

In Manchuria, two battalions of Cosacks have also recently been stationed on the pretext that they were needed to protect the workmen laying the railroad connecting the Siberian line with the Yellow sea, but this stationing of troops in a foreign country is looked upon as a military occupation of the northern province of China and will undoubtedly be permanent.

Naturally one would think that the situation in China and Korea might furnish material enough for the ambition of the rulers of Russia, but the news has just been given out that another strategic enterprise of vast dimensions is to be commenced in the near future. The project is to connect the Baltic with the Black sea at the cost of \$97,000,000. When this canal is completed it is possible for Russia to mobilize in less than a week a big fleet either in the Baltic or the Black sea and give her an immense advantage over her European rivals. In case of trouble in Turkey or the necessity of a naval demonstration in Asiatic waters Russia would be early on the scene and reap all the advantages of being first.

It is pretty clear that Russia is about to carry out her traditional policy and that she will not rest until it has been accomplished. Soon she will have her strong arms outstretched to embrace the whole of the Asiatic continent. The profession of the czar is that he is working for peace, but will he maintain peace, should other powers attempt to interfere with his plans? That is a question the answer of which may belong to the near future.

A MISSION TO PALESTINE.

Elder Anton H. Lund, of the Council of the Apostles, leaves tomorrow, Dec. 30, on a special mission to Palestine and other parts of Asia Minor. He will be accompanied by Elder F. F. Hintze of Big Cottonwood, who formerly has spent some time in the Turkish mission. A farewell gathering was held last night in the Fourteenth ward under the auspices of the Scandinavian Theological class in this city, and many friends of the two Elders were gathered to wish them Godspeed on their long and important journey.

The Saints generally have manifested much interest in this mission as soon as it became known that it had been decided upon by the authorities of the Church. Through the labors of various Elders in Syria, the Gospel principles have been embraced by some of the natives there, principally Armenians. Others are inquiring. The Saints in Turkey, as in other parts of the world, have a strong desire to gather with their co-religionists, but as it is understood that emigration is virtually prohibited by the Turkish authorities, and as it is one of the principles of the Church to encourage obedience to civil governments as well as to God, it has been deemed best to send a special messenger to the Armenian Saints and see what can be done to obtain the Turkish government's permission to select a place within the Turkish empire for a gathering place. It is done at the earnest solicitation of the Saints there, who wish to serve the Lord in accordance with their religious belief, and at the same time remain in the country loyal to their sovereign and perhaps better their condition temporally, and consequently become more useful subjects of the sultan.

It is in full accord with the views of the Saints to establish a gathering place in the land of promise. For the word of the Lord shall go forth from Jerusalem and the law from Zion.

Probably the time for the accomplishment of this still belongs to a distant future, unless indeed it is consistent with the plans of the Almighty to intervene in a special way before long and hasten the latter-day work on. But the mission of Elder A. H. Lund, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, may be looked upon as one of the stages in the great work of gathering Israel and Judah and the coming restoration to prominence of the country where once dwelt the glory of the Lord, and where the Son of God lived and died. For this reason the Saints feel a deep interest in his mission and will surely follow him and his labors in those distant parts of the world with prayers for his success and the welfare of the Saints whom he may visit.

DISMEMBERMENT A BLESSING.

If the great nations would unite on some effective plan of sufficient magnitude for the civilization and enlightenment of China, it would of course be far the better way to advance her inhabitants in the scale of being. But such an idea is, of course, utterly unfounded in any existing possibility. Such a union for such a purpose can never occur prior to the dawn of the Millennium. In all that the leading nations do that will effect the relations of the people of China to the civilization of modern times, they will be instigated by a desire to aggrandize themselves and oppose, harass and checkmate each other.

But it seems like the Ruler of all nations has decreed that the days of China's exclusion from contact with the rest of the world must end; that modern enlightenment must penetrate the morally and intellectually dark regions of her vast domain; that her people must be made acquainted with art, science, literature and higher principles and forms of government, human and divine, than they have ever known, and that the homogeneity of all humanity which modern civilization surely advances, shall embrace the barbaric hordes of the Celestial empire in an effort to raise them to a higher plane.

