

Sunday Reading.

AMONG THE QUIET MENNONITES.

Missionary and Educational Movements of an Interesting People.

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Few religious sects have appeared so little in public print as the Mennonites, although they have been a unique, distinctive force in the world's spiritual life since the days of Luther, of whom Menno-Simon, leader of the sect, was a contemporary. They have been in this country since 1683, and there are now some 60,000 of them here, and over 10,000 in Canada. The fact that they are branching out in foreign missionary work (a field in which they have been comparatively inoperative) and their recent activity in India relief—they sent many carloads of corn and much money last summer to India—has awakened interest in many people who seem to have heard little or nothing of them. Through the courtesy of Dr. Dewitt R. Good, of Dale Enterprise, Va., the Christian Herald presents the following facts, compiled for this paper by Bishop L. J. Heatwole, of the Middle District Virginia Conference.

Mennonites, previous to the year 1890, had never made public any statement of their work, at which time, reports as to their numbers, doctrines and tenets of faith were rendered for use by the U. S. Census officials. The custom, from time immemorial, has prevailed among them to go about things in a quiet way, and they have never followed the custom of publishing an account of their work or the number of their communicants. With them the evangelical life is reduced to a principle that requires not only separation but also distinction from the world. With respect to this outward distinctive form—such as the "prayer head-covering" for women and the peculiar regulation dress for men, these people have maintained throughout all their generations the attitude of sober singularity before the world.

The first authentic account of any settlement of Mennonites in America is that of a body of some twenty-five members, who located at Germantown, Pa., October 6, 1683, coming thither from Holstein on the invitation of William Penn. The colony increased rapidly through subsequent immigration, and its members came under the notice of the neighbors as being very simple in their habits and mode of life; as adhering, like the Quakers, themselves, to plain, modest apparel; as being slow to abandon the customs of their forefathers, and not readily adopted innovations of any kind. With the breaking out of the Revolution War, there were forty-two meeting-houses in Pennsylvania. Congregations are now located in at least twenty-five States, and in the Canadian Provinces.

All Mennonites recognize The Confession of Faith, consisting of eighteen articles, which was framed and adopted April 21, 1632, at the City of Dort, in Holland. In addition to the principles set forth in baptism and the sacrament of bread and wine, this confession also enjoins the ordinance of foot washing, enjoins marriage only between members of the same faith, prohibits membership in secret organizations, forbids the taking of oaths, and impresses upon Mennonites the doctrine of non-resistance.

The communion is observed twice a year. Every intending participant is carefully examined separately concerning his spiritual standing, before the day appointed for taking the sacrament. Immediately after the communion of bread and wine, comes the ceremony of Foot-Washing. The members of the sexes perform the offices among themselves, each in turn washing and wiping the feet of his brother or her sister, and giving at the same time the hand of fellowship and the kiss of peace. Those who perform the duties of the ministry are chosen from the congregation to be served. Should more than one person be placed in nomination by the congregation, a day is appointed to choose by lot one from among the persons nominated. Deacons are chosen in the same manner, and are ordained to care for the poor and the sick, to adjust matters of difference among members, and in the absence of the minister to conduct the service with exhortation and prayer. Bishops are chosen from among the ministers, and are ordained to administer the right of baptism and the communion, to celebrate the right of matrimony, and to have the pastoral charge of a district in which there are a number of places of worship, and a number of ministers and deacons, all under his direction.

The ministry, except for travelling evangelists, is unsalaried, preachers, deacons and bishops, supporting themselves, as a rule, at their ordinary occupations.

The first college in this country—Elkhart Institute, Elkhart, Ind.—and the only one in existence among the class of which Bishop Heatwole writes, was incorporated in 1895. Among the growing institutions in the Mennonite Church, probably there is none which has such possibilities for usefulness. The school owns its own buildings and grounds, and has a well-equipped laboratory, a library, and modern facilities and methods of instruction. The Principal, Prof. N. E. Byers, is a graduate of Northwestern University. It is the earnest desire of the management to raise the endowment fund of \$4,000 to \$50,000 as soon as possible. Eleven States and Canada are represented in the enrollment. The religious influences surrounding the students are very good, and the sisters of the church who are attending the school wear the "prayer head-covering," as shown by the accompanying illustration, at the chapel exercises and at all devotional meetings. The group consists of a number of students, some of whom will graduate at the next commencement.

