

shapeless ruins, and the work of demolition is generally ascribed to a native of the valley, a fanatical convert from Hinduism to Islam, who was born about the middle of the fourth century, when Mohammedanism was brought into Kashmir. This man's zeal and perseverance are recorded by the huge blocks of marble which in many places attest the size and massive style of the edifices that he destroyed. His memory is famous among Mohammedans under the name of Sikandar Butshikan, or Alexander the Iconoclast. Then after the lapse of nearly five centuries, Kashmir came under the sway of a Sikh sovereign, by whose order this building was wrested from the Mohammedans and its interior plastered over and whitewashed. The plaster remains to this day. The present sovereign of Kashmir is Maharajah Pratap Singh—a Dogra, which is a sect of the Hindus. He is a great encourager of all religious works, and, amongst other things, has had this temple restored and maintains a priest who climbs the Takht every day with an offering of milk, and rice, and flowers for the idol therein. We were speaking with this priest the other day, outside the temple, and in course of conversation referred to the different changes that the building had experienced at the hands of various rulers in the valley.

"Well, Sahib, and what will you do with the place, when it falls into your hands?" asked the priest.

"Oh," we replied, "we shall do away with the idol of course. We shall probably send it to the headquarters of our Society in London, and the people at home will stare at it, as we do, and wonder how you clever, intelligent folk out here, can fall down in worship before it."

"Yes, yes, Sahib," said the man, "it is quite true. The time will come—very shortly, perhaps, when the true 'Incarnation' will be revealed unto all men, and they will become Christians. Many of us believe this, but till then what can we do?"

THE CHINAMAN IN AMERICA.



THE Chinaman in America is, as a rule, a heathen of the most unmistakable character, as were his grandfathers before him. He bows to grotesque images of Buddha and other great sages and heroes of antiquity, and honors them with votive offerings on all great festal occasions. He strives to avert disaster, or remove affliction by sundry efforts to placate disturbed spirits, or by "driving out the devil," which last he undertakes to accomplish by the discordant clangor of his native orchestra, the din of exploding fireworks, and a conflagration of candles, and of paper images to his malign majesty. Most of all, he worships his ancestors, and daily honours

their memory by setting incense sticks before tablets on which their names and virtues are inscribed. The Chinaman illustrates most fully the stupidity and folly, the utter vileness and insufficiency of a pagan religion. The mass of them are people "having no hope, and without God in the world," to whom death and the grave are circumstances fraught with unspeakable terrors. Their religious condition is pitiable in the extreme.

While all this is true, our Chinaman has exhibited a marked susceptibility to religious influences of a higher character. Many hundreds of these people have professed conversions, abandoned idolatry and united with the various Churches, while many thousands have been more or less affected by the enlightening influence of mission schools.

Yet missionary work among the Chinese in America is carried on in the face of peculiar difficulties, with results that are all too meagre. Among these obstacles are the following:

1. The absence of home life, and the demoralizing conditions already pointed out. "It is not good that man should be alone," and the Chinaman presents no exception to this rule.

2. The unsettled migratory character of the population.

3. The gross mistreatment and injustice to which they have often been subjected stand in the way of their evangelization. The only hopeful sign in this case is found in the fact that they have learned to discriminate between the "Jesus man" and the hoodlum.

4. The corrupting influence of the lower stratum of American society, with which they come in closest contact. They are adepts in the adoption of American and European vices, and hence become worse and worse by association with our lowest and vilest classes. Unless reached by some of our missions and evangelized through their agency, or that of the Churches by more direct effort, the immorality of their heathenism becomes augmented by the addition of that peculiar to unsaved Christendom, and they at length are far more wicked than when they first came.

Yet, despite all this, God is doing a great work among the Chinese in America, and by them is preparing the way for still greater things in China. In the course of a few years the great majority of them will have gone from our shores; and in the coming revolution, peaceable or otherwise, if out of China is to emerge a new and Christian nation, these, so long under the shadow and tuition of American institutions, are to play no unimportant part.—*Literary Digest*.

CIVILIZATION is opening up the dark depths of Africa. The cry of gold has brought thousands where before the cry of perishing millions was all but unheeded.