

## Why Blame the Boxers?

BY WINIFRED BLACK.

WE'RE getting excited over the Chinese Boxers, and their daring to fight—in their own country. They have the assurance to defend the altars of their fathers. They care enough for the religion to die or to do murder for it. What hideous bad form!

We in America, who have let religion lapse into a mere form, we who wouldn't think of murdering a man to save his soul, much less dying to save our own, we who call our religion the greatest thing in the universe, and who let the ministers who preach it half starve until they can dun their churches out of a reluctant dollar or two, we who will not do, or suffer, or sacrifice one material thing for the church we profess to honor—we have the audacity to send half-educated, half-formed men and women over into a foreign land to take from the people there a religion in which they have the grace to believe with all their hearts and souls, and then we wonder why these people rise and protest.

The missionary business is a survival of another age.

It is as distant an anachronism as a feudal castle, drawbridge, moat and all, would be, set up on the Hudson River to defend America from the invasion of the Huns.

It was all very well during the dark ages, when people believed in and lived up to their religion, but now—have you ever been to a missionary love feast?

Have you sat at the feast of a returned missionary and heard him tell of his trials and privations, and of his glorious work of saving souls?

I have.

The first one of any importance I ever went to was in San Francisco. It was a glorious occasion.

There were delegates from all the churches, and Bands of Hope from all the Sunday schools.

We gathered into dank and darksome parlors in the Chinese mission, up on the slope of Chinatown hill.

There were lemonade and cookies, and the Chinese children of the mission sang "I lang to be an angelle" deliciously and without the faintest idea of what words they were singing.

Then the missionaries spoke.

One was a tall, fine, patriarchal old man, and one was an elderly woman, with a disappointed face and a quantity of curious brass jewelry disposed variously over her shrunken figure, and one was a pale young woman with a knobby forehead, large, pale eyes and a stubborn mouth.

The patriarch spoke first.

He told us about the poor, suffering heathens, who bowed down to wood and stone, and how he and his brothers were saving them from their degradation. He told us all about mission buildings, and how many teachers there were in them, and what thousands and thousands of dollars it all cost, and at the end of his speech he said:

"I have been laboring in the vineyard for lo, these twenty years, and I have led three men and seven women to the light," and all the room echoed to the fervent "amen" of the electrified listeners.

Then the elderly woman spoke, and she told us all about the heathen women and "their heathenish ways" with such a supercilious lack of sympathy, that it made me long to turn heathen myself just to spite her.

And then the young woman rose and rolled her pale eyes, and told us of the awful martyrdom of a devoted missionary, so far from friends, and home, and luxury, and then we all put something in the contribution box.

A bland and smiling heathen sat in the back of the room, fanned himself with gorgeous fan of peacock feathers and listened.

He was a prosperous merchant, known through San Francisco as a just, honest and wise man.

He and I walked down the steps together after the meeting.

"Do you wonder," he said to me, and he spoke better English than any of the speakers of the day, "do you wonder that my people laugh at the missionaries? That man and

those women who spoke in there, they do not look like the people I see here who are intelligent and well educated. Where do you find them, these missionaries?" and when I expostulated, he said:

"Tell me, if you want to transact important business with me, do you send an ignorant servant to do it? Our men in China are wise men. They will listen to wise men. Why do you not send some to them?"

The heathen in his blindness had a curious little way of seeing straight into the heart of things after all.

Who are our missionaries? Good, conscientious, if somewhat meddlesome, folk, no doubt. But to what class do they belong?

Do we send Lyman Abbott, Dr. Gonsauls, Edward Everett Hale, or even men of half their ability? Do we pick out men and women specially adapted by their sympathetic nature, wide experience and ready resource to the persuasion of a stubborn and peculiar folk, or do we take anyone who wants to go and convert them? Do we select men of courage, of youth, of high hope and stern resolve? Or do we choose a broken-down minister, who could not make a success of his own church among his people?

There is no use to ask these questions. Every one knows their answer.

We send a mealy young theological student from Kalamazoo, who has never heard of Confucius, or a discouraged old bigot from some backwoods congregation over there to China to talk to a nation of intellectual skeptics.

How can they reach them? How understand them? Come, come, let us face the truth.

How many of us would listen with patience to a Chinese coolie, who tramped into our houses, smiled at our religion and criticised our domestic economy? How many days do you suppose a colony of proselyting Chinamen would live undisturbed in Mulberry Bend, or out in West Denver, for instance, if they invaded the homes of a neighborhood of well-meaning laborers and tried to tear their religious pictures from the walls? How long do you think a missionary home of Chinese workers could disseminate the doctrines of Confucius in a good old New England Presbyterian village?

Religion, politics, and the reputation of a woman, these are the subjects no wise man ventures upon in decent society. These missionaries of ours have no such scruples.

They pry into a Chinaman's home. They tell him the religion of his fathers is a by-word and a scorn because they do not happen to believe in his particular form of marriage. They call his wife a name no man will listen to in patience, and then, when the Chinaman gets up and throws things at them, they run out and bawl for the police.

I am afraid I don't sympathize much with the troubles of the missionaries in China, or anywhere else. They know the risks they take, and they take them voluntarily. Why worry other people about them?

We all admire the spirit of a martyr to any cause so long as he be sincere, but if he is dragged to the stake, howling protests and shouting for help all the way, we somehow begin to lose interest in him.

I have never met a naval officer, a minister to other countries, or a traveler of any intelligence, who believed in foreign missions. They have seen too much of it.

When I was a very little girl I went to Sunday school. The brother-in-law of the superintendent was a missionary to the Hawaiian Islands.

Every Sunday I put a round, perspiring nickel in the box for the Sandwich Islander. When I grew up I went to those blessed islands. The first day I went out to drive I saw a magnificent country-seat; great rows of palms led up to a magnificent mansion.

"Missionary So-and-So lives there," said my driver. And then I saw another country-place, and another, and yet another, magnificent homes, the like of which none but multi-millionaires can inhabit, much less own, in this country. All of them belonged to missionaries. A prominent missionary gave a picnic and invited me to it. He had twenty servants on horseback to help attend to the comforts of the guests.

—Denver Post.