

persecuting,"* and though the first part of the assertion will remain undisputed, in the face of what we know to have occurred in Russia, and what is transpiring there still, the second part will be at once denied by many. This, however, will be from an inadequate acquaintance with the facts of the case. It is the opinion of those who know the people best, including that of Sir Mackenzie Wallace, personally expressed to the writer, that the Church in Russia as a body is wholly indifferent to this persecution, which arises from two causes, quite independent of religious zeal. The first is the feeling that loss of followers means loss of income and loss of influence, and the second is the national exclusive feeling which regards everything foreign with a bitter hatred and suspicion, which is shared by all propaganda among members of the national Church. It is these two influences, acting and reacting upon one another, which produce the persecutions at the tale of which the evangelical world weeps to-day.

Take, for instance, the case of the Molokans or the Stundists, between whom there is no great difference. The Molokans answer almost precisely in Russia to those who elsewhere bear the honored name of "Brethren." The Bible is their only guide, and they know it well. Their theology is in a half-fluid condition, comprising no definite system, so that considerable independence of opinion is possible among the members. Their meetings are held in private houses, and are directed by three members chosen as overseers—unpaid. Of the Stundists more is known abroad, though their separation is of more recent date—about 1860. These earnest, simple Christians closely resemble the Molokans, and would doubtless have been identical with them had they originated near the same time or place. Their irreproachable life is the admiration even of their foes, and their brotherly love and good deeds are marked by all. As learning to read and write for the study of the Scriptures, they are on a level higher than that of most of their neighbors. An enlightened government would have seen that here was the very pick of its subjects, the ideal of a law-abiding community.

But this is a class of people whose lack of superstition makes them poor contributors to the maintenance of a religious system with which they have no sympathy, even if they consent to employ the priests more often than is absolutely enjoined by law, at all of which times they would have to pay for the services rendered. It is on the fees received for the performance of religious rites that the priests have chiefly to live, and often, regarding it as a mere matter of business, they will bargain over the charge, refusing to baptize an infant, to marry a couple, or bury a corpse, till the price they demand has been paid! They are the first, therefore, to complain against seceders from their church. In many instances complete immunity has been secured by the evangelicals by the simple expedient of contributing to the parish priest the sum he would in due course have received from them had they maintained their allegiance to the Church. But when this has been impossible, or when his greed in levying blackmail

* Dean Stanley.