

REFORMS UNDER ALEXANDER II.

The reaction which had set in since the withdrawal of the restrictions imposed by Nicholas was complete. Not only was the censorship no longer exercised with anything approaching rigour—a negative change which had the effect of calling into existence journals innumerable, nearly all of an extreme liberal tendency—but police supervision was now so inadequately performed that secret printing-presses, all used for revolutionary purposes, could be established in the very heart of St. Petersburg. It was in 1861 and 1862 that the first numbers of the revolutionary print called *Land and Liberty*, and of another called *Great Russia*, were produced, and circulated from hand to hand, and that revolutionary proclamations were for the first time printed, and posted up at night on the walls of the public buildings. The prohibition enforced by the censorship of Nicholas's time against all foreign books of a political and philosophical character had been removed with such success that volumes which no one out of Russia would consider dangerous, but which had really the effect of exciting and inflaming the inexperienced Russian mind, were introduced in large quantities. Buckle and Mill were much read in Russian translations. *Mill on Liberty* appeared in two versions, one of which was enriched by notes from the translator, who pointed out that Mill's notions on the subject of freedom were meagre, and not sufficiently advanced.

The first half-dozen years of the reign of the Emperor Alexander formed a period less of reform than of relief. It was not until February, 1861, that, after a long and painful process of elaboration, the reform known officially as the "law for the amelioration of the condition of the peasantry"—in other words, the emancipation of the serfs—was proclaimed. Meantime the precise constitution of the contemplated district and provincial assemblies for the management and regulation of local interests had not yet been decided upon, while the institution of open tribunals, with oral evidence and the jury system, existed only as a project fully entertained. But the newspaper press had already been placed in quite a new position, and the censorship was exercised with a very light hand, both in regard to publications issued in Russia and to those introduced from abroad.

The universities, too, had been thrown open to all who could or who could not afford a few shillings a term in the shape of fees; for a fund had been established by the richer students, aided by the professors, to which persons unconnected with the universities were allowed and even encouraged to contribute, in the interests of those for whom the almost nominal charges made by the university authorities were nevertheless too high. Exhibitions and scholarships were founded for their benefit; and the actors and actresses, singers and musicians, of the capital were expected, and indeed required, to give entertainments in aid of the poor students' fund, which it became so much the fashion to support that the poor student seemed at one time on the point of himself becoming fashionable.—*H. Sutherland Edwards, in Harper's Magazine for July.*

A PORTRAIT OF JOHN BROWN.

The frontispiece of the July "Century" is an engraving of a portrait of John Brown in the prime of life, and without beard, which Mr. Whittier and Mrs. Brown heartily commend as a likeness. Frank B. Sanborn, who defends Brown against the southern view of ex-Congressman Boteler's recollections—both articles being in the July number of the magazine—says of the portrait: "I knew John Brown well. He was often at my house, and at the houses of my friends, and I travelled with him for days. He was what all his speeches, letters, and actions avouch him—a simple, brave, heroic person, incapable of anything selfish or base. The higher elements of his character are well seen in the portrait which accompanies these pages. There were darker and sterner traits which fitted him for the grim work he had to do, and which are better shown in his bearded portraits, and in some which I possess, taken in the year 1857. But the face that here looks out upon us bespeaks that warm love for God's despised poor which was his deepest trait, and that noble disregard of everything but justice which distinguished his every action. But above and beyond these personal qualities he was what we may best term a historic character; that is, he had, like Cromwell and Spartacus, a certain predestined relation to the political crisis of his time, for which his character fitted him, and which, had he striven against it, he could not avoid. Like Cromwell and all the great Calvinists, he was an unquestioning believer in God's fore-ordination and the Divine guidance of human affairs; but he was free from the taint of guile that disfigured Cromwell's greatness. Of course, he could not rank with Cromwell or with many inferior men in leadership; but in this God-appointed, inflexible devotion to his object in life he was inferior to no man, and he rose in fame far above more gifted persons because of this very fixedness and simplicity of character."

THE PETROLEUM FIELDS OF THE WORLD.

The relative importance of the oil fields of the world are succinctly stated as follows in the July "Century," by E. V. Smalley, in his graphic and fully illustrated article on "Striking Oil": "Nearly all the petroleum that goes into the world's commerce is produced in a district of country about a hundred and fifty miles long, with a varying breadth of from one to twenty miles, lying mainly in the State of Pennsylvania, but lapping over a little on its northern edge into the State of New York. This region yielded, in 1881, 26,950,813 barrels, and in 1882, 31,308,750 barrels. A little petroleum is obtained in West Virginia, a little at various isolated points in Ohio, and a little in the Canadian Province of Ontario. There is also a small field in Germany, a larger one, scarcely developed, in southern Russia, and one still larger, perhaps, in India. The total production of all the fields, outside of the region here described, is but a small fraction in the general account, however, and has scarcely an appreciable influence upon the market.

