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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON,

Manager and Editor.

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, AUG. 5, 1908.

The Foreign Mission Committee, Toronto, has received despatches from Honan, China, asking for eight men and six women to carry on the work at that place. They are needed in several different branches of the work, as school teaching, evangelical work and so forth. The ladies wanted are to be single, as they can devote more time to their work than can married women. At a recent meeting of the churches at Honan it was decided to put the district on the basis of a presbytery. It will form a part of the synod of North China.

Much sympathy will be felt for the sufferers by the terrible fire in the Kootenay District of British Columbia. The town of Fernie, with a population of nearly 3,000, has been practically wiped out; and this destruction of property, sad to say, has been accompanied by a considerable loss of life, numbering nearly one hundred. The hungry and homeless are being provided for by Federal, Provincial, Civic and Private contributions. The measures taken on the spot for relieving the destitute are adequate, and the work is in good hands.

The Capital of the Dominion is growing in quite a satisfactory way. The new directory, just out, gives the population as 85,322. Of course this includes two or three suburbs added to the city a few months ago. The estimate made at the city hall was 80,000, so that probably 82 or 83,000 would correctly state Ottawa's present population. It is gratifying to know that Presbyterianism is keeping pace with the growth of the city. Within its bounds we have now eight flourishing congregations, with four more immediately outside the city limits.

TOLSTOI'S INDICTMENT.

Count Leo Tolstoi has published a new indictment of the Russian Government, more terrible in grim denunciation than anything he has written hitherto. It is given to the world in the columns of The London Daily Chronicle. Its first words are the passionate outcry: "I can no longer endure it." He challenges the government to thrust him into prison—or if it will, execute him—in order that he may be cleared of complicity as a citizen of Russia with the crimes of the government. He characterizes the present regime in Russia as "government by execution." The wholesale murder of political prisoners, he declares, is "carefully arranged and planned by the enlightened people of the upper class," who, however, take care that the responsibility for any given act is so divided among different persons that the blame of it cannot be anywhere fixed. After description of certain gruesome executions Tolstoi goes on: "And not these dreadful things alone are done, but all sorts of other torments and violence are perpetrated in the prisons, tortures and convict establishments; not impulsively under the sway of revengeful passions, as happens in times of war, but, on the contrary, at the demand of reason and calculation, silencing feeling. It is not, however, the physical tortures of such cruelty which most revolve him, but the moral degradation into which his people are falling through sinning of the most heinous kind and pervades throughout the empire, for as wives, mothers and the babes themselves, the moral and spiritual evil they produce is incomparably more terrible. And to the religious principles Tolstoi condemns vehemently the violence of the revolutionaries, but he declares that the revolutionaries' bombings and murders do not come anywhere near the cruelty and stupidity of the deeds done by order of the Russian government."

The "Christianian" remarks:—"How comparatively few of those who join in the singing of that condensed song of praise, 'The Old Hundredth,' remember, or are aware, that the hymn music in which it is generally rendered was written by a noblest martyr, Gounmel, who was one of those massacred at Lyons in 1871, when the St. Bartholomew slaughter of the Protestants was carried out in the provinces of France. There are other noblest tunes in use in our places of worship, but few of them so suggestive as 'The Old Hundredth' of the noble fortitude of those suffered and died for the faith—Christ, and for the religious liberty which we today enjoy." We add that the words of the Psalm, as sung in our churches, are by far the most dignified version in metre. Compare it with the turgid "Before Jehovah's awful throne." The managers of the first great Exhibition, 1851, opened it with our "Old Hundredth" in preference to all others.

God has never found time to make a world that a shiftless man could prosper in.

MORE SOCIETIES NEEDED.

(By Knoxonian.)

We frequently see it stated that there are too many societies to the acre in Canada.

There are few plain citizens in this country. The people who live here are divided up into organizations of one kind and another to such an extent that a comparatively small number of men can be truthfully described as Canadians and nothing more. Even the women are organizing themselves, or are being organized into societies. There are so many societies now that all the letters of the alphabet have been used up for purposes of designation, and some other mode must be adopted if the business of forming societies goes on.

Somebody with a turn for statistics should count up the number of organizations of one kind and another that exist in Canada. We can remember when there were just three national societies, St. Andrew's, St. Patrick's and St. George's, and these existed only in the cities and larger towns. There were three secret societies in those days—the Masons, the Odd Fellows and the Orange men. Besides these there were two or three kinds of temperance societies, and, so far as we can remember, that was about all that Canadians did in the society business.

In those days a member of parliament was called a "representative of the people," and the term was considered a highly honorable one. At present there are comparatively few people to represent. A member was supposed to be elected by the votes of the people, and if he suited a majority of the people he was sure to get it. Now when a prospective member is offered a nomination his first business is to sit down and think about getting or not getting the "Catholic vote," and the "Orange vote," and the "labor vote," and the "liquor vote," and the "Patron vote," and the "town vote," and the "country vote," and the "railroad vote."—the railroad vote is the big vote in Manitoba and in many cities and towns—and perhaps fifty other corporate votes have a potent influence everywhere. The people are nowhere, and corporate votes have a potent influence everywhere. The result is just what any sensible man might expect. Public men are judged in many places by one standard, and that is the number of corporate votes they can control. The present Senate of the United States is a good illustration of what "combines" and "trusts" can do in the way of improving public bodies. We could give an equally good one much nearer home, but giving it would serve no useful purpose.

The corporate mania entered the church some years ago, and we were threatened with so many shoots that the parent tree was in some danger of becoming invisible. The danger seems over, and, strange to say, the last formed society, the Christian Endeavor, is the best, and is doing noble work in many places. So far as one can see no other is likely to be formed at an early day,