

in which it was held was crowded. At this meeting Sir W. W. Hunter, K.C.S.I., LL.D., etc., presided. He stated that Islam was progressing in India at about the same rate as the population, but Christianity was advancing much faster. In the last ten years the population had increased 10.5 per cent.; Christianity had increased at the rate of 64 per cent. Several missionaries who had had ample means of observation, spoke of the depressing and demoralizing effects of Mohammedanism, and Dr. Schreiber, from the Dutch East Indies, said that in Java and Sumatra they were coming over to Christianity in thousands, and a Church of England missionary described a movement among Indian Mohammedans, whose adherents denied the inspiration of the Koran and condemned polygamy, concubinage and slavery. Canon Taylor's defence of Islam has been abundantly refuted.

SPIRITUAL DESPOTISM IN RUSSIA.

SOME time ago reference was made in these columns to the condition of the Lutheran Church in the Baltic Provinces of Russia. The many disabilities they were under and the intolerable oppression to which the members of that communion were subjected, moved them to address remonstrances to the authorities, praying that they might be granted some degree of toleration and the mitigation of the severe laws directed against them. During the reign of the last Czar their condition was much more favourable than the present autocrat is willing to allow. All remonstrance has, however, been in vain. The harsh and oppressive laws devised to favour the national Greek Church, instead of being relaxed, are applied with greater severity than ever. It seems to be the design of the Russian authorities to convert all dissenters from the Greek Church, not by reason or Scripture, but by the strong arm of the law. That such methods will result disastrously is only too obvious. However despotic a ruler may be, he cannot become lord of the consciences of his people, and this is precisely what Alexander III. is striving to become.

The *Interior* publishes a letter from a person in Esthonia, to a relative resident in Chicago, which, though fragmentary, gives a very vivid idea of the spiritual despotism under which the Lutherans in the Baltic Provinces are placed. If a Lutheran desires to join the Greek Church, he has every encouragement to do so. The methods of persuasion are numerous and varied. Inducements of temporal benefit are held out, and if these are not sufficient, annoyances are frequent, and the hesitating convert is also spurred on by threats which cannot by any means be regarded as empty. In these circumstances it is not marvellous that some who would prefer it otherwise, find their way into the fold of the national Church. Should a member of the orthodox Greek Church desire to join the Lutheran or any other communion, almost insuperable obstacles impede the change. We are so accustomed to the freedom enjoyed in all Anglo-Saxon communities of adopting the Church connection which conscience counsels, that it is difficult for us to realise the disabilities dissenters from the Greek Church in Russia have to endure. The person desirous of leaving that Church to join another must apply to the authorities, ecclesiastical and civil, for permission to make the change. That permission is usually withheld, and should the individual persist in spite of refusal to follow out his religious convictions, he must be prepared to suffer the consequences, which in due time he will find are quite formidable.

The letter referred to gives several instances of the hardships endured by those who wish earnestly to follow their religious convictions. A Lutheran pastor was accused falsely of speaking disparagingly of the Czar. That was enough. There was no trial, no examination of witnesses. The accused pastor was asked for no explanation, nor was he given any opportunity of defending himself. The decree of banishment was pronounced against him, and he had to go into exile forthwith. A faithful pastor feels it to be his duty to warn his flock against the errors of the Greek Church, and to put his people on their guard against the insidious methods employed to detach them from their own. That forms a ground of accusation against him, and he is at once at the mercy of those who wield the secular power. Another instance may be cited to show the strength of the persecuting

spirit with which Lutherans in western Russia have to contend:

A pastor in Liveland was deposed because he advised two girls, members of the Greek Church by compulsion (their father had them christened in that Church), but who openly confessed to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and who petitioned said pastor to receive them into his congregation, to petition the Czar. They did so with a heroism seldom found, proclaimed their faith, of which even the Emperor could not rob them. The consequence was the pastor's prosecution and sentence and exile from his congregation. He was sent into the interior of Russia, and as an act of pardon, he was permitted after the lapse of two years to go to the German colonies of Russia, far away from his home, and preach there.

These are but examples of what is going on all the time under Muscovite rule. Is it strange that discontent should largely prevail? The object of this harsh procedure is apparent. It is simply an effort to bring about the entire suppression of the Lutheran Church in Russian territory. The deluded Czar imagines he can become absolute ruler over the temporal and spiritual destinies of his unhappy people. It is certain that in this he cannot succeed. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and His prerogative He will not give to another. In seeking to assume domination over the souls and consciences of men, failure is inevitable. All the dungeons in Russia, all the terrors of Siberia cannot make the people think as the Czar dictates. The rudiments of civil and religious liberty have yet to be learned in the Russian Empire.

Books and Magazines.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE, (Boston: Littell & Co.)—*Littell's Living Age* keeps its lead as the best eclectic published on the continent.

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; Toronto: William Briggs.)—The question of "Apologetics in the Pulpit: Are they more Hurtful than Useful in the Present Time?" is ably and thoughtfully discussed by Henry J. Van Dyke, D.D. The other five papers in the Review department are on timely subjects and are written by masters in Israel. The Sermonic Section is this month both rich and full. The other sections are in no way behind either in interest or helpfulness.

