

reaction will come, and it can scarcely be doubted that its coming will be dreadful.

Another source of internal weakness in the Russian Empire is the suppression of religious liberty. In its best days the influence of the Greek Church in Russia was but limited in the promotion of the moral and spiritual life of the people. Its usages were largely mingled with superstition. It failed to lay hold of the popular heart and in consequence was unable to influence personal conduct to any great extent. Now it is little else than a so-called religion of outward observance, and a moral police system with the Czar at its head. Never at any time was there anything like free religious toleration in Russia, and now whatever little there was is evidently destined to complete suppression. Dissent from the doctrines and ritual observances of the Greek Church are visited with penalties and disabilities that render secession all but impossible. The evils incident to state Churchism have in Russia reached their logical completeness. Reference has previously been made to the severe measures taken to crush out the Lutheran Church in the Baltic Provinces. The Government claims that the children born in Russia of Lutheran parents, belong of right to the Greek Church and must under penalty conform to its rites and usages. This cruel infringement on the inalienable rights of conscience is being rigidly enforced. Remonstrance is vain. The iron hand of Russian autocracy is not encased in the velvet glove. Its grasp is imperious and relentless.

The Swiss branch of the Evangelical Alliance, as being least liable to have its motives impugned, took the matter up and addressed a respectful but firm plea on behalf of the Lutherans of the Baltic Provinces of Russia to the Czar. To this the Chief of the Holy Synod of the Greek Church made answer in which that dignitary attempted to justify the course that is being pursued, and in effect, though not of course formally, telling the Evangelical Alliance to mind its own business. To this imperial ecclesiastical official the Alliance has made a dignified and impressive reply of which the following paragraph is a specimen:

If we have correctly understood your meaning, Monsieur le Procureur, it is the two-fold right, that of choosing his faith freely, and professing it unfettered, that you deny to the consciences of your fellow countrymen. By so doing you set up the dogma, "Might before right." Make no mistake. There is no denying it; and, moreover, you prove that political interests are to be placed before the rights of religion. No other conclusions can be arrived at, since you declare that henceforth anyone dissenting from the orthodox faith shall do so at the risk of pains and penalties. In protesting once more, Monsieur le Procureur, against the employment of force in questions of conscience, we not only are concerned, as we have stated in our petition to his Majesty, about the Lutherans in the Baltic provinces, but also about the thousands of true and sincere believers throughout the vast Russian Empire, whose cries and tears are ascending up to the throne of God. It is on behalf of all these brethren in the faith, for it is only about such that the Alliance takes any action; it is in their name, or rather, we say, in the name of eternal justice, and the imperishable rights of conscience, that we venture to appeal anew to the imperial prerogative; and we shall at the same time, Monsieur le Procureur, present our petitions at the throne of that Supreme Ruler who reigns over all the kingdoms of the world, and who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

This like the previous remonstrance will be practically unheeded. Cruel wrongs may continue to be inflicted on a helpless people, but the dynasty that persists in crushing out the most sacred rights of its subjects will have a day of reckoning. On the side of the oppressor there is power, but the time comes when the right hand loses its cunning and an emancipated people regains its rights, and because God rules that time will come to Russia.

RELAXATION.

MAN'S mission in this world is work. Labour is the law of his life. If a man does not work, neither shall he eat, is the apostolic interpretation of the universal law. The struggle for the means of material existence, even with all the advances in civilization, the adaptations of scientific discovery and mechanical invention have secured, has become intense and absorbing. The same law pervades the spiritual and moral realm. No man can achieve a high character merely by sitting still, or drifting aimlessly with the tide. Salvation is by grace; it is God's free gift; but salvation has its active human side as well. The exhortation to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling is just as binding as the command, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. So far as God's purposes have been revealed, it is clear that in the divine plan there is no room for idlers in this world. Blessedness is only attainable by giving heed to the monition, Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.

At the same time, it is equally true that man's

capacity for labour, and his powers of endurance, have their limits. God requires mercy as well as sacrifice. Man was not created for material effort alone. His high capacities and endowments forbid the possibility of his contentment in being a merely productive machine. He has a many-sided nature, which it is the purpose of his present probationary state to develop. For this one of his immediate needs is leisure for rest and relaxation. The bow too tensely bent will break and become useless; to preserve its elasticity, it must occasionally be left unstrung. Intense devotion to any one pursuit till it becomes an overmastering passion, inevitably ends in serious loss. Undue devotion to business cannot result profitably. Health will be sacrificed, the domesticities will suffer, life will become a weariness, and what to the view of the man who lives only for success, is most serious, the well-balanced brain will lose its equipoise, overstrung nerves be shattered, the judgment impaired, and when these serious calamities occur, the pathway of further advancement is blocked.

Healthful recreation is therefore a necessity of a well-ordered life. Amusement can never become its main business. To make it the chief pursuit would be a most serious mistake. Its purpose would be perverted, and it might cause irreparable injury to character. The right use of relaxation is to afford a healthful pause to the overtaxed energies of mind and body, that they may recuperate and be fitted afresh for the real and serious business of life, to give elasticity and buoyancy of spirit, and to rekindle the real pleasure that honest and conscientious work is fitted to give. In these days of intense activity, the absolute necessity for occasional cessations from the ordinary round of toil is generally recognized. In the first stages of the real business of life—the educational—a vacation is found indispensable. The eye of the child gets dull, and the brain grows weary with its daily round of study, and the temporary relief is no less grateful to the teacher, who occasionally comes to feel that his task is becoming monotonous. The pastor, though his work has much variety in it, experiences that the constant strain on his mind and sensibilities has a benumbing effect, and it is not unreasonable that he should long with the longing of the school boy for the coming of his holidays. So in every department of labour and activity, the rest and refreshment that change and relaxation bring are cheerfully welcomed.

