

## VIEWES FROM THE WATCH TOWER. THE UNREST IN RUSSIA.

UNDER THIS heading the London "*Spectator*" (a very conservative journal) gives further details of recent occurrences and grounds for expectation that some sort of a revolution in Russia is rather to be expected soon. It represents the Czar as the helpless and unwilling tool of the Russian nobility, and points out that the latter may feel forced to go to war in order to awaken "patriotism," and keep its hold on the government. Evidently Russia will hold together as a great nation for some time, for it seems indicated as one of the leading actors, up to the close in the great time of trouble impending. We give some extracts from the "*Spectator*," (May 3) which go to show that the least enlightened of the civilized peoples of the world is awakening and getting ready for the great affray, – as follows:

"Accounts of the unrest in Russia grow more serious. It is stated that the sufferings of the peasantry in the South, the most populous and richest division of the Empire, involve actual hunger, and that in the provinces of Pultawa and Kharkoff the peasants have proclaimed 'war to the castle.' Eighty residences of landlords have been sacked, and the local officials are so terrified that the Minister of the Interior, M. Plehve, has gone himself to the disturbed districts to brace up the bureaucracy. The artisans everywhere are clamouring against their employers, who, poor people, find orders so short that they recently appealed for Government help, and circulars have been discovered directed against the 'foreign devils' who as foremen and overseers try to execute the owners' commands. The students have, it is said, circulated a forged ukase bestowing the land on the peasantry, and the leaders of the artisans have formulated their demands, which are the ordinary demands of English workmen, with the significant exception that they ask for a day of *ten and a half* hours. It is reported, moreover, that the 'moral tone' of the non-commissioned officers can only be

trusted when they are peasants, and that peasants of sufficient cultivation are not always in the ranks. Altogether, there is an ominous stirring among the dry bones, society in St. Petersburg and Moscow is divided, and there are furious dissensions among the group around the Czar.

"The unrest is more serious even than we thought....As far as we can ascertain, the case stands thus. There has [R3024 : page 179] been all over Southern Russia, where, be it remembered, the mass of Russian cultivators, have since the emancipation elected to live, a fall in prices so serious that the peasant cannot pay either his taxes or his debts, which nevertheless are relentlessly exacted.

"There have always been agitators in Russia, and just now they are very numerous, the educated having convinced themselves that they must convert the cultivators before anything will be done to modify the system. They, therefore preach insurrection as a panacea, and are holding out to the peasants the hope that the land, which they, like Irishmen, believe *would belong to them if right were done*, will be restored by decree. They have even, if a correspondent of the Morning Post may be trusted, resorted to an expedient not without precedent in Russian history, and have forged a ukase from the Czar bestowing the land upon them by what they themselves regard as a supreme fiat.

### **"UKASE OF HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS."**

"My grandfather now resting in God, the Emperor Alexander, by abolishing serfdom gave you peasants liberty, and at the same time divided the land among you. The magnates of the land, however, were discontented with this, and they brought the land again into their possession, and thus robbed you. The country which, for a needy wage, you cultivate in the sweat of your brows is your own land, and the corn in the barns of your oppressors is your corn. I love you, and as I desire to be a just Emperor I allow and command you to demand

back your property and to divide it among yourselves as your legal possessions. If they refuse to give it to you peaceably, then take it from them by force, together with the cattle in their stalls and the corn in their barns."

"In the peasant's eyes this is simple justice, and he demands the land of the stewards, who, and not the landlords, manage the estates. Being refused, and probably mocked, he seizes any arms he can find, and proceeds to destroy the [R3024 : page 180] chateau and its papers....If their feeling spread to the Army the cataclysm so long dreaded for Russia would have arrived, and the Empire so slowly and so strongly built would be thrown into the crucible."

The same journal elsewhere says: –

"THE UNREST OF THE CONTINENT."