The recent Doukhobor emigration from Russia to America, will recall our Mennonite influx from that country, which attracted much attention, in 1871-6, when almost an entire remnant of a great company which had fled thither a hundred years before from Austria rather than submit to military impressment, came over to us, driven by the same goal, and settled in Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska and Dakota. It is their doctrine of non-resistance which has brought upon them their most persistent troubles. During the days that followed the Reformation they came under condemnation of Protestant and Roman Catholic rulers alike, for take up arms they would not at any command. No sect, it is said, according to numbers, has suffered so much from persecution or given so many martyrs for its faith. It was this fierce persecution and wholesale slaughter that quenched the missionary spirit which early history shows they exhibited in exceptional degree. Dr. Good has been prominently identified, both here and in Canada, with its modern revival.

The Tutor's Two Lessons.

Will Rogers had been a bright student in college, had had a year of experience on the frontier in the service of the government, had done postgraduate work in an Eastern university, and was teaching a year or two to get money with which to go abroad and take his Ph. D. Everyone knew that he would make his mark. The faculty hoped that he would come back as a professor; the students liked him, and counted him both one of the faculty and one of themselves.

There were in the college about a dozen young men, largely sophomores, who gathered together to discuss the emancipation of the human mind from the dogmas of past ages, and to glory in their own intellectual greatness. To these young men it seemed a strange thing that Tutor Rogers should be the brilliant scholar he was, the well-read man in all modern sciences, and yet a sincere and outspoken Christian.

One day they asked how about it, and suggested that he might be interested in attending a meeting of their club. He promptly accepted the invitation, and they proceeded with unwonted vigor in their ready denials of faith in God, Christ and the bible.

"Fellows," said Rogers, at length, "if you are determined not to believe these things, why don't you get the best arguments there are? Those you advance are the cheap oratorical quibbles of the lecture platform. There are much better arguments against the bible than you have advanced. Hold on, and I'll give you some."

Then he listened in amazement as he quoted from ancient writers, beginning with Celsus and Porphyry; from philosophers, such as Schopenhauer, whose names they hardly knew; from scientists, Huxley and Tyndall. He towed them into the deep waters of thought, and plunged them into whirlpools of doubt deeper than they had known; and then he said "Good night!" and offered to come again.

The club sat silent for five minutes after he had gone. Then one member asked, "Can Tutor Rogers know all this and still be a Christian? What arguments do you suppose he knows on the other side?"

The next day they waited on him again, and asked, "Will you come again, and tell us the answers to those arguments?"

"Certainly," said Rogers, "if you wish me to do so."

It was a quiet and thoughtful group of young men with whom he met next time and Rogers began with a few earnest words on the need of open and honest minds to discern the truth. Then he told them the reasons for his faith.

It would make a long story if the whole were told, but the sum of it is this: The club continued its organization, but with a new spirit and purpose, and with Tutor Rogers as its leader. Before the year ended, the membership had considerably

increased, and the original members, instead of shallow and argumentative skeptics had become earnest Christians.

The Rights of Children.

There is a pretty story of a Boston physician and a small patient whom he attended a few years ago. It was necessary for the doctor to perform a surgical operation, slight but somewhat painful, and there were reasons why he did not wish to use an anesthetic.

The patient was only five years old, but he bore the pain with great fortitude. After the physician had gone, the little boy turned to his father and said, "Papa, I like that doctor. He tells me the truth. He said he was going to hurt me, and he did."

The story carries a lesson which parents ought not to overlook. How many fathers and mothers are as honest with their children as this wise old doctor was with his little patient? How many of them can claim from their children the respect he had won merely because he told a small boy the truth?

It is not only in the matter of honesty and frank dealing that children have frequent cause of complaint against their elders; politeness is even more neglected. Parents too often seem to consider courtesy beyond the appreciation or understanding of a child, and even in the presence of strangers will treat their little sons and daughters as if they were quite devoid of feeling.

