

to use its own. Vanity and folly and pride pass by on the other side, while hypocrisy in sober garb keeps its eyes steadily on the ground. Selfishness and unconcern, blind and deaf, pour along the main road, turning not to the right or the left, but straight on in quest of self or pelf.

We are told that there are probably a million of people in London living in dens, or tenements which scarcely deserve a better name. That a vast proportion of this immense mass of humanity live no one knows how, in the midst of squalor, filth and wretchedness, and that thousands of tradesmen and artisans who earn respectable wages are scarcely superior to them in point of comfort, and on a level with them in point of religious training or religious knowledge. The same melancholy truth holds good with regard to other large cities. In all or almost all there is but a small percentage of habitual church-goers, many who very seldom enter any place of religious worship, and very many who have never entered a church or heard the voice of a minister in their lives. Recent statistics tell us that this melancholy group is rapidly increasing, especially in our manufacturing cities. How are these practical heathens in the very heart of a Christian land to be reclaimed, or is it possible to reclaim them? The problem is dark and difficult, and hangs over Great Britain, at once a reproach and menace to that great Christian land. Time was, in free and merry England, when it was considered not only a disgrace but a crime to be absent from the parish church, when the idler or recusant was first rebuked, and if that was ineffectual, then fined or put in the stocks, or sent to prison and fed on bread and water. Good old Queen Bess carried out this plan with tolerable firmness and success—and her successors tried to continue it, but it was a sad and deserved failure. Charles went the length of cutting off ears and slitting noses, and ended by losing his crown and head. Every body is now satisfied that people cannot be made religious or church-goers by act of parliament, and yet we cannot believe it altogether hopeless to bring the Gospel within reach of the poor and needy, or to induce them to listen to it when it is brought. Then how may it be done? Here the whole difficulty lies, and it would be much easier to show and prove now it cannot be done than how it can. Individual and systematic philanthropy has done and is doing much—but can never cope with the giant evil. The Voluntary system cannot do it, or it would have done so long ago. Ought the State then to step in and try what it can do. At the very thought a hundred rival sects rise up bristling with indignation and thunder.—No. And yet, such was undoubtedly the great idea of John Knox at the period of the Reformation, for the godly upbringing of the people of Scotland. His plan was that every 1000 people or 200 families should

have a spiritual overseer, whose support should be provided out of the funds of the State. He never contemplated that the number should be stationary, but that it should increase with the population of the country. Had it done so, Scotland would now have 3000 parish ministers instead of a little over a third of that number. It is true that *in cumulo* the number of ministers is scarcely if at all, below the required limit. But they are badly distributed. The sturdy Reformer does not appear to have contemplated that his children would quarrel among themselves, and split off into rival and hostile sects, often jealous of and sometimes sadly abusing each other. It certainly never entered into the good man's calculations that in a parish of 800 or 900 souls there would be the time-honored parish Church, and as near it as possible the aggressive Free Kirk—doing all in its power to thin its pews, and again within easy hailing distance the dounce U. P. scrambling to make up a flock, and it may be two or three smaller sects, all watchful and jealous of each other with but little in common, but that of regarding the Parish Church as a common enemy and common prey. Now how much better would it have been, could the division have been continued on geographical principles, to every pastor his given thousand to feed and nourish with the bread of life? Then such a city as Glasgow would have had 400 clergymen instead of about 150, and there would have been at least a *chance* of preventing the wholesale heathenism into which many thousands in every large city has fallen. It is needless however to lament over the past, the duty of the Christian church, by what ever name it may be called is very evident. They must try and agree to work together in endeavoring to make some impression upon the sea of vice and ignorance which runs riot in every considerable town in the empire—or it cannot fail in the end to eat into our greatness and effect our moral overthrow. First of all the State is able to educate and ought to educate every child born upon its soil. It can direct that education so that the rising generation may be trained to habits of thrift and cleanliness, and learn the great principles of morality, and the sublime truths of religion taught and acknowledged by all branches of the Christian Church. In spite of everything there would be a vast outlying wilderness of vice, not to be wholly or even partially reclaimed, but habits of industry, of cleanliness, a knowledge of something beyond the four walls of their humble cottage would be a good preparation for the reception of religious truth by many a poor weary soul. We have not space to pursue the subject, but it is full of interest and we will probably return to it.