

THE  
**MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD.**

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VOL. XVII. No. 8. —*Old Series.*—AUGUST. —VOL. VII. No. 8.—*New Series.*

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THE REAL AND THE ROMANTIC IN MISSIONS.\*

BY THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

We all, who *love* the truth, want first of all to *know* the truth. Aristotle profoundly says that "Truth is what a thing is in itself, what it is in its relations, and what it is *in the medium through which it is viewed.*" To know the truth, therefore, we need, first of all, to get at the real facts, then to get those facts adjusted in their relations, and then to get a clear eye wherewith to see them, unclouded by prejudice or partiality, neither exaggerating nor "extenuating," nor "setting down aught in malice." Many a man who would not falsify, fails to verify. His imagination is more lively than his memory is retentive, or his reason logical, or his analysis exhaustive, or his discrimination accurate; and consequently, without meaning to do so, he gives a false coloring even to facts.

A book has recently appeared which cannot fail to make—has already made—a sensation in the religious world, and especially among advocates of missions. Its author has sought, as he affirms, to obtain "absolutely correct information concerning that portion of the Dark Continent which was the field of his investigation," and then to present "that knowledge with rigid adherence to the truth." †

Any man setting out with such a purpose is to be honored; and, whatever be the results of a candid investigation, he is to be respected, if not admired, for a candid and intrepid testimony. We accord to the author of "*Reality versus Romance*" all this honor at the outset. We accept his own statement of his honest aim, and shall at no point call that in question. And, yet, his views are so revolutionary, his conclusions so upsetting, that some do not hesitate to say that "he lies"—a harsh judgment, as it would seem. We prefer, if we cannot accept his statements, to find some other solution for any difference of opinion or variance of conclusion.

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\* "*Reality versus Romance in South Central Africa*," by James Johnston, M.D. Published by F. H. Revell Company, New York.

† Pp. 5, 236.