

have heard our grandparents talk of a "dark day," when the sun seemed to shine through an inky haze. Every day is a dark day for the adherents of this superstition. They live under a pall of dread, and he who offers them a way of escape from this bondage is likely to have earnest listeners. Think what the Christian doctrine of God's providential care must be to such. And, as matter of fact, a large number of those who make up the Laos church have been driven to the missionaries by this very superstition. For in Siam, as everywhere, belief in spirits leads to belief in witches. The Laos man whose child has become suddenly ill, or whose buffalo has fallen into a pit, has a short and easy method of reasoning. "This has befallen me because the spirits are angry with me. But why should the spirits be angry with me, who have taken such pains to appease them? Must not some witch have set them upon me?" And who is the witch? Alas for his enemy, if he has one! Alas for his neighbors, if he has no enemy! For his suspicion of witchcraft once aroused will soon light on some hint of the witch, and forthwith the accusation is uttered. A jury of the village elders is impanelled to hear his complaint; but the jury is as superstitious as the plaintiff, and the verdict will generally be guilty. And what will be the penalty incurred by the innocent victim of this accusation? He will be driven from the village, his house will be pulled down, his garden rooted up. And where shall he go? There are cities in Laos land wholly inhabited by such supposed witches, who have been herded together as though they were lepers. But some hundreds at least have gone to the missionaries for help. They have heard that the missionaries are not afraid of spirits; at any rate, the missionaries are foreigners, and a refuge may be found with them; and so they have come under the power of Gospel truth, and found Him who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

THE NEGRO AS A MISSIONARY.*

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William H. Sheppard, the subject of this sketch, was born in 1865 at Waynesborough, Va. He grew up after the manner of his race, not much cumbered by cares or clothes. A pious lady said to him when a boy, "I have been praying that God may make you a Christian and send you to Africa." This boy is now a man who, after a strange experience in Africa, has been speaking to crowded houses, capturing all by his eloquence, fund of humor, and histrionic qualities. At the age of sixteen years he studied for four years at Hampton, Va., and then spent three years at the Colored Theological Seminary at Tuscaloosa, Ala., under the

* The following is a brief sketch of a most remarkable colored man, who spent some time speaking through the South, and at the last meeting of the Synod of Virginia received a most enthusiastic bearing.