

RELIGION IN FRANCE.

A PART from the general interest pertaining to the religious condition of any one of the leading nations of our time the actual state of France in this relation has a special interest for Canadians. A large and important province of the confederation is more or less influenced by that to which it fondly turns as its motherland. True the currents of contemporary French thought flow but sluggishly, if they flow at all, across the surface of what is sometimes called New France, yet there are certain matters of vital importance both to the individual and to the community, in which French opinion is almost supreme among our French-Canadian fellow citizens. The French-Canadian, like his Gallic brother, is largely swayed in his actions by impulse. In religious matters he can be influenced in almost any direction by his spiritual guides and with the exception of Spain there is possibly no people on the face of the earth so completely in the grasp of clerical rule as are the Roman Catholics in the Province of Quebec. In one direction it can be said that as yet the French Canadian people show little sympathy with their fellow countrymen beyond the sea. The infidelity so rampant in modern France has so far as appears only an infinitesimal representation in Quebec province. It is occasionally whispered that this and that public man has a fondness for free thought, but it must be confessed they are very chary in giving it expression. Again it is to be remembered that Romish intolerance is prone to designate by an offensive name all who question her claims to infallibility and repudiate her lordship over conscience.

Harper's Magazine for September contains a paper by one well qualified to give a clear and reliable view of the present condition of religion in France. Edmund de Pressensé, the writer, is both a theologian and a publicist. He has long been known as one of the ablest Parisian preachers; he is now a member of the French Senate, and one who takes an active part in the discussion of all questions pertaining to the welfare of his country. He is a Republican and in the best sense of the word, a Christian patriot. As such he views with alarm the present delirium that idolises Boulanger and which may yet elevate him to a position which it is not unreasonably thought would be disastrous to France. Dr. Pressensé is a calm, comprehensive and tolerant thinker. He is a Frenchman, but not an impulsive Frenchman. His estimate of the religious condition of his countrymen is all the more valuable on this account. He has steadiness and clearness of eye to see things as they are, and courage to express his opinions without partiality or distortion. When he speaks, therefore, on a subject in which he is profoundly interested, his statements can be accepted as the utterances of a competent and reliable witness.

The measure of religious independence known as Gallicanism, preserved so long by the Roman Catholic Church in France is now overborne by the triumph of Ultramontanism which is as dominant there as it is in the Province of Quebec. This has been brought about by the later policy, under Jesuit instigation, of Pius IX., which found expression with the syllabus that will long be associated with his name as the first recent indication of the irreconcilable antagonism between the Papacy and modern civilization. The adoption of the dogma of Papal infallibility completed the triumph, since the protests of Pere Garatuy, Bishop Dupanloup and Archbishop Daboy were silenced in the absolute submission that the infallible occupant of the Chair of St. Peter imperatively demands. The old Catholic movement represented in France by Pere Hyacinthe has had no appreciable influence in stemming the tide of Papal absolutism that has swept away almost every vestige of Gallican independence. Pere Hyacinthe is listened to and admired because of his incomparable oratory, but his leadership in religious thought receives no wide recognition. The Notre Dame lectures during Advent and Lent, rendered so famous by Lacordaire and Hyacinthe are now delivered by Pere Monsabré, a Dominican, described by Dr. de Pressensé as "gifted with a thundering voice, his eloquence is without distinction, his thought without richness, and above all, without breadth; but he continues to hold attention by his fiery apologetics of the most extreme Roman orthodoxy, and also by a certain preoccupation about subjects of ephemeral interest, about *actualité*, as we say, which excites curiosity." Some survivors of liberal Catholicism are still to be found. One is Pere Charles Perraud, "who is charged with the Lenten lectures of St. Rochs, at Paris. Pere Perraud speaks a truly modern language, and seeks to touch the generous chords of the souls of his hearers. He had very great success.

