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THE INDIANS OF AMERICA: THEIR CURIOUS CUSTOMS, WEIRD WAYS, AND STRANGE SUPERSTITIONS.*

BY THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

Fact often outruns fiction in novelty and romantic interest. The aboriginal tribes of this Western Hemisphere bear study. No people on earth are so reticent and reserved. Beneath an exterior imperturbably placid, features that never betray changing emotions and are almost frigidly rigid, they hide even from acute observers their inner secrets; and their whole personal and social life is a veiled chamber of mystery, behind whose curtain very few outsiders ever penetrate to the arcana.

A book has recently appeared which will be to most readers a revelation, not only of marvellous "wonders of the world" to be found within the Continent of North America, but of unsuspected mysteries of Indian life and character. Its author has spent years in Isleta, New Mexico, Arizona, and other parts of the Southwest, living among this comparatively unknown people, studying with rare penetration and patience their curious and occult history and habits. He has not contented himself with any superficial glance or hasty impressions, but seems to have persevered in cultivating such friendly and intimate relations, and in gathering such trustworthy information as might serve to supplement his own keen observation, and enable him to reveal to the general reader, more fully than we have ever before seen, the real life of these "native" Americans. From his fascinating book we cull a few facts which especially bear upon Indian notions of religion, etc.

The somewhat amazing disclosures of Mr. Lummis have to do particularly with the Pueblo cities of Moqui, well into the edge of the Arizona Desert, and remote from civilization and Spanish influence, like the inaccessible *mesas* on which they are built.

* Some Strange Corners of Our Country. By Charles F. Lummis. New York: Century Company, 1892. The author cautions the writer of this article and his readers, to "discriminate carefully between the classes of Indians mentioned in 'Strange Corners.' The Pueblos, of course, are Christians, and very earnest ones, though superstitious."

colporteurs have made tours down the Shat-el-Arab and up both the Tigris and Euphrates, Mr. Cantine going as far as Bagdad. Many points were profitably visited, and at least three towns to the north of Busrah were found—one on the Tigris and two on the Hai—which could be immediately and profitably occupied were funds for this work at hand. From Bahrein, Rev. S. M. Zwemer has recently made two tours, one in October, 1893, and the other in July, 1894. This last tour was toward the interior from Aden to Sanaa, but was suddenly interrupted at a point twelve miles north of Sanaa, and by the connivance of the Turkish officials the missionary was subjected to “so much delay, robbery, and extortion,” that he was finally compelled to relinquish his purpose and return to Hodeydeh, and thence home. Since this the movements on the mainland of all the missionaries have been more restricted. Tours have, however, been made with some freedom among the towns of the Bahrein islands.

The villages in the neighborhood of Muscat have been frequently visited, a recent tour along the coast by Rev. P. J. Zwemer proving, *first*, the possibility of reaching at least the coast of Oman with the Gospel; and, *second*, that in Oman naught opposes the Gospel but Islam itself.

Finally, of the results of this mission and its work for the past five years it can be said, in the words of one of the missionaries: “An entrance has been made into the very heart of Islam. In faith, Arabia has been pre-empted by the Church, and though fanaticism scorns and ignorance misjudges, the seed is being sown, and the questions of the kingship and sonship of Christ are being discussed by the Moslem pilgrim on his way to Mecca.”

Is it not ours then to do what we can to lead the multitudes of Arabia to acknowledge “that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that believing they may have life through His name”?

THE OPENING OF EFFECTUAL DOORS.

BY REV. T. D. WITHERSPOON, D.D., LL.D., LOUISVILLE, KY.

The miracle of all history is the evangelization of the old Roman world in the first century of the Christian era, and almost within the limits of a single generation. The little company of disciples in the upper chamber after our Lord's ascension had no doubt as to the terms of His great commission. The Church, in its very organization, was a missionary church. It recognized from the beginning the whole world as constituting its parish. Every member was understood to be, by the terms of his enrolment, an evangelist. Every place where two or three could be gathered together in Christ's name was to constitute a sanctuary of worship. No rest was to be expected, no halt contemplated until the Gospel had been

preached to every creature and all nations disciplined into the observance of Christ's commands.

