

tinge relate to the essentials of evangelical religion, will not their successors of the same school of thought be still more radical in their doubts and negations? The advice of a profound theologian and self-denying apostle to his beloved young co-labourer is not untimely, even in this enlightened age: Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.

### RUMOURS OF WAR.

FOR years the leading nations of Europe have been staggering under a load of taxation, keeping up in time of peace gigantic armies, and other expensive war agencies. The rulers in these countries believe immense armaments necessary to ensure the continuance of peace. One is afraid to relax the unnatural strain lest the others should catch it at a disadvantage. No effort made to secure in concert a general reduction of expenditure for warlike purposes seems ever to have been seriously entertained. When such a proposal is made it is speedily dropped as impracticable. At the present moment Europe is one vast military camp. From Russia on the north to Constantinople and Greece on the south, every nation, with the exception of the Scandinavian kingdoms, Holland and Belgium, and the Swiss Republic, seems straining its resources to the utmost to put itself in the best fighting attitude. What does it all portend?

The Bulgarian crisis, Russian encroachments on the Afghan frontier, and the uneasiness of Greece several months ago inclined many to the belief that when spring came the flames of war would burst forth. Diplomacy has been intensely occupied in ostensibly seeking the maintenance of peace, but at the same time desirous of securing better terms for those by whom it is employed, with what results time alone can tell. Rumours are started on Talleyrand's principle, that language was given for the purpose of concealing thought; while others with that reckless selfishness characteristic of the gambler, set stories afloat for no other purpose than the disturbance of the money market, and opening the way to profitable speculation in fluctuating stocks.

Apart from all this, the peace of Europe is at the present moment most insecure. It is true that the Emperor of Germany has uniformly on recent occasions given expression to his earnest desire for peace. He has also, there is reason to believe, been earnest in his endeavours to restrain the impetuosity of the Czar; but the fact remains that Russia has never paused in the work of warlike preparation in which she has for months been engaged. Last week was signalized by the keen debate in the German Reichstag over the Army Bill, which involves a still larger expenditure on military armament than the German nation has yet known. The Government is eagerly anxious for the adoption of the measure. The aged Von Moltke urged it with great earnestness, and Prince Bismarck, autocratic to the verge of truculence, singularly out of harmony with the modern principles of constitutional government, threatened the assembly with dissolution, if the measure was not adopted. Both speakers professed their belief that war was not imminent, but that larger armies and greater equipments were absolutely needed for its aversion. Where is this to end? France understands the position, and increased expenditure on the armies of the republic is enthusiastically voted, in the spirit the last war was entered on, with a light heart. This would then afford a plausible reason for Germany making still larger preparations, and so the game would go on till a state of things as intolerable as actual war itself would be brought about.

Whether well founded or not, it appears that the British Government is taking every precaution against a surprise. The condition of the army is securing close attention, the navy is being rapidly brought up to the highest standard of efficiency possible, and all will be in readiness, let the occasion for its use arise when it may.

For what reason are these millions of armed men to be put in motion? Is there sufficient cause for setting all Europe aflame, and letting loose war's horrors upon other millions that have but little interest in the disputes and ambitions of kings and cabinets? Is the desire of the French to be avenged for the disasters culminating in Sedan and the siege of Paris, or German imperial jealousy of France, sufficient reason for deluging the fair fields of either country with blood? Is European peace to be dependent

on the hungry ambition of Russia to rule in Constantinople, and to extend her conquests across the Asian continent? If the desires of the people of these nations had their way, it is almost certain that there would be no speculations as to the imminence of a great war at the present time.

One thing is clear—the present tension and uncertainty cannot long continue. In a short time the momentous question, Peace or War? will be decided. Meanwhile it is surely the desire of all who believe in and seek to do the will of the Prince of Peace that He who overrules all events will in His mercy avert the awful calamity of war. The apprehensions of troublous times ought to add intensity to the prayers of all who long for the coming of the time when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth, and when that kingdom which is righteousness and peace shall be established.

### Books and Magazines.

**UNCOVERING THE MUMMY OF RAMESES II.** (Toronto: Williamson & Co.)—This sheet gives engravings from photographs, and contains brief letterpress accounts of the discovery of the mummy of Rameses, the oppressor of the Jews in the time of Moses.

THE first number of the *Faithful Witness* has been issued by Mr. S. R. Briggs. It contains much useful and profitable reading matter. Its typography is excellent, and contributions from eminent Christian writers are promised. Its *raison d'être* is the advocacy of the pre-millennarian theory of the Second Advent.

**THE BROOKLYN MAGAZINE.** (New York: 130 Pearl Street.)—Readers of this constantly improving magazine are presented in the January number with a fine selection of papers on a great variety of subjects, many of them most commendably short. The announcement is made that in April the *Brooklyn* will appear as an illustrated magazine.

**THE THEOLOGICAL AND HOMILETIC MAGAZINE.** (Toronto: S. R. Briggs.)—In the Symposium of this valuable monthly Dr. T. W. Rhys Davids, the distinguished Orientalist, has a paper on "Buddhism and Christianity," and Rev. D. Powell discusses Biblical and Scientific Ideas on the end of the World. The contributors to the Expository Section are Dr. Oswald Dykes, Rev. A. F. Muir, M.A., and Dr. J. Morison. The remaining contents are interesting and suggestive.

