

Messenger and Visitor

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REVOLUTIONARY FORCES IN RUSSIA.

Naturally there is some speculation as to the effect of the present war upon the internal affairs of Russia. Will the revolutionary tendencies within the Empire, always more or less in evidence but ordinarily held in control by the hand of despotic authority, find in a prolonged war opportunity for effective expression? In an article on *The Social and Political Constitution of Russia*, contributed to the *New York Herald* some weeks ago, the well-known writer, George Kennan, expresses the opinion that "in its possible influence upon the outcome of a long war with Japan the social and political condition of Russia is hardly less important than her financial and economic status."

There is known to be among the Russian people an anti-Government feeling of very considerable extent and strength, but whether this hostile feeling is sufficiently wide-spread, strong and well-organized to become a formidable revolutionary movement under such conditions as a protracted war would involve, is a question which even those who have given much attention to Russian affairs would perhaps find it difficult to answer. The despotic interference with individual liberties in Russia is without doubt most oppressive and exasperating. The conditions are such as would at once drive the people of any constitutionally governed country into open rebellion. But the Russian peasants have become accustomed to the yoke, and what would be intolerable to men who have enjoyed a larger measure of liberty is not so to them. They are credited with a real affection for the Czar, and, when occasion requires, they fight bravely for their country. There seems to be no doubt that in Russia to-day there is an intense public sentiment which will support the Government to the utmost in the prosecution of the war.

But Russia is a great country and contains many people who do not belong either to the noble and governing class or to the stolid peasantry who are more or less content to be governed in the old despotic fashion. Revolutionary ideas, in spite of the most rigorous measures of suppression, are spreading among the people, and the present political condition of the nation is not likely to be indefinitely prolonged. The present war may not mark the occurrence of a revolutionary epoch in Russia, but it can hardly be doubted that it will add effectively to the influences which in time will bring a revolution to pass. There appears to be no doubt that an organized and active anti-Government propaganda in Russia, has of late years produced an effect which is being recognized and feared by the highest Russian officials. Two years ago the Russian Minister of Justice in asking the Council of the State for an extra appropriation to enable him to deal effectively with the rapidly increasing number of political offenders, said, as quoted by Mr. Kennan—"Scattered secret societies which in the beginning had neither bond of union nor centre of organization, are now joining one another so as to form larger and larger groups, and in making these combinations they are laying aside their racial, religious and other differences in order to attain the object which they all have in common, viz., a radical change in the existing form of government and a reformation or regeneration of the national life." The Minister of Justice also presents statistics to show that the number of cases of political crime, as well as the number of persons implicated therein, are increasing generally and with incredible swiftness.

But what seems to be justly regarded as the most serious aspect of the revolutionary movement in Russia is the fact that now for the first time it is making progress in the army. There is an "Army League" and an "Army Revolutionary Society" organized with the purpose of propagating revolutionary sentiments among the soldiers of the Empire, and there are indications that Russian officials regard this movement as formidable. The kind of influence which is being exerted through these organizations may be gathered from the following extract from an appeal circulated by the Army League: "We officers only

know what is taught us in our military schools, and yet men like Colonel Volkof, for example, whose knowledge is confined exclusively to the direction and manoeuvring of soldiers, are put at the head of whole provinces with full power to decide thousands of questions, relating to the Zemstvos, the courts and municipal institutions. Then when people protest against this sort of thing and demand personal security, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and political freedom, the Czar's Government rides them down with Cossack horses, shoots them and convicts them with exile. This melancholy state of affairs is not new. It existed in France, in Germany and in Italy until absolutism was forced to lay down its arms before the power and justice of freedom. . . . Let us then unite in the name of freedom and for the sake of our country in overturning the Czarism which has outlived its time and in demanding a constitution to be framed by representatives of all classes of the people."

If the revolutionary activity in Russia is regarded as dangerous in a time of peace, it evidently might become much more so during the progress of a protracted war. For while the call to resist a foreign foe may at first arouse the patriotism and martial spirit of the nation, a long war would be likely to intensify the revolutionary sentiment by emphasizing the corruption and inefficiency of the bureaucracy and by increasing the burden of taxation under which the people groan to a point at which it would become absolutely intolerable. At the same time a badly conducted or unsuccessful war would tend to break down the power and the prestige of the autocracy and render it more susceptible to attack.

HEARERS AND DOERS.

Our Bible lesson for the current week embraces the closing sentences of what is known as the Sermon on the Mount. Men sometimes speak about the Sermon on the Mount as if it embodied an easy-going theology. But there is perhaps no other passage of Scripture more searching in its exposure of human motives and more imperative in its demand for whole-hearted service than that which constitutes this lesson. The condemnation here pronounced falls not merely upon those who refuse to hear the Gospel, but upon those who, having heard Christ's words with apparent respect and acquiescence, still refuse to make that word the law of their life. This preacher is he of whom John spoke, whose fan is in his hand and who thoroughly cleanses his threshing floor, inexorably dividing the chaff from the wheat. Others may be willing to take men upon their professions, without inquiring too searchingly into motives and character. Jesus cares always for quality rather than quantity. He makes everything of motives and character, and nothing of profession which is not an honest expression of true-hearted service. A demonstrative profession of discipleship, the performance of many religious acts, and even the doing of mighty works in his name, counts for nothing in his sight, if withal there is no real conformity in heart and life to the will of God. It is they, and they only, who do the will of his Father who shall find entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.

