

were he free to utter his untrammelled thoughts. Where there is entire freedom from State control there may still be a restriction not less galling. Classes of hearers, and even individuals, may have not a little to say, which if their counsels were heeded, would to some extent interfere with the liberty of prophesying. The only cure for this is a high sense of the responsibility resting on the minister of Christ to speak out whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. Of course it would be no indication of wisdom or fidelity to attack popular prejudices for the mere sake of arousing them. It must be from a profound conviction of the truth itself that an earnest man can speak with effect. Fidelity to truth and an earnest endeavour to promote vital Christianity in which the Christian spirit is exemplified will always secure respectful attention. A fearless and independent pulpit is never out of place in any age. A little more of it in our own time would be a signal benefit.

The relation of the pulpit to the moral and spiritual needs of the time is thus expressed :

There is need of a voice that will still the strife of business competition ; of a medicine that will soften the pulse-beats of a community frenzied with gold-fever, of a hand to rest in affectionate but restraining power upon greedy ambition until the lesson shall be learned, that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesses. But that voice must come from heaven ; that medicine is the Gospel ; that hand is the nail-pierced hand of Jesus. The rich need the Gospel ; and the poor need it. Are you not conscious of the operation of the social forces ? Do you not see how class feeling is increasing ; how the idea of neighbourhood is narrowing ; how selfishness is promoting social isolation ; how the well-to-do and the ill-to-do are falling apart without sympathy and without sense of common interest—pride on the one side, envy on the other. We disapprove of premature and revolutionary efforts of labour for self-protection. We know how many alleged grievances are imaginary, and how often real grievances are exaggerated. But we also see increase of wealth and increase of poverty going on together. It may be we cannot help it. Our brothers may be writhing in the grip of natural law ; but if we cannot help, we can pity. We have not power like Jesus, but we have tears like Jesus ; and to poor, broken-spirited, breadless men and women struggling against destiny and mocked by the unsympathetic splendour of the great, pity goes for something. You say that there is a natural cure for all these ills ; that legislation and philanthropy only arrest the kinder surgery of nature. So the philosopher says, and in this temper he looks upon the sad drama of tears and sorrow ; utters his philanthropic formula about adjustment to environment and passes on. Adjustments come, I grant, and so do earthquakes ; but the cost of such adjustments is catastrophe, disaster, hate, passion and bloodshed. Natural adjustments may come through the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest ; but there is a moral adjustment that might be speedier and less costly, if men were only filled with the spirit of Christ and would listen to the Sermon on the Mount.

The remarks on the form of preaching which occupy nearly the latter half of the paper are well worth reading and no one who reads them attentively will fail to find in them much that is helpful. He urges the cultivation of power of expression, knowledge, power of thought, a knowledge of the proper methods in the construction of pulpit discourses, and rich Christian experience. "And, then," he adds, "let your sermons be yours ; let it be you ; let it be an arrow shot from the tense bow-string of conviction." His closing words are :

Dear friends, if you would preach well keep near to God. Be frequent in prayer. Go hand in hand through this dark world with Christ. Let not your studies take off the fine edge of your religion. Do not talk flippantly about holy things. Do not lose the sense of reverence that you owe to early training. Set the harp of life where heavenly currents blow, so that the breath of the spirit on its strings may make a music that will chasten, soften, sweeten your existence here and be a blessing to the world.

RUSSIAN DEMORALIZATION.

RECENT accounts given to the world outside of Russia concerning the inhuman treatment of political prisoners at Kara and at other places in Siberia, where exiles are located, have been received by many with incredulity. The dreadful nature of the atrocities alleged has been such that average readers imagine that the tales told of inhuman tortures inflicted on refined, helpless and defenceless women are the malicious inventions of reckless Nihilists, and that no credit is to be placed in the accounts that reach the outside world by the secret channels through which only a precarious communication can be obtained. Semi-official denials, coming by way of legitimate sources over which a strict censorship is exercised, tend to increase the incredulity with which these unimagined tales of horrors are received. The fact is that so prevalent is the lying habit, so widely has it spread through private and official life in Russia, that there is some excuse for doubting all information that comes from that country, whatever its source. If the testimony of those who by long residence in the dominions of the Czar is to be

believed, then the proverbial reputation of the ancient Cretans is more than paralleled by the modern Russians.

