

## RELIGIOUS AND REFORM

### ROADS AND CIVILIZATION.

In these vacation days, when automobiles are in requisition by holiday makers who would seek the less frequented regions of the country, the connection between roads and civilization becomes more than ever evident. But it is not only the holiday maker who is interested, nor does the importance of good roads cease when denizens of the city are back at their desks and counters. Rather, it is during the inclement weather of winter and spring that the loss which this country suffers by the lack of good road facilities becomes most evident. The loss does not merely consist in the wear and tear of vehicles and horse flesh in getting produce to market, but in the diminution of social intercourse, due to the difficulty of getting from house to house from the remote farm to the village center. The "Good Roads Convention" held in Buffalo last month shows that the country folk are awaking to take a vital interest in the matter. The American Roadmakers' Association was effectively supported at this time by the National Grange, the farmers' association which, indeed, was active in supporting the Currin good roads bill introduced into Congress last session.

The city of Buffalo is setting a splendid example in the matter of improvement, and was able to furnish the convention with an admirable object lesson as to methods and results. The city is expending three-quarters of a million dollars in the improvement of its roads, and its citizens furnished automobiles by which members of the convention were enabled to inspect all that is being done in this respect. But the task of furnishing the nation with good roads must be to a large extent a national duty, not only in the great West, where cities are small, and far apart, but even in the seaboard states, and especially in the mountain regions of the Appalachian country. President Frost, of Berea College in addressing eastern audiences has often shown how large the low civilization of the mountaineers of eastern Kentucky and Tennessee, Western Carolina and Georgia, is due to the absence of roads. All thru this vast region the horse and saddle are with few exceptions the only means of locomotion, and the only roads are the beds of streams, practicable only during the droughts of summer. Why should not ignorance prevail, and feuds and shootings be common among a people so cut off from all the advantages of civilization?

Our country is still young, and it is very large; therefore the task of providing good roads is beset with unusual difficulties. Yet it is the richest country in the world, not only in per capita wealth, but in natural resources, and therefore it ought not to hesitate before the task. The splendid roads of Switzerland are an illustration of what may be done under circumstances of extreme difficulty by a nation of little wealth, an example, also, of the prosperity which good roads may bring to a nation. France has for more than a century been subject to vicissitudes of the most costly nature, of which the colossal indemnity entailed upon it by the war with Germany is only one. Yet since the time of Napoleon France has expended nearly \$660,000,000 in road making and road preservation. There are in the United States 2,150,000 miles of roads, and of these only 160,000 miles are in any true sense "improved," only 322,000 miles being "road surfaced." The bicycle was the pioneer missionary in road improvement and the automobile is doing its part but improvement on a large scale

must be the nation's task. It will be shortsighted folly if the people of the nation refuse to be taxed even heavily, for this purpose, since the benefit to the nation will be so great and the profits so immediate.

In 1860, after the massacre in Mount Lebanon and Damascus, France was incited by the European powers to step in and restore order. European jealousy required the withdrawal of the French troops after a very short period, but during the months of occupation the troops built a splendid series of roads over all the foot hills of Lebanon, to an altitude of 3,500 feet above the sea, built them so splendidly that nearly half a century of comparative neglect has not seriously impaired them. The difficulties to be surmounted in that part of Syria were fully equal to those presented by our Appalachian district, and the superior civilization of Lebanon over all other parts of rural Syria is an outstanding witness to the beneficial influence of good roads. When the farmers of our mountain districts can get their produce to market, "moonlight" distilling of whiskey will cease to be the almost imperative necessity that it now is. When good roads are everywhere the rule not only will holiday makers be able to penetrate to much glorious scenery which their automobiles are now unable to reach, but a far more important result, the standard of living in rural sections will be wonderfully raised, farmers will save millions of dollars now expended to no profit in hauling goods to market, families on remote farms will enjoy church and school privileges from which they are now debarred, the price of land will be enhanced, the city and the country brought closer together to the mutual advantage of both, intellectual and moral.

### THE RETURN OF PROSPERITY.

Now that elections are over and political uncertainties no longer disturb business conditions, the business men thruout the country are predicting an area of prosperity greater than the nation has yet enjoyed. One of the most significant instances of the confidence in Mr. Taft and the coming administration at Washington is the action of the New York Central lines in placing thru First Vice-President Brown, the operating head of the system, orders for \$31,000,000 worth of equipment supplies. This was done by telegraph by Mr. Brown the day after election and he added this encouraging statement: "I can say positively that the railroads of this country have done so or will in a few days release orders like these of ours that will aggregate \$240,000,000 for equipment and material that will go into railroad building extensions and improvement of rolling stock. I can tell you also that enough orders have been placed with the gigantic steel industries of this country to keep them working for a year at their maximum capacity if they should not receive another order." Evidences abound that commercial and industrial activity are now sure to progress beyond the point attained in the fall of 1907, when the approaching campaign and temporary lack of confidence conspired to check business. The crop reports made by the Department of Agriculture last week place the aggregate value of the 1908 crops of the country at \$7,000,000,000, assuring the circulation of a vast sum of money. All things considered, it looks as if the voice of the calamity lower will be drowned by the noise of trade for some years to come. And if temporary hard times have taught the na-

tion how to economize they have been a blessing in disguise.