In France, as elsewhere, the Roman Catholic Church has striven to obtain control of Education. In this department her claims are met with irreconcilable opposition, but Dr. de Pressensé thinks this opposition has been too indiscriminate and unreasoning. There is much popular sympathy with the religious orders in their efforts to secure the instruction of youth. When under the influence of M.M. Gambetta and Paul Bert the unrecognized religious orders, the Jesuits amongst them, were expelled many of them opened schools as near to the French frontiers as they dared and numerous pupils followed them and were entrusted to their charge. The expelled Jesuits are unobtrusively slipping back again and resuming their congenial occupation. In charitable and benevolent work the Roman Catholic Church in France is deepening her interest and extending her operations. A movement of much importance, recently inaugurated, whose object is to promote the welfare of the working class, will not be without influence in attaching many of them to Roman Catholicism.

Infidel and atheistic opinion is an appreciable force in France to-day, but according to Dr. Pressensé it is by no means the potent factor its adherents imagine. He considers that from its obtrusiveness the noise it makes is altogether disproportionate to the influence it wields.

French Protestantism, which from the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes till the Revolution was repressed by serious disabilities, has had the disadvantage of being divided in opinion, and that division still continues. Orthodoxy and rationalism will still have their supporters. Himself largely influenced by Alexander Vinet, of Geneva, Dr. Pressensé thinks that his influence has had a most salutary effect on French Protestantism and now that Church is exercising an elevating influence on the religious thought and life of the time. He regards as most hopeful signs the practical beneficence in which it is engaging in efforts to extend the Gospel at home and abroad, in philanthropic endeavours on a large scale, and in the increasing interest it is taking in the working classes. The conclusion reached is that

All this activity is certainly not lost for the general mass of our population. Everywhere where the gospel of liberty is announced, whether in popular meetings in which the devout English Christian, the Rev. R. W. M'All, has taken the initiative with marked success, or before cultivated audiences in some lecture room, the reception is almost always favourable. With greater resources, more zeal, a wider development, and a more ardent spirit of conquest, the evangelical apostleship would have immense efficacy in our troubled country at the obscure end of this nineteenth century. Nothing, we believe, would be more advantageous to this apostleship than the emancipation [the severance of State connection] of the Church.

Books and Magazines.

CASSELL'S FAMILY MAGAZINE (New York and London: Cassell & Co.)—This old established and highly prized family magazine makes its appearance this month in a new and handsome cover. Its contents are varied, useful and instructive, and finely illustrated.

WOMAN'S WORK FOR WOMAN AND OUR MISSION FIELD. (New York: 53 Fifth Avenue.)—This is an excellent monthly publication specially devoted to the advocacy of the mission cause, and giving regularly much useful and specific information relating to woman's work in extending the knowledge of the Gospel in foreign lands.

THE TREASURY FOR PASTOR AND PEOPLE. (New York: E. B. Treat.)—The September number comes with all its excellence in Sermonic matter, Theological articles, Critical Essays, Discussions of Questions of the Day, Helps in Pastoral Work, Sunday School work, Christian Edification, Evangelical Work in Roman Catholic Countries, and also suggestive editorial brevities, with a great variety of other helpful matters. The illustrations are a portrait of Dr. R. Terry of the South Reformed Church, New York City, and a fine view of the church building. The first place in the Sermonic department is given to an excellent sermon by Dr. Terry. Other full sermons are by Chancellor Moore of Denver University, Rev. Dr. Burns of Halifax, and Dr. Tryon Edwards of Detroit. The number is eminently both doctrinal and practical.

THE LORD'S SUPPER. Compiled and edited by John L. Brandt. (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co.)—The purpose designed in this excellent compilation will be apparent from the following extract:

To furnish a volume giving the views of the Lord's Supper as held by the leading religious bodies of the world; to furnish a variety of fresh and suggestive thoughts on nearly every phase of the subject as viewed by the various theologians; to aid those who frequently serve the emblems in making the service sweet, impressive and scriptural; to aid in perpetuating an ordinance which, in its history and in its significance,

establishes the central truths of Christianity and overthrows the combined arguments of infidelity; to add testimony to the witness of that greatest of all events, the death of Christ; to carry joy to the hearts of those who love to commune with the Lord; to prepare a homiletic book which I hope will supply a need in Biblical literature, and thus to serve God, are my purposes in preparing and presenting this volume to the public.