Mr. E. B. Lanin, who has been contributing a most interesting series of papers on "Russian Characteristics" to the *Fortnightly Review* has lived in Russia, and in addition to the possession of powers of keen observation and graphic description, has from circumstances enjoyed exceptional facilities for the study of Russian character in many of its phases. His narratives have all the appearance of trustworthiness, and all his material statements are fortified by quotation from, and reference to, the most widely circulated and influential contemporary Russian journals. The pictures he gives of the social, business and official life of the people is by no means flattering, though there is no suggestion of a cynical disposition in his descriptions. Lying, cheating, deceit and theft are to be met with everywhere. There is little or no healthy opinion, and the moral degradation which all this implies is for the most part unfelt. One who excels in daring deception is held in high estimation for his adroitness. The smart man is evidently no rarity in Russia. The excuse offered for the debased condition of Russian morality is not that the people are deteriorating, but that they are slowly emerging from barbarism. If this be so, the distance they have as yet travelled towards a higher stage of civilization can easily be measured.

The State religion evidently fails to imbue the popular mind with a high moral sense. An instance of this is given by Mr. Lanin when describing the manner of observing one of the most important of the annual religious celebrations. The Feast of Kuzminki, in honour of the saints, Cosmus and Damian, is held on November 1, and terminates with a grand banquet, in which only unmarried girls take part. They provide the material for the feast. This they do by simply stealing wherever they can, and the young men with great willingness help them in their robberies. In the popular estimation there is no scandal in these proceedings. All is regarded as a matter of course if not in every respect praiseworthy.

Though dissent from the orthodox Greek Church has to contend with great difficulties, it is, wherever existing, producing a powerful influence for good, an influence that is felt. The account given by Mr. Lanin shows that it is a saving remnant. He says :

It should be remembered that there are whole communities in Russia, religious bodies separated from the orthodox Church, but composed of genuine Russians, which are characterized to a man by the strictest integrity, whose word is a bond, and whose commercial dealings with their fellowmen are dictated by profound respect for the altruistic precepts and counsels of the Gospel. Take, for instance, the so-called Sarepta Brotherhood, whose headquarters are in the Volga district, and who do a large business in St. Petersburg in the mustard, yarn and woollen trades. These people are to Russia, in respect of honesty and single-mindedness, exactly what the Society of Friends was and still is to England and America. The same thing may be said of the thousands, nay, of the tens of thousands, of sectarians called Molokani, Quindists, Pashkovites, behind whose yea and nay one need never trouble to intrude, and to whose promise alone one may tender a receipt. To trade with such men is a genuine pleasure, and to proclaim their existence—which is little less than heroic in Russia—a highly agreeable duty. No man with the interests of humanity at heart will hear without profound regret, be he Christian or atheist, that the religion which has effected this almost miraculous change in the Russian character is systematically proscribed and prosecuted by the Government.

This testimony to the practical power of the Gospel is not surprising. The result is the same everywhere. What it needs is simply free scope for the exercise of its inherent power, and like results will follow. But for this preservative power the future of Russia would be dark and hopeless indeed. What that future may be is shrouded. Things cannot long continue as they are. A crushing despotism cannot pursue a course of repression for ever. Corruption from end to end of the public service will result in disaster. Widespread social immorality must run its course until the goal to which it inevitably conducts is reached. The recuperative power of civil and religious liberty, the Gospel of the grace of God, can transform Russian character and give to it a future, but from all accounts the present condition of affairs in that great and populous empire is ominous. A people may be beset with perils from which a well-disciplined and gigantic army cannot deliver.