### REDUCING THE BIBLE TO CANNIBAL TALK.

A low coral atoll, languid with lilies and palms. Futuna, of the New Hebrides 1,500 miles east of Australia. Just one of the myriad islets sprinkling the map of the South Pacific as stars dots the firmament with nebulous splendor. And landed on the strand a Setochman permeated with the true "Idea" of Plato. Here where Doctor Paton and John Williams were clubbed and eaten he will make his home, it may be for twenty years. Note-book in hand, listening for words in a vocabulary so small; paying the cannibal 18 cents a hundred for the precious gutters, parting with his last two pieces of cotton for an elusive verb.

"Pig," "rat," "dog" exhaust the terms of zoology, no words for "city," "wheat," "barley." Nay, I go lower—numerals up to four only. Five is "my hand;" six, "my hand and one;" and so on until ten which is "both hands." Then come brown toes up to twenty, and after that a vague gesture and "very happy." The lonely white man is going to reduce this savage speech to writing for the first time having done that he will hand over to this remote people a magnificent literature entire—the Christian Bible; and that so cheaply that any Futuna man may buy a perfect copy in Aneityum or fifteen pounds of arrow brood.

He is one of many, that patient lonely Scotsman. Let us look at others—the pioneers, captained only by an abstract "Idea" that drives them night and day with dynamic force. Here is an American in camp with the Micmac Indians of Nova Scotian wilds. He is in dismay over his first printed copy of St. Mathew's Gospel. At xxiv 7 he reads, "A pair of snow shoes shall rise up against a pair of snow shoes. Mere gibberish. Yet only one letter was wrong. "Naook-tukumiksijik" is a nation; "naookta-kumiksijik" is a snow shoe.

In Tahitian words must be coined for abstract conceptions like "honesty" or "conscience;" in Maori for "hope" and "law;" and in Yaghan, terms distinguishing between hands and fingers. "Faita" would be an unthinkable thing to a tribe whose very existence depended upon suspicion. And yet to-day the Bible is printed in eleven Polynesian tongues, and parts of it in thirty-eight other dialects of the South Seas and New Guinea, says W. S. Fitzgerald in Harper's for October. Mistakes? Plenty at first; at a second revision of the Lifu Bible for the Loyalty Islands 52,310 corrections were made.

### THE BIBLE IS WORTH YOUR WHILE.

During the war of the United States with Spain many young boys volunteer soldiers, were sent by this government to Cuba. A large number died from disease; quite a number were killed in battle.

After death their knapsacks were examined in order to return to their relatives the personal property. It was commented upon at the time by the Secretary of War Alger that a majority of these knapsacks Bibles or New Testaments were found, and that not a few of them showed evidence of having been carefully read.

For all this there must be a reason. Men or boys are not found going into battle or hard service with a novel or a picture-book in their already crowded knapsacks. If any book is found there it is a Bible or Testament.

### THE INCREASE OF DIVORCE.

The compilation of the statistics of marriage and divorce for

the twenty years, from 1887 to 1906 inclusive, which has just been issued by the Census Bureau, shows, in the first place, that the marriage rate based on the total population, is higher in the United States than in any other country for which reliable statistics are available, and in the second place, that the divorce rate per 100,000 population increased from 29 in 1870 to 82 in 1905 or, in other words, that there was one divorce for every 3,441 persons in 1870, and one for every 1,218 in 1905. During the twenty years from 1887 to 1906, inclusive, 12,832,044 marriages were recorded, increasing from 483,069 in 1887 to 853,290 in 1906. But the increase year by year was by no means uniform, for the marriage rate responds very quickly to changes in economic conditions. The marriage rate in the United States in the year 1900 was 93 per 10,000 population, which is a rate of 321 per 1,000 in the adult unmarried population. In the twenty years, 1887 to 1906, inclusive, there were 945,625 divorces. From 1867 to 1886, inclusive, the number reported was 328,716. While the population increased thirty per cent, between the years 1870 to 1880, the number of divorces increased 79 per cent. In the next decade, 1880 to 1890, the population increased 25 per cent, and divorces 70 per cent. From 1890 to 1900, an increase of 21 per cent, in population was accompanied by an increase of 66 per cent, in the number of divorces. In the six years, from 1900 to 1906 population, as estimated, increased 10.5 per cent, and divorces 29.3 per cent. It thus appears that divorces are increasing about three times as fast as population. Divorce is now two and one-half times as common, compared with married population, as it was forty years ago. In 1870 there were eighty-one divorced people

in every 100,000 of the married population; in 1900 there were 200. Our divorce rate is higher than in any other nation for which there are reliable statistics.

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