"The dry bones are stirring on the Continent in a way which, even if the ultimate result should prove not to be great, should keenly interest all politicians. We write in this country about Continental 'Socialists,' and 'Collectivists,' and 'Radicals,' and 'rioting,' but those familiar words do but obscure the great general movement actually going on. Everywhere, except perhaps in Switzerland, those who work with their hands, including in all countries the agricultural labourers, and in some a large section of the peasants besides, are expressing with violence three ideas: one that they are overworked, another that they ought to have, and therefore will have, more physical comfort in their daily lives, and a third that they can alter neither toil or payment for toil until they become an effective force in the government of the country. The cause of the rapid growth of the first idea is still obscure, for men who are not yet old can remember when the governing notion of the immense majority was that a working man when not eating or sleeping was bound to be at work, – a notion which still rules throughout the greater part of Asia. We fancy the change is one consequence of the small modicum of education which has at last

filtered down to the bottom, but of the revolt against the traditional opinion there can be no doubt whatever."

### **CONCESSIONS TO YOUNG PEOPLE.**

CHICAGO, April 25. – "If the clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church expect to keep their young men and women in the field, they must do away with their restrictions against card playing, dancing and attendance at the theaters. If they are not allowed to follow the dictates of their conscience they will attend churches where they will be allowed to do so or they will not attend church at all."

This, in substance, was the declaration set forth at the dinner last night at the Union League Club, attended by sixty-five prominent Methodist ministers and laymen of Chicago. The proposition received general discussion, in which Bishop J. W. Hamilton, L.D. Condee and Robert Quayle took leading parts. Mr. Quayle said: –

"If we do not take active steps toward arousing interest in the church on the part of our young men and women we shall stand alone in our old age; there will be none to take the burden from our shoulders when we pass away. If we seek to bind the young people down too closely or draw too tight a rein we cannot hope to keep them with us.

"I recommend that all laymen and clergymen to whom the interests of the Methodist Church are dear organize around this question and insist that at the next general conference the present regulations and restrictions be removed."

– Washington (D.C.) *Star*.

### **SOCIAL EMANCIPATION LEADS NOT TO GODLINESS.**

We often hear of the prosperity of Australia, and of its people being farther advanced along lines of social emancipation than are others; – indeed, that in it the poor man's interests receive greater

consideration than in any other land on earth. A reasonable question is, To what extent are these blessings working out spiritual advantages? The following article, sent us by a brother who resides there, and who endorsed the sentiments expressed, is from an Australian journal, the *Northern Advertiser*. It shows deplorably immoral conditions, – such as we must expect everywhere in proportion as prosperity, short hours and idleness prevail. Evidently that feature of the curse which declares, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," was necessary to our race in its fallen condition.

We could not hope that a Millennium of the kind generally wished for and expected by the world, would be a real blessing. Our confidence inspired by God's Word is, that when those blessings and releases which he has promised, come, the Kingdom of God will be here in power; and that it will enforce righteousness and a proper use of the liberties and blessings it will bring; – until all shall have had full opportunity to develop characters. Then whoever shall not have reached the place of loving righteousness and hating iniquity, will be cut off in the Second Death.

The fact that present-day blessings are producing an increase of crimes and a lowering of moral standards, is in full accord with the Scriptural portrayals of the ending of this Gospel age. – 2 Tim. 3:13.

The article follows: –

"The increase of crime, not only in the State of Western Australia, but also all over Australasia, is a matter of deep regret to the community as a whole and must cause those responsible for the moral and religious well-being of the people profound pain as well as distress. Crime is rampant everywhere, and the cases that are tried in our law courts only too plainly manifest the corruption of society and the loss of moral influence in restraining from vice. There is no effect without its cause, and hence the cause of the moral decadence of our people should command careful and prudent inquiry.