There is perhaps as much danger to-day that men may deceive themselves in regard to the essentials of religion as there was when Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount. To make a profession of religion—to cry "Lord, Lord," and to perform many acts which men regard as religious is far easier and more agreeable to human nature than a whole-hearted acceptance of the will of God. It is easy to listen and passively assent to the Gospel and persuade ourselves that in this we have done all that is required on our part to establish vital connection between our souls and the Saviour of mankind. But the word of Jesus demands far more than this. It is true indeed that the sinner is without power to save himself. It is true also that the grace of God in Jesus Christ is abundantly full and sufficient for the salvation of every sinner through faith. But faith, if real, is much more than a crying of "Lord, Lord." It involves a real surrender of the heart to the lordship of Jesus and a purpose, supreme over all others, to conform the life to the will of God. This is the purpose and the promise of grace—to bring men into harmony with the divine will, and whatever does not accomplish this, no matter by what pious name it may be labeled, lacks the essential quality of true religion.

It may be said that what is here proclaimed is salvation by character. That is true, but there is no conflict between salvation by character and salvation by faith. For faith is character and ministers to character. The soul which truly surrenders and consecrates itself to God, through faith in Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners, thereby becomes through the gracious divine power, a new creature. The believer is not yet indeed made perfect. He is subject to temptation by reason of his fleshy nature and the power of Satan. He is encompassed with infirmity, but though he stumbles in his walk, his face is toward the celestial city and the purpose of his heart is to do the will of God.

The picture which our Lord draws of men as builders and the result of their building is one which should lay hold strongly upon the imagination and the conscience. All are builders, whether they will or not, and all must abide by

the results of their building. Every wise man builds his house not for show but for a permanent abode which shall be a refuge and a shelter for him in the time of greatest need. The man who makes the eternal principles of truth and grace declared by Jesus the law of his life is building on a rock that shall not move, and when the floods come he will not suffer wreck and loss. But he whose soul is not grounded by a personal and vital faith on the truth of God, as revealed in and declared by Jesus Christ, has only sand as a foundation for all that he has built. When the floods sweep away the sand, as sooner or later they are sure to do, the man is utterly ruined. We need to consider the cardinal, the supreme, importance of the issues which Jesus presents to men. His word is not something which men may hear and with impunity treat with indifference. It is that word which shall judge them at the last day. It is upon the acceptance or the rejection of that word that human character and destiny depend.

Editorial Notes.

—The *Baptist Times* of London says: "Passive Resistance shows no sign of wearing itself out. Last week there were 645 summonses, the largest number yet heard of in one week. The total number issued up to date is 8,757. A notable case was heard at Manchester on Friday, when Messrs. J. Watts & Co. declined to pay £252 as the sectarian portion of their rates."

—Dr. George C. Lorimer is prostrated with inflammatory rheumatism, and his sufferings have been very severe. The *Examiner* of last week reported that Dr. Lorimer was resting a little more comfortably, but said, "He has been greatly reduced in strength by the long days of suffering and is still a very sick man. He is however having the best of care. His people are extremely kind and solicitous, and his physicians are hopeful for a relaxation of the pain, which will give relief and restoration to health."

—Secretary Mabie of the American Baptist Missionary Union reports that, up to the first of February, the appropriations for the work of the Union were \$556,000. Last year the appropriations up to the same date were \$554,000. The total receipts to the same date for the current year were \$297,000—\$30,000 more than last year. This increase comes principally from an increase in legacies and annuity bonds. There has been a decrease of \$4,000 in donations. The Union will need to raise some \$283,000 in the next two months if it is to close the year free of debt.

—We had supposed it to be a well established rule of English speech that the pronoun "who" is personal, to be used of persons only or of animals and things when personified. But there seem to be a growing number of writers who feel at liberty to degrade the personal pronoun by applying it to the lower animals. It is the "horse who" and the "cow who" and the "dog who" and the "cat who" and the "bird who" etc. etc. We do not know whether or not this use of language is to be regarded as a kind of practical outgrowth of the doctrine of evolution. But evolution or no evolution, it seems to us that "which" is plenty good enough for feathered bipeds, cats and dogs and all the tribes of four-footed beasts and creeping things.

—The illness of Dr. T. Harwood Pattison of Rochester Theological Seminary, noted in the *Messenger and Visitor* last week, had a fatal termination. Dr. Pattison passed away on Saturday morning, the 13th inst. He was born and educated in England, and after coming to the United States held pastorates in New Haven and Albany. From Albany he was called in 1881 to the Seminary at Rochester where he occupied the chair of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology. A few years ago Dr. Pattison visited Wolfville at the time of the college anniversary and was heard with much interest both in the pulpit and on the platform. Those who were privileged to meet him privately felt the charm of his personality. The *Examiner* says of Dr. Pattison that he was a man of genial spirit, sparkling wit, wide learning and genuine pulpit power, and master of sturdy Saxon English. Dr. Pattison was the author of *A History of the English Bible, The Making of a Sermon*, and other works.

—Senator Wark of Fredericton completed his one hundredth year on Friday last, and received the congratulations of his friends and fellow citizens on that noteworthy event. Among the numerous congratulations from near and far which the venerable Senator received was one from King Edward. Senator Wark was born in Londonderry, Ireland. He came to New Brunswick in 1825, and by his intelligence and indefatigable industry rose rapidly in the business world. He entered public life in 1842, as representative in the House of Assembly for Kent County, and in 1851 was appointed to the Legislative Council of which he remained a member until his appointment to the Dominion Senate on the consummation of Confederation in 1867. Mr. Wark has accordingly been a legislator for the period of 62 years. He has attended every session of the Dominion Senate since Confederation and expects to be in his place as usual during the approaching session. Of all those who entered the Senate with him in 1867 only one—Senator Miller of Nova Scotia—remains.

—We have received a copy of our Maritime Baptist Year Book for 1903. The late appearance of the Year Book is