

lies to be looked after and no domestic help of any real value, and often without means to find even proper help, the missionary has much secular labor to perform which necessarily reduces his time and strength for his proper work. Like the China inland missionaries we are without guarantee of salary. Moreover, no fixed sum can we look for regularly. The society sends to its missionaries that which is entrusted to it, but it leaves the missionaries free to receive from any source through which God may be pleased to send to the help of His servants. Want of means often puts a drag on the chariot wheels, and causes the worker not a little anxiety as he finds the will present to perform more, but the wherewithal to perform lacking. May the Lord of the harvest enable all who pray that laborers be thrust forth to help also in the sending of them on their way.—*Alfred S. Lamb.*

—*Mohammedanism and Missions.* An interesting article on the influence of Arab traders in West Central Africa, contributed by Lieutenant Wissmann to the current issue of the "Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society," throws light on the question of Mohammedanism and missions, raised by Canon Taylor at the last Church Congress. The writer's experience of Mohammedan influences upon the native populations is in direct contrast with the assertion that the creed of Islam is that best suited to their needs. He gives a graphic account of two visits to Bagna Pesih, and certain villages of the Bene Ki, a division of the Basonge, in Central Africa, before and after the arrival of a gang of Arab traders on the scene.

On the first occasion, in 1882, he was welcomed by a prosperous and contented tribe, whose condition and occupations bore ample evidence to the existence of its villages for decades in peace and security, free from the disturbing elements of war and slave-hunts, pestilence and superstition. The huts of the natives were roomy and clean, fitted with shady porches, and surrounded by carefully kept fields and gardens, in which were grown all manner of useful plants and fruits, including hemp, sugar, tobacco, sweet potatoes, maize, manioc and millet. A thicket of bananas and plantains occupied the back of each homestead, and shady palm groves supplied their owners with nuts, oil, fibers and wine. Goats, sheep and fowls abounded, and no one seemed afraid of thieves. The people all had a well-fed air, and were anxious to trade, their supplies being plentiful and extremely cheap. A fowl could be purchased for a large cowrie shell, and a goat for a yard of calico. Everywhere the visitors found a cheerful, courteous and contented population, uncontaminated by the vices of civilization, and yet not wholly ignorant of its arts.

Four years later Lieutenant Wissmann chanced to be in the same district, and after the privations of a toilsome march through dense, inhospitable forests, rejoiced as he drew near to the palm groves of the Bagna Pesih. A dense

growth of grass covered the formerly well-trimmed paths.

"As we approach the skirt of the groves we are struck by the dead silence which reigns. No laughter is to be heard, no sign of a welcome from our old friends. The silence of death breathes over the lofty crowns of the palms, slowly waving in the wind. We enter, and it is in vain we look to the right and left for the happy homesteads and the happy old scenes. Tall grass covers everything, and a charred pole here and there, a few banana trees are the only evidences that man once dwelt here. Bleached skulls by the roadside, and the skeletons of human hands attached to poles tell the story of what has happened here since our last visit."

It appeared that the notorious Tippoo Tib had been there to "trade," and in the course of that process had killed all who offered resistance, carried off the women, and devastated the fields, gardens and banana groves. Bands of destroyers from the same gang had returned again and again, and those who escaped the sword perished by the small-pox and famine, which the marauders left in their train. The whole tribe of the Bene Ki ceased to exist, and only a few remnants found refuge in a neighboring state.

Such must be counted amongst the results of Arab "trading" in Africa, and if it is at such cost that the blessings of Mohammedan civilization are purchased by the native races, it is no wonder that they are not considered a desirable acquisition. Even if it be true that Christianity is sometimes tardy of operation in its beneficent effect upon the blacks, Christian missionaries and Christian traders can at least boast that they have never wittingly acted otherwise than beneficently towards them. In their case the perpetration of such atrocities would be impossible. With the followers of the False Prophet it is different. Their religion is merely a superstition, adapted to the needs of aggressive and militant tribes, and does not profess to inculcate tenderness or humanity, much less the loftier teachings of the gospel of Christ.

**England.**—"The Christian Union for the Severance of the Connection of the British Empire with the Opium Traffic," with Sir S. A. Blackwood as its President and Dr. Maxwell Honorary Secretary, gives the following reasons for its formation:

*Because* as a nation we are responsible through our Indian Government for a trade which is ruining the bodies and souls, and destroying the homes of multitudes of the Chinese.

*Because* our national connection with this evil traffic is peculiarly close and revolting. The poppy is grown in Bengal alone over an extent of more than 500,000 acres, and this growth is carefully fostered by the Indian Government. The opium drug is manufactured under constant Government direction and supervision. It is sold at auction by the Government, expressly and intentionally for the Chinese market. Including