Furthermore, the oil of these minor fields, whether in America or the Old World, is of an inferior quality, and so long as the great Pennsylvania reservoir holds out, can only supply a local demand in the vicinity of the wells."

THE WILD BIRD'S SONG.

WHAT is it that the wild bird says?
Come listen to his song:—
"Sweet, love is of the summer time,
And summer is not long,

"The blossom fades upon the bough
Before the month of June.
And when at last the red rose comes
She carries but a moon.

"Come while the earth is glad and green,
We'll build our nest together;
For love is of the summer time,
And cannot bide foul weather."

O, sweetheart! listen, listen well,
Unto the wild bird's song:—
"Sweet, love is of the summer time,
And summer is not long."

The May is white upon the hedge,
Why should we longer tarry?
When hedge-rows bloom and wild birds nest,
Then is the time to marry.

E. A. M. in July Century.

SIX HUNDRED FEET UNDERNEATH NEW ORLEANS.

In his graphic account of "Flood and Plague in New Orleans," which is profusely illustrated in the July "Century," George W. Cable describes as follows the geological formations underneath the city as was ascertained in boring an artesian well. "The alluvial surface deposit is generally two or three feet thick, and rests on a substratum of uniform and tenacious blue clay. The well in Canal street found this clay fifteen feet deep. Below it lay four feet more of the same clay mixed with woody matter. Under this was a mixture of sand and clay ten feet thick, resembling the annual deposits of the river. Beneath this was found, one after another, continual, irregular alternations of these clay strata, sometimes a foot, sometimes sixty feet thick, and layers of sand and shells and of mixtures of these with clay. Sometimes a stratum of quicksand was passed. At five hundred and eighty-two feet was encountered a layer of hard pan, but throughout no masses of rock were found, only a few water-worn pebbles, and some contorted and perforated stones. No abundance of water flowed. The continual alternations of tough clay and loose sand and shells in such variable thicknesses gave a clear illustration of the conditions of delta soil that favour the undermining of the Mississippi banks and their fall into the river at low stages of water, levees being often carried with them."

ARTHUR AT CHURCH.

The following episode of President Arthur's recent trip to Florida has just come to light through the Washington "Cruc." While in the quaint old town of St. Augustine, the President and Secretary Chandler arranged to attend service on Sunday morning at a coloured church. When the deacons of the church became aware that such distinguished people were to be present, the front row of seats was reserved for them, to which they were escorted with due form and ceremony. The minister threw all of his available muscular eloquence and earnestness into the prayer with which he opened the service, and then arose and announced that "dis congregashun will june in singin' de gud ole hymn, 'Bring forth dat ryal diadem.'" The congregation arose, led by the President's party, and the gray-topped preacher, after nervously adjusting his spectacles, repeated from the hymn-book in a clear voice:

"Bring forth dat ryal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all."

Each couplet was repeated by the divine and then sung by the congregation until the entire hymn had been completed, and those who were present declared that President Arthur's voice was heard above all the congregation singing out the inspiring words of "Dat gud ole hymn."

GOOD ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN.

President Porter, of Yale, recently gave this sound and wholesome advice to the students: "Young men you are the architects of your own fortunes; rely on your own strength of body and soul. Take for your star self-reliance. Inscribe on your banner, 'Luck is a fool, Pluck is a hero.' Don't take too much advice, keep at the helm and steer your own ship, and remember that the art of commanding is to take a fair share of the work. Think well of yourself. Strike out. Assume your own position. Put potatoes in a cart, go over a rough road, and small ones go to the bottom. Rise above the envious and the jealous. Fire above the mark you intend to hit. Energy, invincible determination, with a right motive, are the levers that move the world. Don't swear. Don't deceive. Don't read novels. Don't marry until you can support a wife. Be civil. Read the papers. Advise your business. Make money and do good with it. Love your God and fellow-men. Love truth and virtue. Love your country, and obey its laws."

The appeal of Bontoux and Feder, officers of the Union Générale, from their sentences of two years' imprisonment has been rejected.

The peasant who refused to betray the Pretender after Culloden, although £30,000 was offered as a reward, was hanged for stealing a cow.

RELIGION IN RUSSIA.