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; Toronto: William Briggs.)—The September *Homiletic Review* gives no indication that its editors are off on vacation. Professor Hunt, of Princeton, leads off with a grand paper on "Cadmon's Scriptural Paraphrase." Dr. Ludlow gives a very eloquent sketch of General Mitchell. Dr. Kinnard discusses ably "Sympathy as an Element in Psychic Force." Dr. Pierson gives some admirably "Practical Hints on Pulpit Oratory." Professor Payne contributes a fine sketch of the "House of Mercy at Jerusalem," while Dr. Wayland Hoyt, in an exceedingly graphic and racy paper, using Charles Kingsley as an example, describes the true sort of a minister needed in these times. The balance of the powerful article is promised in the October number. The nine sermons are mostly by eminent divines. The Exegetical Section, the European Department and the Miscellaneous are each full of timely and practical papers on a great variety of subjects of special interest to ministers. The Editorial Department discusses the "Meaning of Texts," and some of the great questions of the day.

MISSIONARY SUCCESS IN THE ISLAND OF FORMOSA. By Rev. William Campbell, F.R.G.S., English Presbyterian Mission, Taiwanfoo. In two volumes. (London: Trubner & Co.)—Many and important have been the additions to the Literature of Foreign Missions in recent years. The two neat and handsomely printed volumes before us will be deservedly prized by all who take an intelligent interest in the progress of the Gospel in heathen lands. It is generally supposed that Foreign Missions are only of recent origin; they are, however, as old as the days of the apostles. Mr. Campbell, who a few weeks ago passed through Toronto on his way to resume his much-loved work in Formosa, as a missionary of the English Presbyterian Church, has rendered excellent service by rescuing from oblivion a most important chapter in the history of missions. The first efforts to evangelize Formosa were made by the Churches of Holland over two centuries since. From 1624 to 1662 there was a Dutch settlement in Formosa, and most excellent Christian work was accomplished, traces of which are still distinctly visible. The first part of Mr. Campbell's work is a reprint of a book published in 1650, which furnishes much that is of interest to the readers of this age. As in those days title-pages were more voluminous than modern taste approves, it is worth while reproducing here in substance and spelling, the one appearing in the first volume, since it will give the reader an idea of its contents: "Of the Conversion of Five Thousand Nine Hundred East Indians in the Isle Formosa, neere China, to the profession of the True God, in Jesus Christ, by means of M. Ro: Junius, a Minister lately in Delph, Holland. Related by his good Friend M. C. Sibellius, Pastor in Darentie there, in a Latine Letter. Translated to further the Faith and Joy of many here, by H. Jessei, a servant of Jesus Christ. Imprimatur, etc." The narratives of early mission work in Formosa are extremely interesting. These are followed by no less interesting and clearly-written narratives of mission work now prosecuted in Formosa. Much that Canadian readers would feel interested in might be quoted, but the following, descriptive of Dr. Mackay's work, must for the present suffice:

With all this, however, it is necessary to get introduced to God's main instrument in accomplishing the results above referred to. Mr. McKay is a little man, firm and active, of few words, unflinching courage, and one whose sound common-sense is equalled only by his earnest devotion to the Master. He began by labouring hard to know the language well himself, and came soon to think that, so far as he dared give it direction, his work had better for a time be confined to the largely predominating Chinese portion of the people. During the first year of his stay in Tamsui, he began an educational and evangelistic training movement among the young men of the Church, which has been greatly blessed in the carrying on of the work. For the most part, the Tamsui chapels are well grouped together, our brother going on the plan of very gradual extension, with occasional long evangelistic tours into regions which are still unoccupied. On such journeys, his real work has been greatly helped by sometimes practising as a dentist in the towns and villages through which he passed. From the chewing of betel-nut and other similar habits, the Chinese suffer much from decaying teeth, so that Mr. Mackay is enabled on a short passing visit to do the maximum of good to the bodies of the people, with a minimum amount of entanglement in mere extraneous matters. I noticed, too, that great attention has been paid to the praise part of worship in the Tamsui Church. The singing among the brethren is distinct, hearty and frequent, while our brother himself generally begins any open-air service by singing one of our appropriate Chinese hymns.