

The Board of Home Missions

OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

O. D. EATON, Treasurer, 53 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK.

The Demoralizing Influence of our Exceptional Populations.

By the exceptional populations of our country we understand the Indians, the Mexicans and the Mormons. The Indians have been reduced by war, want, and contact with white settlers, to a quarter of a million. Within a brief period they have been placed by the Government on separate reservations. This was probably a wise precaution against tribal alliances for war and marauding purposes. But, by mingling for years with the most degraded of our white settlers, and witnessing the worst vices of civilized life, they have turned the reservations in some cases into fetid pools, which send forth poisonous exhalations which destroy all that is fair and pure round about them. The Government's present policy, we are sorry to note, is to take their children out of the schools conducted by the Christian churches and educate them in those of their own. The result will probably be that the most important factor in their civilization

will be dropped, so that they will be made intellectually higher, but in all probability morally more degraded.

The Mexicans, according to the Census of 1890, number 150,000. They belonged originally to the old Republic of Mexico, and came to us with the territory ceded to the United States by that government. They brought with them their superstitions, degraded habits and corrupt religion. The majority are as ignorant and corrupt as they were under the old Mexican Government. Even the criminal practice of the Penitentes is kept up by many of them, as in the days of their forefathers. The transfer from under one government to another has not improved to any extent their moral or religious condition.

According to their own showing, the Mormons number more than 200,000 in Utah and the adjacent States of Idaho, Wyoming, Montana and Colorado. Their doctrines and practices aim a deadly blow at the three pillars of society, to wit: the family, the Church and the State. They destroy not only the peace, but also the true idea of the family, by the introduction and maintenance of polygamy. They overturn the foundations of the Church of Christ by substituting the vagaries of Joseph Smith for the Divine oracles. They denounce the State as tyrannical, and trample under foot its well-known emblem of power. They labor with a diligence worthy of

a better cause to secure a sufficient political influence to compel the homage of our politicians. "Our vote," says Bishop Lunt, "is solid, and will remain so. It will be cast where the most good will be accomplished for the Church. Then, in some great political crisis, the two political parties will bid for our support. Utah will then be admitted as a polygamous State, and the other Territories we have peacefully subjugated will be admitted also. We will then hold the balance of power, and will dictate to the country. In time, our principles, which are of sacred origin, will spread throughout the United States. We possess the ability to turn the political scale in any particular community we desire."

This is not the dream of an ignorant Mormon for even the late Vice-President Colfax tells us that, "with Utah overwhelmingly dominated by the Mormon theocracy of their established Church, and wielding also, as they already claim, the balance of power in the adjoining Territories, this Turkish barbarism may control the half-dozen new States of the interior, and, by the power of their Senators and Representatives in both branches of our Congress, may even dictate to the nation itself." With the corruption which is found everywhere in our political parties, it is difficult to foretell what they may soon accomplish. To-day the nation speaks of the hideous system of polygamy in Utah as a monster of the past,

will be cited by the last administration. But to-morrow political necessities and constitutional limitations will perhaps be cited to excuse for years its continued toleration. Who can assure us that that Territory will not be in a few years admitted into the sisterhood of States, and thereby power be conferred upon it by Congress to manage its own domestic affairs? No human sagacity can foresee the danger that is to-day threatening our peace and prosperity from that direction.

The missionaries of the Presbyterian Church were the honored pioneers of that dark land. Our mission schools and chapels are to-day dotting the beautiful valleys of the Wasatch Mountains. Many of their towns have caught a gleam of gospel light, and many of their people have felt the transforming power of the Divine Spirit. Such hymns as "Jesus, Lover of my Soul," cheer many of the Mormon firesides, and the homes of the Gentile sojourners. They are hummed by the busy mother over the cradle of her infant child. Fragments of the refrain are whistled in the streets of Salt Lake City and Ogden. They are caught by the plodding plowman and gleesome school boy. The work so well begun there must be pushed forward with still greater diligence before sure and abiding victory will crown our efforts with permanent success.