

advanced, and the religious wants of thousands of your fellow-colonists supplied. Reflect, furthermore, upon the rich revenue of glory that will, under God, accrue to all the persons of the God-head through this Institution, and that those who, in a right spirit, contribute towards this fund, shall have a share in all this glory, and that down to the latest generations. Reflect, I entreat you, upon all these things, and I leave the matter with perfect safety in your hands. One request more, and I close: Make the whole of this proceeding the subject of your daily prayers. If you have anything of the spirit of Him who, when he saw the multitudes as sheep having no shepherd, was moved with compassion on them, then will you realize your responsibility and privilege, and pray the Lord of the harvest that he may send forth more labourers into his harvest.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
ALEXANDER FORRIESTER,
Free Church Deputy.

RUSSIA.—SINGULAR ACCOUNT OF THE MOLOKANERS OR MILK-EATERS.

SHORES OF THE BALTIC, May, 1843.

I have recently obtained some intelligence respecting a Russian colony, of considerable extent, singular origin, and very uncommon attainments; of which, though prevented by reasons affecting its political security from quoting all the sources of my information, I may convey to your readers some very interesting particulars.

Although doubtless the name of Temperance Societies was never heard of in the wide Steppes of Russia, the thing itself is not unknown to a simple and true-hearted community of dissenters from the Russian-Greek Church, whose continued existence and even increase, during many years of persecution, seems to have borne some resemblance to Israel's experience in Egypt; while their present comparative tranquillity in the land of their banishment equally displays the power of Divine grace, and the truth of the declaration that "when a man's ways please the Lord He will make even his enemies to be at peace with him." The first detailed account which I saw of the Molokaners, or Milk-eaters, was contained in a letter from the Rev. Mr. Roth, one of the Basle Missionaries, whose station, Helenendorf, may well be described as situated on the utmost verge of Christendom.

In the course of a missionary tour to Schamachi and its environs—a journey in which the Gospel messenger is exposed to dangers similar to those rehearsed by St. Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 26—Mr. Roth met with a venerable member of this singular community, and he details the interview in the following words:—"It was in the middle of October that in one of those nearly impassable and wholly indescribable roads, with which nothing in Germany can be compared, that I again fell in with one of those Molokaners of whom I have before made mention. With this aged and highly interesting disciple I was happily enabled to converse for some considerable time, as our several roads lay in the same direction, and one of my companions was capable of acting as interpreter between us. Before, however, entering on the chief subject of our discourse, it may be well to give a short account of the rise, past history, and present extent of this long despised and severely tried people.

"The Milk-eaters separated themselves from the Greek Communion, avowedly, on account of the invocation of saints, the various images, the worship of pictures and relics, the prescribed use of the sign of the cross, and similar superstitious observances, insisted on by the Greek Church. In short, they took conscientious exception against every part of the public worship of that Church, excepting the sermon, which however, (more especially in the country parishes), is almost always omitted as superfluous. After enduring in their birth-place, which was situated in the interior of Russia, unspeakable hardships and oppressions, and seeing, year after year, many of their leaders exiled to Siberia, as obstinate heretics, it was matter of thankfulness to them when the Russian govern-

ment came to the determination, some eight or nine years since, to banish the whole of this pestilent sect to the Schamachian district in the province of Georgia. This punitive measure was no doubt meant for their hurt, but God turned it to good, and as, like Israel of old, the more they were oppressed the more they multiplied and grew, the Russian government may well have felt surprise at the amount of immigration to which this sentence of banishment gave rise; for there now exists in that wild region, from sixty to eighty villages containing many thousand families. The norm of their faith is simply the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, their hymns are the Psalms of David, and the Bible knowledge possessed by both men and women among them may be justly termed extraordinary. Their public worship commences with the singing of a psalm; then follows an extempore prayer by one of their elders, who afterwards reads and expounds a chapter of the Bible, much in the manner, it would seem, of our Wittenberg scripture readers. . . . The children of both sexes are, generally speaking, instructed by their own parents, although, where a person fitted for the task can be found in a village, a regular school is maintained. But, however accomplished, the result is a most happy one, since not one child above twelve years of age can be found among this people who does not possess a competent knowledge of reading and writing, as well as a rich store of Scripture passages committed to memory. In respect of morals, they are so exemplary, that few denominations of German Christians may bear comparison with them. When, for example, a dispute arises between two Molokaners (which is said to be a very rare occurrence), they feel bound in conscience to so literal a fulfilment of the apostolic admonition, "let not the sun go down upon your wrath," that they make a rule of seeking out each other and shaking hands before sunset. A liar or a drunkard is unknown among them; indeed, the majority of them drink no fermented liquor, (although the use of such is not absolutely forbidden), and hence the appellation of Milk-eaters, by which they are now generally known. Whether this name was at first assumed by themselves, or given in derision by others, I am not able to determine. Such being the character given of this singular and estimable sect by persons on whose testimony I feel warranted to depend, I return to my old fellow-traveller and the conversation which passed between us. You may imagine my surprise when, after some general remarks on religious topics, he addressed me as follows:—"I should feel greatly obliged if you will give me your opinion, whether we Molokaners are right in thinking that the coming of the Lord Jesus cannot be now far distant?" After stating to him my conviction, that according to Scripture we were bound to mark the movements of the nations, and especially the progress of the Gospel proclamation, as the finger-post which should guide our judgment as to 'times and seasons;' but that, notwithstanding this, the prophecies of Scripture could only be safely pronounced upon after their fulfilment, and that, therefore, in my mind, no mortal man was empowered or entitled to decide, with authoritative certainty, when the coming of the Son of Man would take place:—"I proceeded to impress upon him, to my best ability, the present duty to which we were all called, that of watchfulness with prayer, since our Lord Himself compared His coming to that of a thief in the night, or to a flash of lightning, which may at any moment dazzle our astonished vision from the most unexpected quarter. The old man seemed satisfied with my answer, saying that was his own opinion too, and that it afforded him great pleasure to find their views on this question were shared by other Christians. I then observed, that, in Germany, several very pious men had given much diligence to the examination of all that could throw light on the interesting questions connected with the 1300 years, and yet had never been able to satisfy even their minds as fully upon it as to fix the time of our Lord's second coming. 'Among others,' continued I, 'a very thorough search was made into this matter many years ago, by a distinguished man named Bengel;

