

which are worthy of consideration in any practical survey of this subject. We have at the present hour a rather absurd and sensational attempt at an Islamic propaganda here in America. The Moslem call to prayer has been heard for several Sabbaths in Union Square. It was, however, at an uncanonical hour, and apparently is to be repeated only at weekly intervals upon the Christian Sabbath. The Union Square missionary appears to be a rival of Mohammed Webb, and both are probably engaged in a stroke of business in the hope that spectacular accompaniments, with the aid of newspaper notoriety, will secure some kind of a material dividend to the supporters of this religious syndicate. It is not unlikely that some converts to Mohammedanism may be won here in America. If Theosophy can find adherents in England and America, if Esoteric Buddhism has its followers in Western lands, if the oldest errors of the East can thus pose as the newest fads of the West, why is it not possible that a smooth-tongued and magnetic leader shall some day sound the Mohammedan call to prayer from an American mosque?

Another fact of present-day interest is a reactionary rationalistic movement on the part of some prominent Moslems in India, under the leadership of Justice Ameer Ali, of Calcutta, who was recently invited to participate in the Parliament of Religions, which has been named in our public journals "The New Islam." It is an attempt to rid the Mohammedan religion of some of its grosser features, and deliver it from that bondage of traditionalism which makes it impossible for Islam in its crude and semi-barbaric phases to assimilate the spirit of modern civilization, and keep step in the march of modern progress. It indicates that intelligent Moslems realize that if Islam is to enter the ranks of civilization, it must be radically reformed, and much of its immemorial barbarism must be eliminated and consigned to oblivion. A revolt against traditionalism in theory and practice is not altogether new in Mohammedan history, but never before has there been such a hopeful outlook for rationalistic criticism as at the present time. The new movement in the modern atmosphere of this nineteenth century promises to be far more effective than in the old days of the Mutazilah, those representatives of primitive rationalism in the second century of the Moslem era, who strove to break the iron restrictions of Mohammedan orthodoxy. It is evident to the intelligent and discriminating leaders of this new movement that Islam has entirely overreached itself by the inexorable rigidity of its traditionalism, leaving no opening for readjustment or reform in precept or practice, so that even at the present hour the successor of the Khalif is bound to respect the decisions of the Sheikh-ul-Islam and his corps of ulema. The Sheikh-ul-Islam, and in a secondary sense every Kadi or Mufti, is to-day practically the final court of appeal, and the authoritative interpreter of inflexible law. He officially interprets and applies that worse than mediæval *shariat* of the Moslems to existing conditions. A more helpless slavery to an effete and puerile system of petty precepts can hardly be conceived. If the leaders