

MISSIONS TO THE INDIANS.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE INDIAN QUESTION.

As long as there remains before there country an Indian question, just so long will its solution be a perplexity to statesmen, and the more so in proportion as they have thoughtfulness and foresight. The fact is, there is no probability that the Indian question will ever be solved. Solution is not the proper treatment to apply to the Indian question. The only way it can be got rid of is by abolishing it. This is the conclusion which has been reached by two parties which have little else in common. One party says: The Indian question can never be solved, and the only way to get rid of it is to kill off the Indians. The other has begun to say: There is no hope for a solution of the Indian question, and we can only abolish it by treating Indians as white men. It is to the latter alternative of course that we give assent in preference to the former. And, indeed, any other method of treating the Indians is liable to fatal objections if the object is to christianize and civilize them. The method of grouping them together in bands so that they encourage one another in idleness and present a solid front in opposition to every ennobling influence, has been tried long enough to show that such progress as has been made under it has been made in spite of difficulties needlessly great. To treat the Indian as a special case, even with a view to helping him, is a mistake, and results just as inevitably in pauperizing him as does the same course when it is applied to a city Arab in the slums of London. The cardinal necessity is to inculcate manliness and sturdy independence. There is in the Indian—naturally with no mean opinion of himself—good native soil in which these qualities may grow; and it but shows how grievously as a nation we have sinned against the Indian when the mental picture that comes out of the darkness when the name is mentioned, is that of a dirty lounging creature, with no self-respect, who is not ashamed to beg. That is far from being the natural condition of the aborigines of our country. It is an unnatural condition produced by generations of erroneous, though, in the main, well intentioned treatment. Here, in the same line, is what an educated Indian said in a speech on a recent public occasion in Philadelphia: "Keep on feeding my people with all the rations they can eat, give them all the clothing they can wear; and never, never, will they become civilized. But what we beg, desire, demand is that we be accorded the same rights as are enjoyed by the hordes of people from foreign lands who seek these shores! Recognize our men as men; regard our women as women; make them work to live. My friends, it is true of the Indian as of the white man: God helps those who help themselves."