

tatives of fourteen European powers—Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, Italy, Holland, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Norway and Turkey—with the United States of America. After full conference with leading explorers, philanthropists and missionaries, they have created by solemn compact a Free State, embracing nearly all of equatorial Africa. They have covered by the protection of their covenant a territory equal to two and a half Europes, as large as all the United States except Alaska, peopled by nearly fifty millions of souls; and this is the covenant into which they have entered with reference to the land for which Livingstone prayed. It is to be read in the sixth article of their Convention:

"All the powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and mental well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery and especially the slave trade. They shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favor all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organized for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization. Christian missionaries, scientists and explorers, with their followers, property and collections, shall also be the objects of especial protection. Freedom of conscience and religious toleration are expressly guaranteed to the natives, no less than to the subjects (of the sovereign states) and to foreigners. The free and public exercise of all forms of divine worship, and the right to build churches, temples and chapels, and to organize religious missions belonging to all creeds, shall not be limited or fettered in any way whatsoever."

Every word of this international covenant deserves to be written in gold. A more wonderful highway has not been cast up for Christian missions even in this wonderful century. A page more remarkable, both for the prophecies which it fulfills and the promise which it gives, has not been penned during the Christian era.

It is an appropriate recognition of his generous gifts and unselfish labors that the King of Belgium is appointed the sovereign of the Congo Free State. His sovereignty implies little else than the dedication of his energies and resources to the elevation of Africa, with the good-will and the powerful support of the whole civilized world.

The Berlin Conference, springing from the African International Association and under the presiding hand of Prince Bismarck, apparently conferred blessings upon Africa, during the few days of its session, surpassing all that had been secured for her during the present century. At this conference kings became "nursing fathers" for the church, and the basis was laid for the Congo Free State.

*Fifteen great powers*, thus embracing adherents of Protestant, Roman Catholic and Greek churches, and even the Mohammedan faith, met in conference at the invitation of the German Imperial Government. One of our British exchanges says: "This conference of powers which sat at Berlin during the past few closing weeks of the year 1884 has done more for AFRICA than all the political action of in-