With incredible swiftness, by land and by sea, the messengers sped. Over obstacles seemingly insuperable, through hardships apparently insufferable, they pressed on, until, before the century had closed, the Gospel had been preached and the Church established in every province of the Roman Empire. Had the work gone forward with the same celerity for a century or two more, the Gospel would have been preached to every creature, the Saviour's commission would have been fulfilled, and the way opened for His coming in all the glory of His millennial reign.

But just here emerges a question that calls for profoundest thought. Why did the work not go forward with the same enthusiasm and success? What causes intervened to lay an arrest upon this first great missionary movement? Why did the beginning of the nineteenth century find so little more of the world evangelized than in the middle of the second? This question is one of the highest practical importance, because of its relations to the spirit and work of nineteenth-century evangelism. Now that the Church has received, as it were, a new Pentecostal baptism, and has set forth again upon the great mission of conquering the world for Christ, the question becomes a grave one whether the present movement shall expend itself as that of the first century did, and whether there must intervene another long period of inaction followed by a third effusion of power from on high, before the Gospel can be preached to every creature.

The reasons usually given for the arrest of the great work of evangelization begun in the first century have always seemed to the writer unsatisfactory. Church historians are fond of telling us that the Christians began to dispute among themselves over differences of doctrine and of polity, and that, in the wrangles of the various theological schools and parties, the heathen were forgotten, the Spirit was grieved, and so the great work came ignominiously to a close. Was it not rather true that the suspension of the aggressive work of the Church, from whatever cause it may have arisen, rendered inoperative those motives to Christian unity which come from the consciousness of co-operation in a great common work, and that the energies formerly expended in missionary effort, in this time of comparative inactivity, busied themselves, for want of better employment, with wranglings over points of doctrine and discipline? Was not the inaction the occasion of the divisions and strifes, rather than the result? Do we not find in our day that when the hands and hearts of the people are full of aggressive work for the Master there is little either of time or occasion for church quarrels?

May we not then seek the causes of the arrest of the great evangelistic movement of the first century in something less discreditable to the zeal and consecration of the infant Church? May it not be that this tide of evangelization, as it swept onward, encountered barriers such as in the earlier stages had not opposed its course? May not the Church of the

second century have found itself under conditions and limitations different from those of the first century? With the great and effectual doors opened to missions in our day, may we not be in danger of misjudging the early Church and measuring the responsibilities of that age by those of our own?

It may be well, therefore, to indicate some barriers to mission work in the second century, some seemingly impregnable walls, through which God in His providence has opened for us great and effectual doors.

I. And first there was the barrier raised by the poverty in material resources of the early Church. During the first century the work of evangelization lay largely in those provinces which were in direct communication with Rome. For commercial and military purposes there were Roman roads on land and Roman ships on sea that could be brought into the service of the missionaries. At various points along the route of travel were Jewish synagogues in which they could preach without charge, and Jewish communities where hospitality and opportunity of remunerative labor awaited the toil-worn travellers. But little money, therefore, in the earlier stages of the work was necessary. But when the effort was made to press the work into the byways and hedges, when, among aliens and strangers, everything must be purchased, and often at exorbitant rates, larger supplies of money were needed, and these the mother churches at home were unable to supply. Indeed, such was the poverty of these churches in this early day, stripped and peeled by persecution, that instead of the missionaries, as in our day, relying upon the churches at home for the means to carry forward the work, one of the first and most sacred duties imposed upon the new converts was that of sending back money to the "poor saints in Jerusalem." The poverty of the early Church, therefore, constituted the first barrier to work in the remoter and more inaccessible fields which must be occupied before "the end" shall be. What a "great door and effectual" God has opened for the Church of our day, I need not stop to argue. Look at the wealth of Christendom to-day! Look at its wanton waste! If only one tenth of all that Christian nations spend in tobacco and rum could be poured into the treasury of missions, with the blessing of God "the end" would soon be here. If we fail of our great responsibility of preaching the Gospel to every creature, we cannot measure our failure by that of the early Church. The men of that day will rise in judgment against us to condemn us, for if they had possessed the boundless resources of the Church of to-day, the results would doubtless have been far different from what they were.