**GRAHAM'S LADDIE.** By Julia McNair Wright. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication; Toronto: James Bain & Son.)—The story is intensely interesting. It opens in a little obscure fishing hamlet—Kill Eda. There has been a wreck and the brave fishermen go out to the dismasted hull, where one of them finds a baby tied to the rigging. After a series of thrilling adventures, the waif of the *Zwei Guedeld* wreck finds his home. The story, exquisitely told, beautifully illustrates the divine providence and realizes the truth of the appellation given to the baby when found—"The child of the good God." The work is finely illustrated.

**THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.** (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; Toronto: William Briggs.)—Dr. Leonard Bacon writes on "How May the Ministry Increase its Efficiency and Usefulness?" Dr. Howard Crosby discusses Total Abstinence in the light of Paul's Law of Charity. "The Sunday Newspaper" is the subject of a paper by Dr. Talbot W. Chambers, while Dr. A. T. Pierson and others make valuable contributions. Several of the leading divines supply the Sermonic Section. In addition will be found a number of most useful practical papers, and Dr. Stuckenberg's comprehensive review of the current religious thought of Continental Europe closes a capital issue of the *Homiletic*.

**RECEIVED:—THE OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT** (Morgan Park, Ill.); **VICK'S MAGAZINE** (Rochester, N. Y.: James Vick); **THE CONVERTED CATHOLIC** (New York: James A. O'Connor); **THE COSMOPOLITAN**, an illustrated literary magazine (Rochester, N. Y.: Schlicht & Field Co.); **CATHOLICITY—TRUE AND FALSE**, a sermon preached before the National Congregational Council at Chicago, October 13, 1886 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; Toronto: William Briggs); **MIND IN NATURE** (Chicago: The Cosmic Publishing Co.); **WORDS AND WEAPONS FOR CHRISTIAN WORKERS**, edited by Rev. George F. Pentecost, D.D. (New York: Jos. H. Richards); **THE RAILWAY SIGNAL** (Toronto: W. E. Burford).

### THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

#### DOOR TO DOOR ZENANA WORK IN THE CITY OF PEKIN.

One of the last letters written by Mrs. Williamson, a devoted missionary, whose death was recently chronicled, contains the following:

Pekin! Napoleon's memorable saying, "Forty centuries look down upon you," might well be repeated here. Nor are these forty centuries of decay, but of living, active, buoyant energy. No desolate pyramids and sand-buried sphinx here, but a glorious city built with walls and gateways that are the wonder of the world. In its court there reigns as regent a woman who, for energy, force of character and shrewdness, has few equals and no superior. It has been well said that her high Roman nose is matched with a will like a hydraulic press. And it is wonderful that during her regency the Chinese cabinet has made few if any mistakes. She is a Manchu; and this visit to Pekin has raised the Manchu women to a very high point in my estimation of the woman-kind of the world. They have fresh, fair faces, with a very happy expression, abundant black hair and large feet. Their active movements are in marked contrast with the Chinese women around them.

One of the first visits I made in Pekin was to a house whose "Tai Tai," as the first lady is called, was a Manchu.

At the door of a very large house in our neighbourhood there stood one day five or six large official carts, equal to a private carriage in other lands. I called, and was informed that the Tai Tai had not arrived, but was on her way from a city called Scoun Tien Fao. That city and neighbourhood are celebrated for making beautiful articles of felt. The secretary came out, and politely asked me to call after the return of the great lady. In due time I made the visit, taking a calendar with me, and waited talking to the Ting Chien, or Mandarin messenger, in the gateway. Presently a fine-looking elderly man came, and politely invited me in. I had a little parley with him. "Was it perfectly convenient for the Tai Tai?" "Oh! yes she is most anxious to see a foreign lady." "Will I not be intruding?" "Certainly not. Come in. Please do." Then a messenger in a white hat and red tassels appeared. "The foreign lady is invited into the Tai Tai's drawing room." "With pleasure," I replied. My arm was immediately taken by a waiting woman, who led me in. We passed through one court where there was a great stir. Gentlemen's voices were heard eagerly debating; and red-tasselled servants were crossing and recrossing the court with official papers in their hands.

At the door of the second courtyard stood the Tai Tai, one of the handsomest women I had ever seen in China; very tall, some five feet seven or eight. The long flowing robe of the Manchu ladies gave her a regal look, and her every movement was queenly. After our salutation, she took both my hands, and, with an air of imperiousness, drew me into the drawing room, seated me on a thick crimson cushion placed on a divan. Then she seated herself on another cushion on the divan, there being a small polished mahogany table between us. We talked a short time, exchanging the usual social courtesies. She then took up the calendar, which was already unrolled, and exclaimed at the loveliness of the picture, "Christ blessing little children." She said, "That is good," and went on to criticize.

"What a compassionate face the Saviour has! Not a cold look there. He is your Saviour. Have you seen Him? You say He loves and pities little children, and women also."

Again she said: "I rejoice to hear that your Saviour cares for women. Our Lama priests don't care to help women. Oh! how joyful it would be to know, and be assured that we would go to heaven when we die." She accompanied me to the archway of the great gate, where we parted. We who value our "good hope through grace," can we leave such women in ignorance?

THE Free Church of Scotland has good tidings from its mission on Lake Nyass. The people of Angoniland are manifesting a decided interest in the work of the mission, and are willing that their children should be taught. The chiefs accord full freedom to the missionaries.