

Brahmist rather than Christian. We have lately seen, too, in the New York *Evangelist* an admirable letter from Professor Blyden, who writes from Sierra Leone, that shows clearly how very badly this style of doing things has operated on the West coast of Africa. He regrets to say that notwithstanding the many years of labour by devoted men and the immense amounts expended, Christian civilization has made but little advance into the interior, and the Christian civilization of the coast is little more than skin-deep. Within and around the British settlements on the coast, some thousands of natives, mostly re-captives and their descendants, profess Christianity and have adopted European dress and many European customs, one of which is a craze for extravagant living. "They do not consider themselves civilized unless they wear broadcloth, in Parisian style, beaver hats and Wellington boots. The result is that those who cannot afford these things are seized with kleptomania. There are now, I am told, 300 convicts in the jail here, most of whom have been taught in the schools, among them four schoolmasters. The missionaries taught them no handicraft, and when they left school, having no regular means for livelihood, and being under the pernicious idea that a certain style of dress was civilization, they endeavored to keep up this style in a dishonest manner.

The Mohammedans, on the other hand, are all respectable. They wear their native dresses in comely independence. The Governor informs me that there is very rarely any case of offence among Mohammedans. There is not one in jail. While they read and write, and many of them are really learned, they do not find it necessary to adopt foreign tastes and habits either in their food or clothing. They are really the most independent people one meets on the coast. They do not mind being considered odd or being laughed at. And I must be permitted to add that the Mohammedan negroes, wherever I have met them, in Syria, Egypt or on this coast, seem to have more real manhood than the Christian negroes I have met in other lands. The Mohammedan seems to have lost fewer of the elements of manhood in his contact with his

foreign instructors than the Christian negro. May not Christian missionaries, who are endeavoring to civilize Africa, learn some profitable lessons as to external method from the Mohammedans? It is impossible to impose suddenly a foreign civilization upon a people. They must be civilized upon the basis of their own idiosyncracies. They must be stimulated to elevate and civilize themselves. You must not expect to make European Christians of Africans, but African Christians. If you aim at anything else you will distort the man and make him an abnormal development.

Some years ago the Wesleyan missionaries attempted to form a Fulah settlement at McCarty's Island, in the Gambia river—a large sum of money was expended in building a village where the people were to live according to European notions. Various necessities for a beginning were provided, and the experiment started, but of course the whole affair proved a complete failure, and the society becoming discouraged, abandoned the mission. Now this is injustice to Africa, and to the cause of truth. I do not see why it is necessary that the negro, before he can become a Christian, should be required to adopt European dress, and cultivate a taste for bread and butter, and tea. I think this is absurd. The native costume, and the native food are suited to the climate. The missionaries in Syria, India, China, and Japan, do not thus endeavor to compel confirmation in their converts to European habits. The negro is more pliant and yielding. He will submit to these innovations, but they are unnatural, and whenever the least opportunity is presented he throws them off, and as he was taught to regard them as necessary concomitants of civilization and Christianity, away goes his Christianity, with these foreign encumbrances. We sometimes hear complaints of Africans who have been educated, even in England, returning to their country, and adopting the native dress and habits. Such is exactly what might be expected. Not only individuals, but considerable bodies of people almost invariably adopt the customs and habits of the more numerous masses among whom they are placed. I trust that a new era is approaching in