THE TREASURY FOR PASTOR AND PEOPLE, (New York: E. B. Treat.)—The man and the institution selected for treatment in the July number of the *Treasury* are Rufus C. Burleson, D.D., LL.D., and the Baylor University, Waco, Texas, of which the learned Doctor is president. He contributes to the number a good sermon on "Family Government," and Dr. Gregg, of Boston, has also an excellent discourse on "Faith's Symbols." The varied contents of the number are instructive, suggestive and helpful in their character.

SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.)—The July number of this most excellent magazine begins a new volume. The attractions are numerous. The interesting series of papers on railroads is continued, and is copiously and finely illustrated. Other admirably illustrated descriptive papers are "Life and Travel in Modern Greece," by Thomas D. Seymour, and "An Astronomer's Summer Trip," by Charles A. Young. Henry James' "A London Life" advances in interest and power, and the same may be said of "First Harvests" by T. J. Stimson. George Parsons Lathrop contributes "Gettysburg, a Battle Ode." There are short stories and poems, and Robert Louis Stevenson's characteristic contribution.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—*Harper* has been fortunate in securing a short story "Maiwa's Revenge" from the pen of Rider Haggard. In descriptive papers, all of them plentifully and finely illustrated, the present number is rich, comprising the first of a series "A Midsummer Trip to the West Indies"; "The Great American Desert"; "Studies of the Great West," in which Columbus, Indianapolis and Springfield are sketched by C. Dudley Warner. Peter Henderson, no mean authority, writes on "Street Trees of Washington." There is a quaint paper on "The Grand Tour—Three Thousand Years Ago." The serial novels by William Black and William Dean Howells, are continued, losing none of their attractiveness. There are several short stories and poems of decided merit, and the usual departments are up to their best.

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

THE MISSIONARY CONFERENCE.

The anticipated Conference to celebrate the Centenary of Modern Missionary Enterprise opened under most favourable auspices.

The appearance of Exeter Hall on Saturday evening, when the Earl of Aberdeen gave a reception to the delegates, was of a character to raise the highest expectations as to the success of the International Missionary Conference in celebration of the centenary of Protestant Missions. The large hall, which was carpeted and decorated with flowers, was entirely filled, and a spirit of enthusiasm in the undertaking seemed to pervade all present. The United States have sent over 140 delegates, representing fifty-one societies; Canada, twenty-seven, representing six societies; the Continent of Europe, twenty-two, representing thirteen societies; while the various missionary societies in Great Britain, to the number of fifty-two, will be represented by 1,060 delegates, including many of the missionaries from all parts of the world sustained by those associations.

Among those personally presented to Lord Aberdeen were the representatives of various societies, missionaries from foreign fields and distinguished men who are prominent in the advocacy of Foreign Missions. Professor McLaren was among the number. After devotional exercises, Lord Aberdeen, in concise and appropriate terms, offered, on behalf of the committee, a cordial welcome to the delegates generally. The attendance had far exceeded expectations, and it was not too much to look forward to this gathering forming an epoch in mission work. His lordship expressed the regret of Lady Aberdeen at being unable to be present, but they hoped to have the pleasure of receiving all the delegates, before the close of the conference, at their own residence near London. Several brief addresses followed. Dr. Underhill, chairman of the Executive Committee, sketched the history of missionary conferences from that held by Dr. Duff in New York in 1854. Rev. F. E. Wigram, of the Church Missionary Society, testified to the value of the work done by other societies and nationalities in the various mission fields. He had been round the world, and was able to speak from experience. Rev. Dr. Thompson, of Boston, as representative of the American Board of Foreign Missions, expressed his gratification at meeting so many who were engaged in the same great object, and especially referred to the work of the Women's Boards, of which there are thirty-five in the United States, with thousands of auxiliaries. Dr. Schreiber, on behalf of the German missionary societies, and Pasteur Dumas of Paris, reciprocated expressions of brotherly feeling—the latter mentioned that a mission house had been erected in Paris at a cost of \$45,000, and is free of debt. Rev. J. Hudson Taylor offered prayer, and the meeting was closed by Rev. Nevile Sherbrooke pronouncing the benediction.

CHINA MUST BE DEALT WITH.

When the Conference settled down to regular systematic work the first subject taken up was "Christianizing China." Sir J. Kennoway, chairman, Dr. Judson Smith and others spoke.

The Rev. W. S. Swanson, of the English Presbyterian Mission, Amoy, said there was nothing more remarkable than the way in which this Chinese question had of late years forced itself on public attention. Of all the countries passed in a voyage from the Red Sea to China, no country was stirring contemporary history so much as China. They had got to deal with the ubiquitous Chinaman. China existed as a united empire more than 2,000 years ago, and still stands today, the only surviving nation of antiquity. Now China is heathen, and heathenism is a living factor. He was in China to Christianize it, and he would tell them that, if they did not Christianize China she might heathenize the rest of the world; for the Chinaman, docile under control, was truculent when he got power. Yet, after all, big as this question of questions was, they were only trifling with it. He declared that to be a Chinese missionary was to wear the blue ribbon of the order. They should seek to plant native churches there. Already the Presbyterians had 106 native churches there, and several native pastors. They had proved there that the Church could be self-supporting and self-propagating. He did not wish to do anything for the Chinese which they could do for themselves. Knowing the difficulties and dangers of the situation, he never felt more hopeful about it than at this moment.