The Berlin correspondent of "The London Telegraph" writes: Most persons think of the Russian people as a body of some seventy millions of peasants devoted to the Czar and patiently submitting to the scourge of corrupt bureaucracy, and a million of conspirators, secretly sympathized with by every man and woman of a certain education and aspiring towards a higher culture. To close observers it is no secret that the religious sentiments of large classes of the population no longer find satisfaction in the ceremonies of the orthodox Church—that the breach between the ambitious worldly, grasping monks who monopolize all the good benefices of the Church, and the parish priests, steeped in poverty and ignorance, is greater than ever, and that the lay element is beginning to hate the bigotry of the upper hierarchy as much as it despises the ignorance and squalor of the parochial clergy. Pamphlets and articles on the subject have, however, lately appeared in Russia and Germany, among which Baron von der Bruggen's *Stundisten* in the *Deutsche Rundschau* is most likely to interest English readers, as it deals with three movements, which bear much resemblance to the means by which Protestantism has lately been propagated in Italy and Spain, and possesses many features of Methodist revivals. Of these movements one owes its origin, as far as can be made out, to an Englishman, Lord Radstock, and another to German Lutherans, while the genesis of the third can not with certainty be traced.

To begin with the last of the three, an evangelical spirit of inquiry is said to be manifesting itself in the northern districts of the Ural mountains. The peasantry is no longer disposed to content itself with the outward performances prescribed to the orthodox. It anxiously buys New Testaments, if it can read, or listen to the texts read by others, and expounded by every one according to his own lights. It leaves off attending church services and seeks edification at home.

Something more is known of a propaganda in the south, which appears to have originated with the German colonists in the Government Cherson, who were in the habit of meeting together to pray, to expound the Bible, and to sing hymns and psalms. These prayer meetings, or, "Betstunden," soon attracted the Russian peasants. They imitated their German neighbours, and so widely did this practice spread that "Stundismus" has become a denomination, and the number of "Stundisten" in the district of Kieff is alone calculated by thousands. The cause of the rapidity with which the new faith and observance have supplanted the old is not difficult to discover. It lies in the Gospel, which was a perfect novelty to the Russian peasant. Had not the larger minded Emperors Alexander I. and II. tolerated the publication and sale of Russian New Testaments, many more years might have elapsed before the lower classes in Russia could have discovered the knowledge which the Church had carefully hidden from them. The Sermon on the Mount, the whole life and image of the Saviour, came upon them in the shape of a revelation, quite as much so as it ever did to Hottentots, Esquimaux or South Sea Islanders. Von Der Bruggen relates a remarkable circumstance which he gathered from the lips of a landed proprietor. One day the latter heard from one of his men, who had ridden as fast as he could to bring the news, that a great brawl was going on in a neighbouring village. Carts full of "Stundisten" had arrived and were being attacked with cudgels and stones. The country gentleman rode up to the spot and found that these Muscovite Methodists had slowly driven up to the village and through the streets, singing psalms. These were the people whom the priests had always held up as enemies of God and the Church, and frequenters of taverns and pot-houses. Hence, the newcomers were received with scoffs and jeers, and ordered to depart. As they did not obey, the crowd proceeded to hustle them about and to throw stones at them. The converts did not defend themselves or give blow for blow. They avoided angry words and calmly continued to chant. The narrator arrived in time to prevent worse from happening and to establish order. He witnessed how more than one of the orthodox peasants was so forcibly struck by the behaviour of the Salvationists, if we may so call them, as to fall on his knees and look after them as if they had been the real saints of his own Church. Two days later the whole village had gone over to the sect of Stundists.

A similar movement has been begun in the aristocratic circles of St. Petersburg by Wassili Alexandrovich Pashkoff, a colonel in the guards and a man of birth and wealth, who was led to study the Gospel by Lord Radstock. He has left the army, and now opens his palace regularly to the rich, who hold prayer meetings in French; and to poor to whom the New Testament is read and expounded in their native tongue, in which the colonel also prays with them. The hymns sung are translated from the German, and adapted to the melodies in use among German Protestants. In one of the latest Russian publications on the subject, either by Jassoff or Pruganya, the total number of "heretics" in Russia is estimated at 12,000,000. An official account distinguishes 3,000,000 of sectarians who have priests of their own, 8,000,000 who have no priests, rather less than 1,000,000 of "spiritual Christians," and 65,000 "enthusiasts," among whom we may, I presume, reckon the Flagellants (Chlisti), the Mutators (Skopzi), the Wanderers (Strauniki), the Jumpers (Bequm), and the Laving-Dead. The latter bear their strange name because they are in the habit of sleeping in coffins—a fact that reminds one of the Chinese colonist whose first day's work in the new country is invariably the construction of his own coffin. The dissimilarity among all these sects is immense. Adherents of the ancient faith are seriously at variance with the official church only in respect to the highly important question whether two fingers have to be lifted up in swearing an oath or three. Many a martyr might have avoided persecution, prison, torture, and death had he been less economical in the use of his fingers, and raised three instead of contenting himself with two. Sectarianism in Russia has until lately been as superstitious and ignorant as orthodoxy. A kind of partly evangelical, partly rationalist spiritualism seems to have entered it as a ferment, which may some day bring either destruction or reform to the Russian Church.