

Mrs. Archibald, the Missionary, at Home.

The little city of Silverton has some of the rare things of the world, and among them a real live missionary lady, who has given over twenty years of service in the southeast section of India, near Madras. She is now with her brother resting here, but preparatory to a return to her labors and has favored Silverton with two lectures at the Methodist Church, and the Liberals, because they always like to learn all they can and know what is going on, were well represented.

The lady has a fine presence, a clear and decisive voice and style, well fitted to make her a power with her dusky friends abroad. The information she gave about them and their beliefs, environment, character and mode of life was realistic, and not likely to be found in books. In religion they are evidently in the stage of transition from Fetichism to Polytheism under a high caste or Brahmin priesthood, attended by distressing physical, economic, political and moral conditions. In this sort of chop sea they have a hard time of it, and when the rains fail famine stares them in the face. One would think that, with their own troubles and those added by their English conquerors, they had enough to bear without being tortured to make a practically impossible change of their religion to another of the same variety and equally illusory. While it is impossible not to admire the devotion and heroism that inspires the missionary cause and work, and that of this lady in particular, it was impossible not to see from her own statements that the terrible consequences described as "The Missionary Horror" in the last Torch are only too true and too surely to be realized. Out of those hundreds of millions, only a few hundreds, or thousands, have been induced by a kind of deception, not realized as such by those who use it, to break from the faith of their fathers and all of the consequent social relations necessary to their life. This has been done only under the protection of the foreign English law. It has horrified and enraged the rest of the community, so that they are held down by force only. As soon as there is a chance to break that force the insurrection will begin again, as it is now going on in China—all that war, which may subvert the world, is but a sequence and part of the Missionary Horror, the unscientific effort to "convert" the brains of one people into another by illusory hopes and misunderstood words. Evolution says that religious crazes cannot be really converted from one into another, but that they must be outgrown step by step, upon the ladder of civilization and Science, leading gradually to the true, peaceful, all-embracing, universal and final RELIGION OF HUMANITY.

The poor woman thought it literally; that there was such a divine Jesus, a God, like the gods of her country, who actually had mansions in the skies, or at least above those monsoon clouds, where the miseries and horrors of her life might be escaped in a never-ending round of the sweetest joys she ever knew or imagined. Only say "Yes, be a Christian, and they will be yours," and she falls at the lady's feet and forgets for the moment her other gods, her ancestors, mother, father, brethren, friends and all! She awakens to find that she has lost them all; that now she can do nothing more but to bear an increased agony until death may(?) realize her hope, the missionary's promise. But will it be realized? Ah, No! Every astronomer, and the lady, knows that, IN FACT, there is no such, nor any celestial or heavenly mansion above those monsoon clouds or in the skies; that no human being could ever get to them if there were; that there never was any such "spirit," god or man as the "Lord Jesus." In a word, the whole story was an illusion to the victim; and what to the missionary? We would not dare to say—some symbol, perhaps.

And so about all of the gods and mythologies of those peoples, which the lady supposed she was banishing from their minds. Ah, No! Her Christian God, and Christ and Ghost and Angels have merely taken their place, wear their old clothes and are supposed to promise more than they—but of the same kinds of joy or pain—in some hells or heavens. The appeal of both was ever to the same soul-saving Egoism of selfish life and love, from which no real elevation of character can ever grow. The higher culture, the progress of civilization is retarded just in proportion as those appeals are listened to, and those motives are acted upon. Those people are poor and degraded just because they have too much and many of these mythologies, with their heavens and hells and transmigrations. They need some one to teach them to drop them all, and to teach them and to give them a chance, not to desert their country, family and friends for a celestial illusion, but to expend their love, labor and energies upon this world and their relations to it and others here. The missionaries hold these poor people still looking towards another world, while the conquerors, and those whose interest it is, rob and outrage and degrade them in this. And if the People rebel, the "Christian Nations," blow their heroes from the cannon's mouth! The story is horrible—we saw it in India in 1857, and see it in China now!

Those awful facts of illusion, greed and blood embolden us to say to the lady, not sportively, but in earnest, stay with the good brother and with us, and let Silverton be your future home. Here you will find missionary work enough without going to the Antipodes. Here are those "unbelievers" you MAY convert; at least they will listen to you at the Thought Exchange. They will understand by your "celestial mansions," the SYMBOLS of stages of culture and blessed progress, which we can all join with you in realizing into facts on this our good solid Earth, instead of deluding others with them, as you hold them up as a cruel mirage in the sky. T. B. W.

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