Russia, and by their labor and industry many have reached comfortable circumstances and almost become rich. Their family life is pure, a strict moral discipline holding sway among them. Mothers and children no longer tremble at the brutal authority of the father of the family. The young are instructed as well as their circumstances permit, and in each home by the side of the New Testament may be found books and pamphlets which bear testimony to a higher degree of culture than is possessed by their neighbors. It is the Scriptures alone that the Stundists search for truth; there, too, they find rules for every-day life, and they faithfully put them into practice. Thus they strive to realize among themselves the fraternity which marked the primitive Church. They have been called communists and anarchists, but this is base calumny.* They are peaceable citizens, very loyal to their sovereign, whom they pray for with great fervor.† It is true that they seem to believe that the present social system is not in accordance with God's ideas; that the soil belongs to all, not to a few, and ought to be equally divided; that each should cultivate his land with intelligence, and be ready to embrace the ideas of modern progress, but that they should not regard the revenue as belonging solely to themselves, but as given in trust, for them to provide for the needs of their poorer neighbors. Interpreting certain precepts of the Bible literally, they especially condemn *usury*, which is a very common evil in Russia, and *war*. These principles are very different from those of anarchy or even of communism.

Lastly, the Stundists are quiet, honest, industrious people, who do not refuse to fulfil any of their duties as citizens. It is the opposition of the priests which has forced them to break away altogether from the Church, in which, until they had the Word of God, they always found sufficient

* People carelessly use the term Stundists for all those who have gone out from the established church, and thus they confound the Stundists with other sects which exist in Russia, and attribute to them their extravagant and immoral practices.

† It is pretended that the Stundist movement had a political origin. The Stundists are represented as rebels, lacking patriotism, and in sympathy with Germany. "There is positively no anti-Russian tendency," writes a well-informed Russian, "among the Stundists. They neither refuse to go into the army nor to pay their taxes. It is just a slander of the clergy without foundation." All those who have the most intimate knowledge are of one accord on the subject of the loyalty of the Stundists.