It further seems that the same great Ruler, in the absence of all unity among the leading nations looking to such an end, is about to utilize for the purpose their selfishness, jealousies and enmities. All appearances indicate that Russia, Germany, France and England are about to divide the Chinese empire among themselves. It seems tolerably certain that Russia and Germany are fully committed to the proposition, and are now in the very act of seizing the portions they covet; but just what France and England are to get is not quite clear as yet, though that they will omit to present their claims is scarcely credible.

With China divided up among the great powers of Europe, and its segregated parts ruled by them respectively, Chinese exclusion will be a thing of the past. Railroads will intersect its provinces, telegraph, telephone and electric light wires will make a net work over them, courts will administer justice in a higher form than the ignorant masses have ever known it, a comprehension of human rights and of the elements of ethics will soon begin to dawn upon them, and ere long the folly and inadequacy of their religion and philosophy will become apparent to them, and they will be willing and prepared to receive something higher. The printing press, the school teacher, and after a while the franchise, will exert their wonderfully potent influence, and these great moral derricks will operate to raise the Chinese race to a plane of existence and of intelligence far higher than the one they now occupy.

This progress will not be free from

evil features. When the people of China become the subjects of European powers, there may be more drunkenness and less reverence for parents among them than there are now; but on the whole the swarming millions who now know no better than to worship in a joss house and offer sacrifices to the devil, will be the gainers.

It seems a hard thing to say that the dismemberment of a nation is a blessing to it, but in the present case of China and the powers of Europe, it can no doubt be said with truth. The Chinese race has a place to fill in the economy of the Creator. That it may better fill that place it must be enlightened, and that this result may be achieved it must be placed under governmental influences more advanced than the ones it now has. The evil that is in human nature, nationally and individually, is overruled to bring to pass the purposes of the Creator, and the wrath of man is made to praise Him.

IRRECONCILABLE FOREVER.

One of the greatest psychic phenomena of our time is the implacable hostility of religious teachers towards the Mormons. Occasionally such a disposition is shown by a member of the Catholic clergy, but far more frequently it is manifested by Protestant preachers, whose professions of love and fellowship for all mankind are much louder than are those of the teachers who hold tradition to have equal authority with revelation, and that the pope of Rome is the vicegerent of God.

When a professing Christian violates the commandment which forbids him to hate his brother without a cause, he is very likely to break one other commandment, the one which prohibits the bearing of false witness. These sins are twins. And thus it happens that the grossest misrepresentations and slanders that have ever been circulated at the expense of the Mormon people have emanated from the pulpit.

There are ministers and missionary workers representing many of the leading sects of Christendom now employed among the Mormon people. Without exception kind and respectful treatment is extended to these religious workers by members of the dominant Church in Utah, notwithstanding their avowed purpose to decimate the ranks of that Church as much as possible. Officials of the Mormon Church frequently give to ministers of various denominations the free use of buildings for religious worship, extend a generous hospitality to them, and show them every reasonable courtesy. An act of rudeness or discourtesy committed by a Mormon towards a minister of any sect would be instantly condemned and disavowed by the offender's co-religionists.

The Mormon people hold no animosity towards either the clergy or laity of other religious societies. On the contrary, they entertain sentiments of the broadest liberality and fullest tolerance towards them all. According to the Mormon view, religious belief in the individual is the result of evidence that has been presented to that individual's mind; and just in proportion as that individual has or has not had access to, or opportunity to hear and receive, true evidence, is he responsible for his religious belief, or his lack of it, and for its character in regard to truth and error.

It follows from this theory that religious conversion is, or ought to be, a condition resulting from appeals made to the reason and intellect, the judgment and the conscience; from argument based upon the Scriptures and other recognized authorities in religious matters; and from the solemn