

MISSION FIELD.

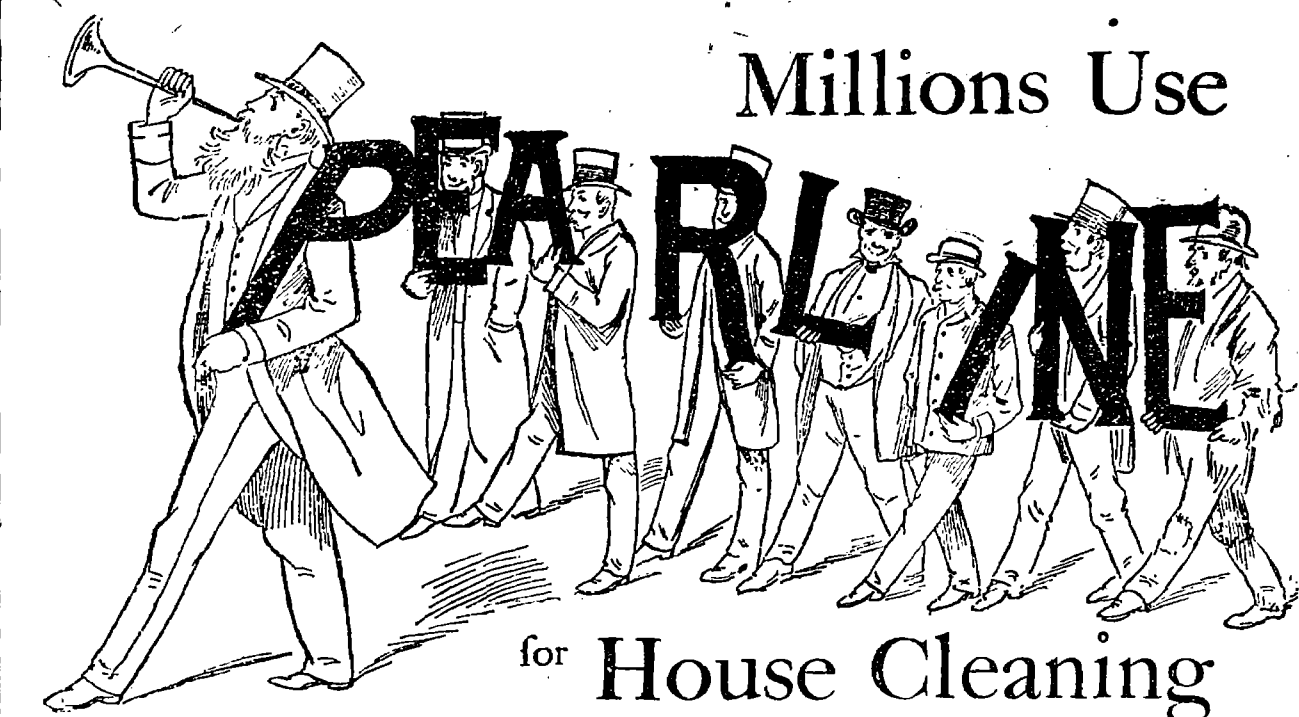
Frem Kolhapur, in the Diocese of Bombay, we have an account of the heathen Ganpati festival by the Rev. A. C. Laughlin:

"This deity, which is seemingly a second class one, and of a standing with the classical Lares and Penates, is half-man, half-elephant, anent which monstrosity I heard an excellent tale which one of my catechists employed to illustrate the childish character of the average members of the popular Hindu Pantheon. It ran somewhat thus: Parvati, Shiva's wife, was one day washing herself in a river. In the course of her ablutions she rubbed so much dirt, &c., from her arms that it made a lump as big as her two fists. This apparently very much took her fancy, and of the lump she made a doll, to which she gave life. She took the plaything home with her, and ordered it (or I suppose we should call it a 'he') to guard her room while she dressed for the day. In the meanwhile Shiva came home, and seeing an unknown individual in close proximity to his zenana was very worth, and drawing his sword cut off Ganpati's head. When Parvati knew this, she was very sorry, and bitterly reproached her husband for destroying, instead of admiring the handiwork of her own ingenuity. Her tears and entreaties prevailed over her husband, who straightway went out into the forest, vowing to slay the first creature he came across, and give his head to the slaughtered plaything. Unluckily, as we might think, the first animal met was an elephant, whose head cut off was affixed to the trunk of Ganpati, who thereupon became the hideous thing our æsthetic tastes are so offended at seeing. It does not require an exhaustive commentary to show how dreadfully inconsistent are the details of this story, or what a travesty on creation, &c., is presented to the ordinary uneducated Hindu hereby."

Beaconsfield is an important parish in the Diocese of Bloemfontein, where, as far as the white population is concerned, the Church's work is independent of the Society's aid. There in a parish church which cost £2,500, schools which cost £1,000, and other things in proportion. There is, however, scope for very large work among the natives, for which the Society makes a grant of £100. This the Rector, the Rev. C. F. Tobias, asks may be increased. He says that for the native work the Mission school-buildings and the residence for the Missionary have been built at a cost of £600, and that no debt remains, owing to the generosity of Archdeacon Gaul and the Rev. H. Crosthwaite.

"The Mission school has an average attendance of about 180, with 250 on the books; two European and four colored teachers. Well reported on by Government Inspector.

"Services at Mission Chapel on Sunday afternoons, preceded by Sunday school.



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"This native work is the result we have to show for the Society's grant of £100 per annum. But there is a native population of somewhere about 10,000 in this parish; what can one Missionary do?"

There are about fifty native communicants. Beaconsfield is a great diamond-mining centre, and Mr. Tobias thus describes the conditions of the work among the natives employed:

"Of late the mining companies have been adopting the compound system, that is to say, the native labourers are confined during their leisure in barracks, and thus are preserved from many evils, above all from the temptations of the canteens or liquor shops. Here is an opportunity for Christian work, for we have need for men more imperative than ever. Formerly a Missionary could gather his congregation to certain central points, now he must go to the compounds, for they are unable to come to him.

"There are two great mines in my parish—Dutoitspan and Bultfontein. Bultfontein we are able to work with something like completeness, but Dutoitspan we cannot touch; we have virtually abandoned it to whatever influence can be brought to bear upon it by religious bodies outside the Church.

"I do think that the Society may be content with the work done by the present grant; a flourishing Mission school, seven or eight services every Sunday, one man's hard and constant work is surely a fair

return, but may I not plead most earnestly for another grant of £100? Not for the purpose of increasing the income of the Missionary, not to pay debts already incurred, but to provide another Missionary to work in the neglected mine. I should be quite prepared to make the grant dependent upon the employment of another clergyman in the Mission work of the parish, and I could, I feel sure, provide for the balance of his income.

"We have natives here from every part of Southern and Equatorial Africa; the work in the compounds cannot produce a great number of baptisms and confirmations, for the laborers are constantly coming and going; but think what an influence for good throughout the dark continent our work in the Diamond Fields compounds may be."

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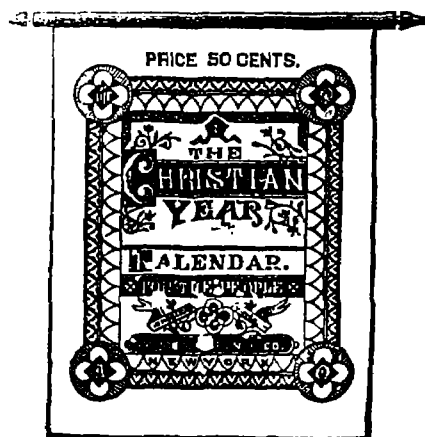
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