"Who of us," asks Mrs. Charlotte Perkins (Stetson) Gilman, "has not seen a clear-eyed child struck dumb and crimson by the rude laughter of his elders over some act which had no element of humor except that it was new to him? We put grandpa's hat on the downy head of the baby and roar with laughter at his appearance. Do we put baby's cap on grandma and then make fun of the old lady's looks?"

Those who really know children are aware that they are sensitive and self-conscious, and often suffer keenly from slight to their personal dignity. There is no surer way to win their hearts than to show the same consideration for their rights as they are asked to show for the rights of others.

Mrs. Grote.

Many are the laudatory adjectives that could be applied to Mrs. Grote, the wife of the historian. She was a woman of wonderful vitality, both of mind and body. Her affections, sympathies and impressions, says one of her biographers, "were as warm when she was past eighty as they could have been when she was eighteen."

This buoyancy of nature was accompanied by a remarkable knowledge of practical affairs. A friend said of her:

"She knew how everything should be done, from the darning of a sock to the building of a house; and she could usually show a better way for doing most ordinary things."

She was a most unconventional creature, and sometimes, in the country, went about with a man's hat on her head, a stick in her hand, and a coachman's coat over her short petticoats.

Her modest country place, with its wonderful garden, was the resort of many celebrities, who sought her to be soothed and rested after the exactions of professional life. One day a ludicrous scene took place there.

Fanny Kemble was sitting in the swing. At her feet were Dessauer, the Viennese composer, and Chorley, a musical critic. Suddenly appeared the martial figure of Mrs. Grote, who hailed them, when scarcely within speaking distance, with some detail about dinner. Did the majority vote for bacon and peas, or bacon and beans? When the momentous question was settled, she turned and marched away.

Dessauer had been sitting up, listening, turning his head to one side and then the other, like an intelligent terrier. He had no knowledge of English, but Mrs. Grote's movements were easily interpreted. Suddenly, with his hands and lips, he began to imitate the rolling of a drum, and broke into the martial air, "Malbrook has gone to the war."

To his horror, the lady faced right about, like a soldier, planted her stick in the ground and faced him with an awful countenance. The wretched little man grew red, then purple, then black. He was consumed by fear and shame.

"Ah, she understood me!" he cried in his agony, and rolled over and over on the ground as if he were having a fit.

Mrs. Grote majestically waved her hand in magnanimous scorn of such a puny adversary, and departed. When she came back, however, it was to plunge into the discussion of some musical topic, and the culprit could see that all was not only forgiven, but forgotten.

When One Grows Old.

"As we grow old," was remarked in the hearing of a N. Y. Tribune representative, by a man at dinner recently, "our self-

esteem is continually receiving small vicarious shocks by hearing some contemporary spoken of in a slighting manner by the younger generation. If So-and-So, whom I have always considered a brilliant man of society is an old fogey and a bore, why do not I also come under the same head? is a question I must perforce ask myself, and the answer is obvious and far from satisfactory. We grow old so unconsciously to ourselves that it is only when we are brought to our bearings, as it were, by some such chance remark that we realize we have passed the Rubicon in the estimation of young people. At my oldest sister's house the other day one of my nieces, who came out this winter, was chattering about her chances, and said in the course of her conversation: 'I did feel so sorry for Sally M. last night; she had to dance the cotillion, with a man tottering on the verge of the grave.' 'Who was it?' I asked, wondering who could be the septuagenarian who ventured to romp through cotillion figures. 'Mr. S.," she answered. I do think old men like that should not expect us to dance with them.' As Mr. S. was my classmate at college, a couple of years my junior, and as he is a remarkably good looking man of forty, I did think this criticism was uncalled for."

Mr. M. is a dreadful old bore, isn't he?" I heard another girl remark. "He means to be kind, I know, but he always comes up to me when I have some particularly nice man I want to talk to!" Alas, how are the mighty fallen! I remember the time when to have M. pay any one attention was a mark of distinction, and I assure you it gave me quite a shock to hear him spoken of in that flippant manner. "Where do I stand in the estimation of these young iconoclasts who are thus ruthlessly shattering all my idols?" I ask myself.

