

[COMPETITION .- THIRD PRIZE].

A FOREIGN MISSIONARY MEETING.



➡ HE following report is clipped from the Calcutta Independent of recent date:

> The large hall of the Home and Foreign Proselyte Agency was comfortably filled with an attentive audience to hear the report of the Fakir Gladli Cumbac, who has recently returned from the Far West land of America, after several years absence.

> He began by explaining his mission. It being commonly supposed in India that the people of that land were in the deplorably wretched condition of

having only one god to worship, some of the kind-hearted people of this Empire deemed it a praiseworthy act to send some one to bear to them a knowledge of some of the numerous deities of the more favored East.

The speaker then startled his hearers by informing them that it was quite a misconception to suppose that these people were in such a sad state as was generally believed; on the contrary, he rejoiced to say that they worshipped practically the same gods as ourselves, but under different names, a difference which all reasonable people would readily concede was but a small matter.

Describing a few of their principal deities the venerable Fakir then left his audience to make their own com-

parisons.

As the most important the speaker first referred to their god Mammon: this god he said was most important in the sense that he is more generally worshipped than any other. To him are erected the most numerous and the costliest temples; to him are sacrificed the most and often the best human lives, for his service are the brightest intellects reserved at the highest pay. It has been asserted that one reason for his popularity lies in



the fact that to worship him successfully is to be worshipped in turn by the less fortunate. This god is symbolized by a silver coin, on which are imprinted these words: "In (this) god we trust."

Another somewhat important deity was the god of Custom, which he found to be one that had to do with the habits and manners of the people. Some of his rules were more strictly observed than others; some might be set at naught with impunity by any one, but others there were that were carefully regarded by all with but very few exceptions, and the penalty paid by these

exceptions was sufficiently severe to deter any one not wholly regardless of the good will of his fellows, from imi-

tating them.

The lecturer regretted that he could not give any reliable account of a deity named Theology, for the reason that no two of his priests could agree as to the method of worshipping him. The result of this lack of harmony is that

this god is steadily falling into disrepute, and it is predicted by the best authorities that he will eventually cease to be worshipped unless the priests sink their differences, which, however, seems very unlikely.

The god of Politics receives much worship, though principally of a periodical and spasmodic kind.

field of activity is the material interests of all the people, but he is so partial to a few and so utterly ignores the bulk of his worshippers, that he also will ultimately be forgotten, and in the vernacular of the country, become a back number.

Now there were some gods which were not worshipped by the whole people, but by certain sections only, for instance, the god Society, which was held

in high esteem by the higher classes, though in what sense higher the lecturer omitted to explain; the Secret Order god worshipped by many, chiefly as a valuable auxiliary in their worship of Mammon; the god of Sport deified by men who smoked bad tobacco, drank worse liquor, and used still worse language.

"In this way," said the lecturer, "I might describe hundreds of their gods but time forbids, but sufficient has been said to satisfy you that these people are not nearly so badly off as has been until now so generally supposed.

"But there is one shadow that threatens to grow to such dimensions that the state of things which we feared

may become an actuality, and it is this: There is one god which is held in such reverence that his followers will worship no other. I cannot give you his name, for it is claimed that there is no name that will adequately describe him. A hatred of all that is unjust, untrue, selfish, etc., combined with unutterable

love for all that is the reverse of these things is his chief characteristic. Many people would gladly worship him had they some one who would honestly and intelligently teach them to distinguish between right and wrong, but fortunately for our cause those whose special business it is to do this,

were too occupied worshipping other gods themselves."

FELIX A. BELCHER.