II. A second wall of opposition to the progress of the Gospel in the second century arose from the barbarousness of the tongues that confronted the missionaries as soon as they passed beyond the limits of the territory that had come under the influence of Roman civilization. So long as the work of the missionaries lay where either of the three languages inscribed upon the cross—the Hebrew, the Greek, or the Latin—was understood,

or even where languages cognate to these were spoken, the work of evangelization was not difficult. As long as the miraculous gift of tongues continued, there was of course no difficulty, but with the close of the apostolic age all miraculous gifts seem to have ceased. We are scarcely in position now, with the results about us of the great work of comparative philology and comparative grammar, to understand the difficulty of mastering these barbarous tongues in that early day. To men of those times the true Chinese wall was not the one of massive brickwork that stretched over hill and vale, but the one of a language so foreign in all its elements and characteristics to anything they had known before. Truly, for us to-day a great door and effectual has been opened. The missionary goes forth now with the results in his hand of a literary work that could have been possible in no century preceding our own. The most barbarous tongues of earth have been mastered. With incredible patience and skill their elementary forms have been distinguished and analyzed. Their rude sounds have been represented in a system of vocalization by written characters. The principles of construction have been systematized in grammar and manuals. Spelling-books, primers, readers, etc., have been prepared. The Bible and other needed books have been translated into these tongues. By means of the printed page a missionary may begin to preach as soon as he disembarks from the vessel in a foreign port. By means of the printed page he may multiply indefinitely his labors, as he scatters far and wide leaves from the tree of life for the healing of the nations. So far has this work of Bible translation been carried that to-day nine tenths of the human race may read the Word of God in "that tongue wherein they were born." What a great and effectual door this is! Surely if with such facilities as these we come short of the evangelization of the world in our day, we cannot in excuse plead as a precedent the failure of the early Church.

III. One more of these barriers was found in the insecurity of life and property in those remoter regions where the power of the Roman Government was not felt. It might be supposed that to men with the spirit of the first witness-bearers for Christ, who "loved not their lives to the death," and who often inordinately craved martyrdom, the insecurity of life would present no obstacle. But while a man might have a high and holy ambition to offer, if need be, his life upon the altar of devotion to Christ, he would at the same time desire that some work should be done, some testimony borne, some result accomplished before he passed away from the world. The man who before a Roman tribunal witnessed as a Christian, and was condemned to death as a Christian, had made a testimony for Christ; and even the cry of "*Christianos ad leones*," that rang upon the air as with his fellow-confessors he was led into the arena, was sweet to his ears, because it published the name of Christ, and identified him as a Christian with the Crucified One; but that was a very different thing from being murdered by savages who knew nothing of him or his

religion, and who felled him with a club, or assassinated him with a spear before he had even once spoken in their ears in their own tongue the name of Jesus. The age in which we live is one in which commerce has carried the name and fame of the great Christian nations of this day, where even the name of Rome was never heard. Far out amid the jungles of equatorial Africa and in the remoter isles of the sea, through commercial relations, and the softening influences of systems of barter and trade, the way has been opened for the missionary, so that with comparative safety he may go with the message of salvation. And although in many of the most interesting fields he bears the spirit of the true martyr, for he knows not when he may meet a martyr's death, his situation is immeasurably beyond that of the early missionary, because he knows that if he should be cut down, through the words he has already spoken and the printed pages he has already distributed, seed have been sown which shall only germinate the more surely if watered with his blood. The missionary, therefore, who goes abroad to-day, whatever field he may choose, has reasonable ground to hope that his life will be spared long enough at least to lay foundations upon which others may build after he is gone, and in this respect the door is open for the evangelization of the world as it has never been before.

If there were time, attention might be called to doors of facility and convenience in the accomplishment of the work—facilities for reaching the remoter fields by means of railways and steamship lines, facilities for communication with home by postal service and by telegraph, facilities for comfort in the field by the erection of mission houses, the presence of medical missionaries, the receipt of supplies from home, etc.

Enough has been said to show the marvellous adjustments of Providence for throwing open "great doors and effectual," for putting it within the power of the men of this generation to win the whole world for Christ. Will the Church of God enter these open doors? Shall the evangelization of the world be effected in our day? These are questions that demand immediate consideration. On the answer to them hinge responsibilities such as never rested upon the Church of God in any previous epoch of its history. Never before did the command come more imperatively, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

THE "MOUNTAIN WHITES" OF AMERICA.*

Professor Austin Phelps remarks that "five hundred years in the salvation of the world may depend upon the next twenty-five years of United States history." So vast is our land that Montana alone could accommodate the entire population of this country, and give each man, woman,

* Outline of an address by Mrs. S. M. Davis, reported by the Editor-in-chief.