

The Persecution of the Russian Quakers.

In the Contemporary Review Count Tolstoi tells in brief the story of the persecution which has befallen the Dookhobortzy, who may be described as a kind of a Russian Quakers, and who are now being harried by the Russian government because they refuse to bear arms. The following is the substance of the story which Count Tolstoi has to tell: "The Dookhobortzy settled in the Caucasus have been subjected to cruel persecutions by the Russian authorities; and these persecutions, described in the report of one who made inquiries on the spot, are now, at this moment, happening. These Dookhobortzy were beaten, whipped, and ridden down; Cossacks were quartered upon them in 'executions,' who, it is proved, allowed themselves every license with these people; and everything they did was with the consent of their officers. Those men who had refused military service were tortured, in body and in mind; and it is entirely true that a prosperous population, who by tens of years of hard toil had created their own prosperity, were expelled from their homes and settled, without land and without means of subsistence, in the Georgian villages.

"The cause of these persecutions is, that for certain reasons three-fourths of the Dookhobortzy (that is about 15,000 people, their whole population being about 20,000) have this year returned with renewed force and earnestness to their former Christian profession, and have resolved to comply in practice with Christ's law of non-resistance to evil by violence. This decision has caused them, on one hand, to destroy all their weapons, which are considered so needful in the Caucasus, thus renouncing the principle of fighting, and putting themselves at the mercy of every marauder; and, on the other hand, to refuse, under all circumstances, participation in acts of force which may be demanded from them by the government; which means that they must refuse service in the army or elsewhere that violence is used. The government could not permit such a desertion of the duties established by law on the part of so many thousands of people, and a struggle broke out. The government demands compliance with its requirements; the Dookhobortzy do not obey.

THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION.

"The government cannot afford to yield. Not only because this refusal of the Dookhobortzy to comply with the requirements of the government has, from the official standpoint, no legal justification, and is contrary to the existing time-

consecrated order; but such refusals must be discountenanced at once, for the sole reason that, if allowed ten, to-morrow there will be a thousand, ten thousand others who wish to escape the burden of the taxes and the conscription. And if this is allowed, there will spring up marauding and chaos instead of order and security: no one's life or property will be safe. Thus the authorities reason; they cannot reason otherwise; and they are not in the least at fault in so reasoning."

A RELIGIOUS STRIKE.

The Russian government, in fact, is face to face with an organized strike based on religious principle against compulsory military service. The peasantry hate conscription, and if conscientious objections to soldiering as anti-Christian were permitted to exempt from military service the numbers of Russian Quakers would increase by the million. Count Tolstoi takes the persecutions very philosophically. He rejoices in tribulation and sees in martyrdom the shortest road to victory: "The more indulgent the government the quicker the number of true Christians will grow. The more cruel the government the quicker the number of those who yield to the requirements of government diminishes. Thus, whether indulgent or cruel toward men who by their lives proclaim Christianity, government is forwarding its own destruction. 'Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out'."

He prefaces his paper with the following prophecy of ultimate victory: "If we will only have courage and boldly

profess Him, soon not only will those horrible persecutions of the body of true disciples of Christ who carry out His teaching practically in their lives disappear, but there will remain no more prisons or gallows, no wars, corruption, idleness or toil-crushed poverty, under which Christian humanity now groans."

The Priest.

"William, fetch the priest!"

It was Admiral Sir John Hopkins of H. M. steamship Blake who thus commanded his canoeman

It was an altogether strange and unexpected request for such a vigorous man to make, and under such circumstances. He certainly seemed to be in no immediate need of a spiritual adviser, for he was at the moment skilfully landing a fine salmon toward a convenient place for gaffing; hence I interposed with the query:

"What on earth do you want with a priest?"

Sir John's benign countenance lost for the moment its look of anxiety, and his eyes twinkled merrily as he replied:

"Why, to administer the last consolation, don't you know? We call the club with which we stun our salmon 'the priest.'" The point was obvious.

In spite of the announcement that King Pramph, of Ashanti, has agreed to the terms of Great Britain, the preparations for the campaign against Coomassie continue, as there is an indemnity for expenses up to date and other little details to be settled before Great Britain will be thoroughly satisfied with the practical protectorate which she is taking steps to assume over this portion of Africa.

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