"That our boasted civilization is only a sham it would be idle to deny. The list of crimes which weekly fill the newspapers of the Commonwealth is only too direct proof of the low standards of our people, socially and morally. Vices that would disgrace pagans are common amongst us, and crimes that make us hang our heads with shame are committed with comparative impunity. Laws, both human and divine, are scouted and openly violated. The principles of honor and good faith are ignored and ridiculed. Theft, embezzlement, fraud, forgery – without mentioning more revolting crimes – are seemingly the appreciated pastime of a numerous class that live and thrive in our midst. The guide of conscience is apparently lost. People take oaths now-a-days without any reference to conscience. Moral responsibility is not generally recognized, and, as a consequence, our downward grade is yearly becoming more and more pronounced. Drunkenness, of course, is prevalent everywhere, and Bacchus is worshipped in every city, town, hamlet, or camp in Australasia. Excessive drinking, no doubt, leads to crime, but drunkenness will not account for the low state of civilization which is perceptibly ruining Australian society. The cause which is effecting such dire calamities must have a deeper depth than even drunkenness itself, baneful as that vice is in its effects.

"No one can view the moral state of Australia without feelings of dismay. Christianity, it cannot be gainsaid, is fast losing its influence, and in its place we are substituting [R3024 : page 181] a gross form of paganism, and being dominated by a corroding system of infidelity which, if not arrested, will compass the complete destruction of society. Crime in Australia is alarmingly on the increase, and if the friends and admirers of Christian civilization do not make a bold attempt at stemming the visible torrent of vice, there is a danger of their being carried away in the fast approaching cataclysm of shocking immorality."

### **THE PROGRESS OF RITUALISM.**

The New York *Sun* commenting on this subject, says: –

"On Easter Sunday the Washington Heights Baptist Church (New York) started the innovation of a vested choir of sixty voices, with cassock and cotta and the women wearing also mortar-board hats. That is, the vestments are the same as in Episcopal churches. The introduction of [R3025 : page 181] such a choir into the Metropolitan Methodist Temple, a year ago, proved so successful, apparently, that the example has been followed by other Methodist churches, one at Chicago having come into line recently and conspicuously.

"This is very suggestive because the two Protestant churches which in the past were always most distinguished by the extreme simplicity of their worship and their church architecture, and were most violently opposed to anything like mere estheticism in religious services, were the Baptist and the Methodist. They were plain people, and all worldly display in raiment and in social life, was eschewed by them. Methodists were enjoined by Wesley, in his 'General Rules,' to 'evidence their desire of salvation' by refraining from 'putting on of gold and costly apparel.' Like austerity of life was the Baptist rule, and the meeting-houses of both denominations were usually without steeples or any other marks of a distinctively ecclesiastical architecture."

"Will these ritualistic Baptist and Methodist churches stop with vested choirs merely? Will they not go on, naturally and logically, to the adoption of other features of the liturgical churches they are imitating? We are likely to see the cross introduced, and perhaps the time will come when the plain communion table will give place to a veritable altar, with all its religious significance. This is, therefore, a serious innovation, suggestive of a radical doctrinal transformation in the future. We have seen how ritualism in the Episcopal church has advanced to a bold teaching of the Real Presence."

On the same subject, endeavoring to solve the significance of the movement, the *Independent* (N.Y.) says: –

"In our Roman Catholic and other sacramentarian churches the ritual grows out of the faith and can be thus justified, but the new ritualism being adopted in our non-liturgical churches is of another order. It seems to have two different explanations. To some extent it may, as Professor Goldwin Smith lately said, indicate 'the growth of a vacuum in the region of religious belief, which music, art, flowers, and pageantry are required to fill.' Men and women who do not really believe very much yet want a quasi-religious sentimentality which can pass for religion. The form of godliness may be kept where its power is lost, and the form must be enlarged where the power is reduced. Even light may be 'dimly religious' – very dimly – and music and vested choirs and responses and all the succession of forms may persuade one that he has had a religious hour, when it has only been quieting and soothing, and has marked the loss of real faith and religious force."