DR. NORMAN KERR has had among his patients ladies who drank three bottles of brandy a day and others whose diurnal allowance of chloral amounted to 960 grains ! twenty grains of chloral is a full medicinal dose. He has known ladies who took a pint of chlorodyne in the twenty-four hours, and some who smoked cigarettes at the rate of thirty per diem.

Books and Magazines.

HOOD'S CAROLS FOR EASTER. (Philadelphia. John J. Hood.)—A neat, well-arranged eight-page publication containing hymns, music and responsive reading suitable for Sunday schools that observe Easter.

PRAYERS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP. Prepared by a Special Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Revised Edition. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons.)—For the help of those who may have difficulty in conducting family worship this little volume having the sanction of the Church of Scotland will be very useful. It has been carefully and judiciously arranged.

THE ENGLISH ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE. (New York: MacMillan and Co.)—The March number opens with an interesting illustrated paper on "A Submerged Village" by Grant Allen. Henry Vassal gives an exposition of "Rugby Union Football." Arthur J. Knowles tells about "The Forth Bridge," and Mr. J. E. Panton discourses on "Cats and Kittens." Mr. William Gattia expounds a scheme that he thinks will "Increase the Revenue without Taxation." The "Cycle of Six Love Lyrics," with music, is continued, as is also Earl Lytton's "The Ring of Amasis." There is a finely illustrated descriptive short paper "Lismore."

ON THE REVISION OF THE CONFESSION OF FAITH. By Benjamin B. Warfield. (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co.)—This is a neat reprint in paper cover of Dr. Warfield's contributions to the Revision discussion. "The Proposal to Revise the Westminster Confession ;" "What is the Confession of Faith ?" "Does the Confession need Revision ?" "The Presbyterian World and the Westminster Confession ;" and "Confessional Subscription and Revision," are the subjects treated in this pamphlet. "These papers," the author tells us, "are reprinted in the hope that in their collected form, they may do something toward helping Presbyterians to appreciate their heritage in our noble Confession, and toward encouraging them to retain it in its integrity as the standard of their public teaching and their testimony to the truth of God to those who are without."

FAMOUS WOMEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. A series of popular lectures delivered in the First Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama. By Morton Bryan Wharton, D.D., pastor, late United States Consul to Germany, Author of "Famous Women of the Old Testament," "What I saw in the Old World," etc. Illustrated. (New York: E. B. Treat.)—This book is a companion volume, as the title-page announces, to "The Famous Women of the Old Testament" by the same author. In some respects it is an advance upon that work. Dr. Wharton has thoroughly studied each personage, the environments of each, all that conduced to the formation of each character, the native and acquired characteristics of each, and the lessons taught by each to the women of all succeeding ages. The analytical power of the author is keen and just : his ability in describing picturesque scenes is of the highest rank, and his shrewd demonstration of how old wicked devices are reproduced in modern fashionable sins, shows that he is not only a close observer of human nature, but a plain, faithful preacher of the truth, and a rebuker of iniquity wherever and by whomsoever displayed. The language is chaste, popular and flowing, and in perfect keeping with the subjects of which he treats.

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW. (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co. Toronto: Presbyterian News Co.)—This most admirable quarterly has replaced the one that disappeared a short time ago. It is pleasing to find that the felt want of a first-class theological quarterly has not been long left unfilled. The opening number of the new venture is a splendid one, and is certain to produce a favourable impression on the minds of all into whose hands it may come. It opens with a paper by Prof. W. G. Shedd on the "Meaning and Value of the Doctrine of Decrees." The learned and versatile President of Princeton, Dr. Francis L. Patton, gives his views "On Preaching ;" Dr. Edward B. Coe discusses the "Biblical Meaning of Holiness ;" Dr. Kellogg, of Toronto, in a clear and comprehensive paper dilates on "A Tendency of the Times ;" Professor Welch contributes a paper on "The Atonement ;" and W. Benton Greene, Jr., descants on "Christian Science or Mind Cure." Dr. Talbot Chambers supplies Editorial Notes, and a department of great value is that devoted to recent Theological and General Literature. It is to be hoped that this first-class quarterly will meet with adequate encouragement. It certainly merits it.