

ported. This is also a pleasing contrast to what was only too common in the good old days. To what is this better state of things really due? The temperance movement is to be largely credited with this improved condition of things. It has taught men in all walks of life to be more self-respecting than was formerly the case. Even the excitement incident to a hotly contested election is not now seized upon as an excuse for degrading indulgence in intoxicants. Another reason is found in the fact that under our improved election laws all places where liquor is to be had are closed on polling days. This has produced most excellent results. It is a test on a small scale of prohibition; and facts generally demonstrate that in this case at least prohibition does prohibit.

THE GOSPEL IN JAPAN.

THE progress of the Gospel in the South Sea Islands is generally regarded as one of the most striking triumphs of modern missionary enterprise. The complete change in the beliefs, social habits and customs, the exemplary Christian lives of the converts, and the liberality and zeal with which they maintain ordinances among themselves, attest the reality and genuineness of their faith. No less does the present condition of these islands evidence the transforming power of the Gospel of Christ. In another part of the world a like remarkable movement in favour of the Gospel is visible in these days. The rapid growth of Christianity in Japan is simply marvellous. Within the last few years thousands have embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and many of them are zealous and earnest in the work of making known the way of salvation to their fellow-countrymen. The various Christian Churches, Presbyterian among the rest, are employed in the good work, with the most encouraging results. The work goes on with a unanimity of spirit and purpose that must be cheering to all who pray that the watchmen on Zion's towers may see eye to eye.

The immediate want in Japan is a large accession of men and women qualified to take part in the work of the Gospel. It is not so long since the missionaries of the cross in Japan had to encounter, in addition to the indifference of the people, the active opposition of those in authority, and the bitter hostility of the interested upholders of the native religions. With the exception of the latter all is now changed. Everywhere throughout the island a keen interest is manifested by the people. They are eager to hear the message of salvation. Converts by the hundred are coming in. The erstwhile opposing authorities are friendly to the spread of the Gospel. Everywhere there is an open door for the missionary to enter. Now, although the Buddhist and other priests are no more friendly than before, yet they receive so little sympathy in their opposition that they are less violent than formerly.

The friends of Christian truth in Japan, both foreign and native, are deeply concerned at the present time. The conditions for the successful spread of the Gospel there were never before so favourable; in the future they may not be so favourable as now; therefore they are anxious that the present opportunity may be embraced by the Christian Churches of Europe and America to carry on the work with all the energy they can command for the complete Christianization of the Japanese Empire. Rikizo Nakashima, a Japanese student in theology at Yale College, in a recent communication to a New York contemporary, gives an account of the opening of a new mission school in Sendai, one of the largest and most important cities in Northern Japan. Sendai is the chief town in a large, populous and prosperous province, and the influence this new mission school is fitted to exert is unquestionably great. At the opening of this school three months ago there were more than 130 students enrolled at once, and many more were anxious to enter, but the resources of the institution being taxed to the utmost, no more could be admitted. The principal people in the city are anxious to have their sons educated there, and are contributing to the support of the school. With the exception of the maintenance of two or three missionary teachers, all the expenses of the school are provided for by the people themselves.

This recently opened school is conducted on Christian principles. It is opened in the morning with the reading of the Scriptures and prayer, and the truths of Christianity form part of the daily course of instruction. This Japanese student at Yale recalls

how different in these respects matters were only ten years ago, when mission schools at Kiyoto were first opened. Scarcely a dozen students ought to be enrolled at that time. The Government authorities prohibited the reading of the Bible in the school, and Christian instruction was forbidden. Students desirous of learning the truths of Christianity had to repair to the homes of the missionaries, where they were gladly welcomed. Great and beneficent is the change that in God's good providence has been wrought.

The communication of the Japanese student closes with an expression of opinion which he assumes us is shared by many of his friends. It is one which in the main was also expressed by one of the most devoted of modern Christian missionaries, Dr. Alexander Duff, and commends itself to many. It is that the success of the Gospel in foreign lands is in the first instance mainly dependent on educational work. The aim should be that a native ministry, which is best fitted for the work of evangelization, should be trained and equipped as speedily as possible. This is claimed to be specially applicable to the circumstances of Japan. It is what all sections of the Christian Church are striving for, and they are appealing earnestly to the British and American Churches for Christian men and women who are apt to teach, and for increased means to carry forward this most promising work in what is to-day the most promising mission field in the world.

Books and Magazines.

OUR LITTLE FOLKS AND THE NURSERY. (Boston: The Russell Publishing Co.)—In general excellence and in adaptation to its interesting circle of readers, this publication is unsurpassed.

ST. NICHOLAS. (New York: The Century Co.)—*St. Nicholas* for January presents its friends with varied, instructive and entertaining reading, and a profusion of beautiful engravings.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. (Boston: Littell & Co.)—In presenting to intelligent readers the most noteworthy products of the intellectual activity of the age this weekly publication maintains the foremost place.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—This favourite weekly for young people begins the new year with an excellent number. The reading matter is varied, appropriate and instructive, while the illustrations are numerous and finely finished.

SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.)—On its merits this new competitor, in the first rank of current literature deserves a cordial welcome. The initial number presents a very attractive appearance. The engravings are good and directly illustrate the texts to which they are related. Among the most interesting of the contents of this number may be mentioned "Reminiscences of the Siege and Commune of Paris," by E. B. Washburne, who was American minister to France at the exciting time described in these papers, "The Babylonian Seals," glimpses at the Diaries of Gouverneur Morris and several others. In fiction and poetry the first number of Scribner's is very attractive.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)—If the contents of the January *Atlantic* are a fair sample of the qualities which will distinguish this magazine for 1887, its subscribers may congratulate themselves; for the number opens with the first chapters of a delightful novel of English country life, written by Mrs. Oliphant and Thomas Bailey Aldrich in collaboration. Besides this, Mr. Marion Crawford begins a serial entitled "Paul Patoff," and Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton, in his continuation of papers on "French and English," shows the difference which the Puritan influence has made in the English manners as opposed to French. There are also a number of admirable papers by distinguished contributors. "The Saloon in Society" is upon the subject of temperance. A discussion of the political relations of Frederic the Great and Madame de Pompadour, by Edith M. Thomas, and some brilliant reviews complete the prose articles. Charlotte Fiske Bates has a striking little poem called "The Clue," and S. V. Cole some verses on "Athens," and there is also some good verse by others. The usual brief notices and a clever Contributors' Club complete one of the best magazine numbers that January will bring.

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

ASIATIC TURKEY.

The Rev. P. Chambers, formerly of Whitby, now of Erzerum, has written an interesting letter to the Rev. D. M. Gordon, Winnipeg, from which the following are extracts.

The parties on whose behalf I originally wrote you are entirely unable to scrape up passage money. The old father—about seventy years old—in despair started off to Constantinople to try to get work. Friends, however, followed him and brought him back, considering that his project was a crazy one. He was actually imprisoned this year because of his inability to raise 80 cents as part payment of taxes. And yet he has always been and is still one of the most respectable and honoured of the Christians of this district. He is our oldest Protestant, and our work in that district owes more under God to him than to any other half dozen men there. His tale of persecutions borne for "farmasonism," as they call Protestantism here, would fill a not uninteresting chapter in the "Tales of the Covenanters." I spent a whole month in that district this summer. I collected together our four helpers there during the month of July, and gave them lessons in theology, sermonizing, English commentary and Bible introduction. I enjoyed it greatly, and the students seemed to be greatly benefited. On Sunday I circulated through the district, and became more intimately acquainted than ever before with the condition of the people. They are a most industrious, hard-working people, being in their fields with the rising sun, and do not return to their homes until after sunset. Their food is mostly bread and a crude kind of cheese. Their garments—Sunday and Saturday the same—look as though the wearer had been well tarred and then plunged into a rag bag. Every one who has any credit is heavily in debt. Wheat, for lack of means of transportation, is, in that district, 18 cents per bushel. Circassians (robbers and cut-throats)—emigrated from the Caucasus—loan money at from sixty to 300 per cent. per annum, and men are compelled to borrow in order to pay their taxes. These Circassians collect their dues on time at the edge of the sword. In case the debtor fails to raise the money by selling his ox, or cow, or sheep, or bed—house furniture there is almost literally none—the creditor takes him into a species of slavery until the debt is paid by labour—the wife and dependents being left to beg. One village this year, in utter despair, carried the title deeds of their lands, along with their oxen and sheep, to the seat of government, and said to their pitiless rulers. "Take what we have, and pay the taxes yourselves, we can do no more." Last summer Koordish bands, some of them in the employ of Government officials, roamed the country, and robberies were of nightly occurrence. I sat up in my tent one night till after midnight with my gun and cartridges in my hands, awaiting an attack. But the Koords had come for the village sheep, and as I had called the shepherd with his flock to my vicinity, and had also called out a band of villagers to act on the defensive, the Koords thought it wise not to attack. The Koords were all armed with Martini-Henry rifles, and had plenty of ammunition. The Christian villagers are not allowed to possess a gun of any sort except old flint locks, which they quite possibly inherit from Togarmah, or, more likely, Tubal-Cain. It is a crime also for them to buy or sell powder. For the whole I think this the most viciously governed country on the face of the earth. I myself, during my short stay in that place (meek and forbearing as missionaries always must be, and I always try to be), got into a hand to hand fight with a captain and two or three soldiers, in which fight I used my loaded English riding whip on the captain's head, and got a handful of my beard pulled out. One soldier put a cartridge in his rifle, and was about to shoot me, but was prevented. How the blood of one who has had a taste of liberty burns in this land! Were I a native Christian of this land, I would certainly follow the example of the outlaw David. God be praised for the picture of that noble outlaw which the Bible, most just of all books, blesses the world with!

THE jubilee of Rev. Mr. Fleming, of Troon, is to be celebrated by a dinner in the King's Arms hotel at Ayr, and the Presbytery have issued invitations to none but office-bearers of the Troon Church.