but even he found it too high for him to reach, and its depth too great for him to fathom.' On the mention of Bengel's name, the old man's countenance lighted up, and he exclaimed with animation, 'Oh! I know him—I know him well!' and further converse proved him indeed no stranger to Bengel's sentiments. You may imagine my astonishment. Can it indeed be possible that Bengel's Apocalypso or his Sixty Discourses have been translated into Rum? And yet, how else could this Russian become acquainted with his name and writings?—Luther, too, appears to be a familiar name among the Molokaners, who sometimes indeed call themselves simply Lutherans, in opposition to the Russian Greek Church. But what a glorious hope does this excite as to the disclosures which the GREAT DAY shall make! What extensive good may we not then find has been accomplished by believing authors and preachers, compared with what either they or we ever dreamed of! And how large may be the accession to the "white-robed multitude," which shall then stand at the right hand of the JUDOR, from places of the earth deemed by us dark, only because they were to us unknown!" "Lastly," concluded Mr. Roth, "my old friend informed me that, but a very few weeks since, a fresh detachment, comprising several hundred families, had joined them from Russia, now no longer exiled by government, but coming of their own free will, to enjoy the liberty of faith and worship, granted to their co-religionists in their far, but not now desert home."

In addition to these interesting particulars related by Pastor Roth, I may mention, that I have quite recently read a private letter from one of these Molokaners, breathing ardent piety, and still deeply engrossed with the question of the speedy second coming of Christ. As far as the sentiments of that letter may be received as a specimen of those of the colony generally, there seems no reason to apprehend that this expectation of Christ's immediate and visible reign upon earth has produced among them that sequens to present duty, and that exaltation of spirit, leading to a neglect of the demands which their day and generation may justly make on them, which are at least alleged against the holders of this belief in Germany. At all events, the existence of such a spiritual oasis, amid the sterile wastes of Russian-Greek superstition, is a cheering subject of contemplation to the Christian heart, and may, in some small measure, neutralise the fears, at this moment strongly felt by thinking men, that Russia may use the moment of almost universal abeyance of all social order, and long venerated institutions, for an irruption with her countless hordes on the disorganised, and therefore helpless, states of Germany. May God in His mercy avert this dread climax of misery!

T. B. K.

A BEAUTIFUL ALLEGORY.

The following description of a Celestial Wedding, was written many years ago by the Rev. Dr. Buckminster, and addressed to one of his daughters:

"In an accompaniment with one of your letters, I find a picturesque description of a fashionable ball in the neighborhood of A—, giving an account of the marriage of Mr.—. The guests were many, the accommodations capacious; rendered splendid and sublime by all that art and taste could devise. Fancy and ornament combined their powers to throw a lustre over the delighted attendants. Three hundred silver candelsticks, and an infinite number of lamps, poured their light upon thirty mirrors, which faithfully reflected what they received, in softened brightness through the several apartments, and their variegated scenery. The domestics were delicious, exhibited in a style of elegance and grandeur. The music and amusements were enchanting and transporting. This must have been a scene highly delightful to a man of the world, or to the daughter of worldly taste and pleasure. But, Betty, I find it lasted but one short night, nay, it blushed to meet the rising sun, as if conscious that the lamp of heaven would tarnish all its glory. The ladies retired at three; the gentlemen at five; probably they both resolved to take