

decade. Take the census figures for Bengal. In 1871 there were seventeen millions of Hindus and about sixteen and a half millions of Mohammedans, but in 1901 there were eighteen millions of Hindus and little over nineteen and a half millions of Mohammedans. So that in the space of thirty years the latter, who were at the start in the minority of half a million, had not only gained on the Hindus but came out with a lead of a million and a half. On the basis of these figures, Lieut.-Col. U. N. Mukerjee, of the Indian Medical Service, has written a booklet entitled, "A Dying Race," in which he maintains that in Bengal the future is with the Mohammedans while the Hindus are "waiting for extinction."

How is the increase in the number of Mohammedans to be accounted for? Certainly not in the practice of polygamy, for only twenty-nine in every thousand of the Bengal Mohammedans have more than one wife. At the census in 1901, an inquiry was made into the reasons for conversion, and in the report we are given an appendix of nine foolscap pages containing notes on specific cases. From these it is evident that conviction does not play a prominent part in the reason why. Everywhere the converts confess ulterior motives in joining Islam. The report from the district around Calcutta is typical. Forty cases were inquired into and reported upon as follows: twenty-three conversions were the result of "love" episodes and elopements. Seven were reported as becoming Moslems "owing to straightened circumstances," whilst the conversions of the remaining ten are variously explained. I have made careful inquiries from missionaries in various parts and they say that nearly all the conversions they know of might be classed in the same way.

Mukerjee, in the book mentioned above, does not look upon these conversions as being lapses from morality, as