For a well balanced life amusement is necessary, yet it is not enough that it should be congenial and attractive. No amusement that is not conducive to health and innocent in its character is properly legitimate. If it is other than this it will be hurtful, not helpful. Athletic exercises within due bounds are necessary as they are attractive to the young. If not pushed to extremes they are physically beneficial, and not in themselves injurious to the moral nature. The too obvious fact, however, is that through a perversion that is accidental, not essential, they have in almost every department become associated with dangerous temptations. Many young men, for instance, find great enjoyment and recreation in bicycle riding. The temptation to which some too readily yield is to employ the sacred hours of the Sabbath for their amusement instead of attending to the higher duties for which the day was instituted. The same temptation besets those who are fond of other means of recreation. It is well for our young men seriously to remember that the Sabbath was designed for higher and holier purposes and not alone a release from the restraints of ordinary toil.

One serious evil that has at the present time fastened itself on almost every form of relaxation and amusement ought to be religiously shunned by every one who cherishes pure and lofty aspirations, and who seeks the attainment of a healthy moral nature. The inveterate custom of betting on all athletic contests cannot rightly be regarded as other than pernicious. The young man trained in a pure moral and spiritual atmosphere who permits himself to be entangled by this betting and gambling mania has entered on the down grade, and if he continues thereon he will soon discover that the incline is steadily becoming steeper and more dangerous. The course on which he has entered soon, for him at least, becomes too difficult to retrace. It were folly to prescribe what particular forms of amusement should be followed and which shunned. Tastes, opportunities and conditions differ, and each must decide for himself what form is best suited to individual circumstances. The one thing to be considered is the character and tendency and associations of the particular form of relaxation to which he is attracted. No kind of amusement can be followed with safety and benefit unless it is of such a nature as conscience and correct moral principle can unhesitatingly approve.

Books and Magazines.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. (Boston: Littell & Co.) This valuable weekly presents its readers with all that is most attractive and interesting in the best current literature of the day.

ST. NICHOLAS. (New York: The Century Co.) The May number of this splendid publication is more than usually attractive because of the great variety and interest of its contents. The illustrations also are both numerous and excellent.

OUR YOUNG ONES AND THE NURSERY. (Boston: The Russell Publishing Co.) Bright little eyes will beam all the brighter when they glance at the contents and look at the pictures in the pages of this widely-welcomed little monthly.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.) Every week *Harper's Young People* comes with unfailing punctuality. It is a hopeful sign of the times when a magazine of such excellence as this finds favour with so large a multitude of youthful readers.

THE METHODIST MAGAZINE. (Toronto: William Briggs.) The May number of the *Methodist Magazine* offers its readers a very enticing bill of literary fare. It opens with a descriptive paper, "Holland and its People," by Rev. S. P. Rose. "Round About England," and "Studies in Art," give scope for a variety of illustrations and interesting descriptive and historical writing. Senator Macdonald continues his "Recollections of British Methodism in Toronto." The other contents and the usual departments afford varied and profitable reading.

SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.)—A paper of decided interest to Canadians opens the number for May, "The Land of Winanishie," the landlocked Lake St. John, in the Province of Quebec. It owes its authorship to Dr. Leroy Y. of New York, and Mr. J. G. Aylwin Creighton, of Quebec, and its pictorial embellishments to Dr. Yale, L. O. O'Brien, our Canadian Academician, and Mr. J. Burns. Other interesting papers are, "Count Leo Tolstoi Twenty Years Ago," by Eugene Schuyler, the "Freight Car Service," in the Railway Series, and "Photography," by John Trowbridge. The two serial fictions by John Elliott Curran, and by Robert Louis Stevenson are continued. Poetry and short story of standard excellence complete a capital number.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.) The May number opens with the first paper of a series that promises to be very interesting, "Social Life in Russia," by the Vicomte Eugene Melchior De Vogue, with illustrations by T. de Thulstrup. The first paper gives the reader a view of the court and noble life of Russia. Another paper of considerable interest is by the well-known correspondent of the *London Times*, M. de Blowitz, entitled, "A Chapter From my Memoirs." Brander Matthews writes on "The Dramatic Outlook in America." There are other attractive papers in which numerous readers will be interested. The illustrations are plentiful and several of them are of singular merit. Charles Dudley Warner's American Society novel and Constance Fenimore Woolson's "Jupiter Lights," will find eager readers. Poems of decided merit and beauty, and the usual departments add to the charms of a decidedly excellent number.

THE CENTURY. (New York: The Century Co.)—A new volume of the *Century* begins with the May number, the frontispiece of which is one of Mrs. Foote's pictures of the Far West, "Cinching Up." Then follow two of Cole's engravings of the old Italian masters, with accompanying articles by W. J. Mann and the engraver himself. There are interesting papers on Samoa, one of them by George H. Bates, now attending the Samoan Conference at Berlin. The Lincoln History is as interesting as ever, giving full details of prominent incidents in the memorable administration of the War President. George Kennan's paper, "A Ride through the Trans-Baikal" is as keen, clever and incisive as any of its predecessors in delineating the actual condition of Russian exiles in Siberia. There are also papers specially attractive for all who are interested in art studies. In fiction the number contains another instalment of Mrs. Mary Hallock Foote's story, "The Last Assembly Ball;" "Tom's Strategy," by Mr. Edwards, the author of "Two Runaways;" and "Roby's Christian Charity," by James T. McKay. There are poems by Edward Everett Hale, Dora Read Goodale, Charlotte Fiske Bates, H. S. Morris, Walter Larned, Margaret Crosby and Frank Dempster Sherman.