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Missionary Work in China.

Among the comments that Lord Salisbury's mild condemnation of missionary work has evoked, the following by "Cyrano," in *Topical Times*, is worthy of note:

"The foreigner would have been quite comfortable in China, able to live and trade in perfect peace and amity, if only he had never meddled with the religion of the people. And, in the name of common sense, why should he? China has a civilization older than our own; has a literature that is worthy of respect; has religious beliefs deeply implanted in the minds of the people, so that attacks are keenly resented. I should think a prompt kicking into the street the most courteous treatment possible for the man who should come as a guest into my house, only to tell me that I was a superstitious fool, and that his special belief was to be swallowed by me. No man, unless he was a hopeless cad or lunatic, would think of behaving like this as between man and man. Why, then, should it be thought either decent or praiseworthy as between nation and nation? Lord Salisbury, I think, underrated what I may style the religious side of the question."

The same journal also publishes the following satirical lines on the same subject:

Pack your bag and do not tarry,
Go and be a missionary,
Teach the heathen how to be
Circumspect, like you and me,
How to hide their shameful limbs,
How to warble Watt's hymns,
How to feel they're worthier far
Than their erring neighbors are!

Yet I warn you at the start. Ah!
Be a saint, but not a martyr;
Why should missionaries come
To a useless martyrdom?
If the natives won't admit you,
If they all look black and hit you,
Since that proves their country lacks hymns,
Wire for soldiers and some Maxims!

Maxims are the things to teach them!
When our military reach them,
Though at first, perhaps, they'll hurt them,
In the end they will convert them
Into British subjects, then,
For the remnant of those men,
Here on earth has heaven begun,
So your mission will be done!

It might do some of our Christian friends much good to study the following opinion of their religion, given by an educated Chinaman, Wu Ting-Fang, the Chinese Minister to the United States, in an article in the *London Commonwealth*:

It is difficult for a man of education and reflection to give credence to all the Bible stories. The account of the creation of the world and the story of Adam and Eve and the garden of Eden seems to me funny. I see too that in these days of enlightenment many thinkers in

Europe and America take a similar view. I must acknowledge that the teachings of Jesus Christ seem to me to establish a standard of conduct as highly ethical as that established by the doctrine of Confucius. Jesus Christ, in fact, goes a little further than Confucius. If your enemy smites you on the cheek, he bids you to turn the other also. Confucius is more practical. He says: "Requite justice with justice, favors with favors." "If we requite our enemy with kindness, how, indeed, can we reward our friend?" he asked.

I have no quarrel with any religion that is based on a foundation of virtue. If they all bid one to do good and deter one from doing evil, I say let them all go on. If there is a reward in some future life for good deeds done on earth, if there is a heaven for the righteous, there must surely be many ladders leading up to it, just as there may be many staircases in a house. To say that there is only one ladder is too narrow for me. If there is any reward for any, I believe it will be for all good people. Some Christians say that except you believe in Christ you cannot be saved. I am broader than that doctrine. My religion comprehends all.

I have read the history of Europe during the middle ages, and the account there given of persecution caused by difference of religious belief fills me with horror. We have no such records in China. Jews, Mohammedans, Buddhists have lived there peaceably side by side. It is only when indiscreet Christian missionaries go to extremes and excite the people that they have any trouble. Christianity owes most of its converts in China to the fact that it is more alluring than any religion we have there. The idea of a future life and rewards for the righteous is tempting to many. Confucius teaches no such doctrine. He was once asked if he believed in a future life, and he answered: "If I don't know what will take place to-morrow how can I know anything about a more remote future?" He exhorted men to do their best to-day with no thought of reward. That seems to me the higher view.

Wu Ting-Fang's remark, "The idea of a future life and rewards for the righteous is tempting to many," is one that corresponds to our common experience, and indicates the cause of the wide-spread belief in a future life among the ignorant masses. In all ages, intelligent men have seen the folly and impossibility of such ideas as those of eternal bliss and eternal punishment; and there is no doubt that—though the Chinese may not on the whole be so advanced and progressive as Westerns—to an educated Chinaman the Western missionaries who come to convert them to Christianity must appear in about the same light as that in which an Indian medicine-man would appear to Englishmen if he came to convert them to his religion. When the Chinese, whose religious prejudices have been ruthlessly violated for many generations, turn and make a determined effort to destroy their oppressors, a howl of "Chinese Barbarities!" is raised, but this should hardly come from those