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CLAD IN BRIEF AUTHORITY.

How a Young Officer Was Brought to Grief by a Correspondent.

A reformed war correspondent tells in Leslie's Weekly some unique stories about his experiences with army officers. He prefaced his remarks by saying, with a fairness that will commend his anecdotes to respect, that ninety-nine out of one hundred army officers are the most cordial, democratic, and splendid fellows in the world, but that the hundredth, over-awed by a sense of the superlative magnificence conferred upon him by his shoulder-straps, is sometimes found to be a bit of a snob. Growing reminiscent over his experiences in Manila, the correspondent told the story of one day when he went into the big court yard of the Cuartel d'Espana, with a bundle comprising a change of underclothing, soap and towels, on his way to the banos, or baths. He encountered a young lieutenant, and passed him. Quick as a flash the lieutenant wheeled about.

"Say, my man!" he shouted. The correspondent, who was clad in the khaki uniform of the army, turned around and regarded his interlocutor.

"Don't you ever salute anybody?" angrily demanded the lieutenant.

"No-o-o," drawled the correspondent, after returning the stare.

"You don't eh? Why not?"

"I don't have to."

"You don't have to?" gasped the lieutenant, incredulously.

"No; I'm not a soldier."

"Not a soldier?" repeated the young officer, staring at the khaki uniform. "Then where did you get that uniform?"

It was the correspondent's turn. He drew himself up stiffly, beat his inquisitor at staring and answered, icily:

"I beg your pardon, but I never discuss my private affairs with strangers."

For a moment the lieutenant looked as if he were ready to shoot, at such unheard

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of audacity. Then with a grunt, he turned on his heel and walked away, utterly forgetting to return the salute of the sentry, who during the entire dialogue, had stood at "present arms."

"Say," whispered the sentry to the correspondent, "I hope you'll meet him again. The company'll pay you for your trouble if you will."

It was the self-same lieutenant, affirms the correspondent, who went down to the palace a couple of days later on official business. In one of the corridors he passed a middle-aged man in khaki. The man passed with both hands set jauntily in his pockets.

"My man," shouted the lieutenant after him, "don't you know how to salute?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man, wheeling and standing at attention.

"Then salute, dash you!" With the utmost punctiliousness the man brought his hand to the brim of his sombrero.

"Who are you?" demanded the snobbish lieutenant, with the utmost asperity.

"I'm General Hughes," came the jarring answer. "Who the dickens are you?"

But the lieutenant "sounded retreat" with such amazing speed that the secret of his identity is still locked in the correspondent's diary.

She Had to Chew.

Amusing, yet not wholly amusing,—since it illustrates the firm hold of habit,—is the Chicago Tribune's anecdote of a woman who called upon an eminent local "alienist" and insisted upon seeing him at once.

"I had my hat in my hand," said the doctor, "and she had been told that I was in a hurry. She came across the room in a most leisurely fashion, however, taking three times as much time as the ordinary person would have done. She was chewing an unusual wad of gum, a whole package, I should say."

"She sat down slowly, and I asked her a question. She looked straight at me and went on chewing. I spoke again and again, but she sat looking at me and chewing in as much silence as was possible under the circumstances. Finally I said to her: 'Madam, will you kindly stop chewing long enough to answer my questions?'"

"Then she burst out, sobbing: 'That's just what I'm here for—I can't stop—I've got to chew—and I've been chewing just this way for more than two years.'"

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Talking Shop in the Woods.

Mr. Blank, a busy and successful oculist spent his summer vacation in the woods, with his shotgun.

Noticing one day that when using the left hand barrel he generally brought down his game, and when using the other barrel he invariably missed, he tacked a small target to a tree and fired at it several times with each barrel, in order to bring the matter to a test.

The result confirmed his suspicions. One barrel was all right, or nearly so, and the other was all wrong.

"Well," he said, "as nearly as I can make out, this gun has a severe case of strabismus, with strong symptoms of astigmatism."

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