

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.\*

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The series of which this is the first volume is one of the most ambitious enterprises hitherto undertaken by a Canadian editor or publisher. Extending over twenty-five volumes, and involving an initial outlay of several hundred thousand dollars, it aims at setting before the English-speaking world a record of the progress of the century at once replete with popular interest, and yet so comprehensive, so trustworthy and so convenient as to form a permanent and valuable work of reference. The volume before us, as well as the reputation of the writers of those to come, give promise of ample fulfilment of this design.

Dr. Withrow deals both generally and specifically with the religious progress of the century. Beginning with a general account of the moral and religious condition of Europe, England, and America at the close of the last century, including a chapter on the great revival under Whitefield and the Wesleys, before passing to religious progress in the strict sense, he touches two great moral aspects of the world's movement, Sabbath Observance and Slavery, giving suggestive notes on the advance made and on the dangers still existing.

As might be expected, the discussion of Religious Progress begins with the great missionary movement. This occupies about one-fourth of the volume, and is in itself a compact history of the missionary work of the century. Carey and India, the South Seas and John Williams, Africa and Livingstone, China and Morrison, Turkey and Cyrus Hamlin, Persia and Henry Martyn, Burmah and Judson, Wolff and the Jews, Eliot and Brainard and the North American Indians, are starting-points leading to Coke and Duff, Hunt and Calvert, Selwyn and Patteson, Burns, Hudson Taylor and Mackay, McKenzie and Hannington. The picture is an inspiring one, but it covers such a vast extent that one cannot help missing a multitude of details not

inferior in interest and importance to the facts presented.

From missions our author proceeds to the history of the individual Churches, to which a second fourth of the volume is devoted. The Church of England, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church in its great branches, the Congregational Churches, the Baptists, the Lutherans, Unitarians, and Universalists, Friends, Mormons, and Spiritualists, and finally the Roman Catholic Church, are all briefly passed in review. Indeed, so condensed is this part of the work that one cannot but think that it might better have been omitted, and the space given to the great religious movements which have touched all the Churches. These, including the progress of religious thought and scholarship, the great Sunday-school movement, the great movements for the distribution of the Scriptures and religious literature, the great movements for the salvation of our city heathenism, including the Salvation Army, and the important Young People's Movements and Societies, fill out the remaining sections of the book and find altogether too scanty space in the hundred and sixty pages at the close, while the great evangelistic movement of the century, which created so many of these special activities or inspired them with their fulness of religious life and power, does not receive separate treatment.

One rises from the perusal of the book feeling that he has touched but the outline of a vast field which he would fain explore in all its breadth of extent and wealth of interest by the aid of many such volumes instead of the one. It leaves the conviction that the religious life of humanity with which it deals is not inferior either in importance or in fulness of matter to that secular life to each individual aspect of which a full volume is devoted.

But while the volume is of necessity limited to a bird's-eye view, it must prove of interest and profit to every Christian worker, and especially to the large numbers of our young people who are now taking an earnest and intelligent interest in religious life and work.

\* "Religious Progress." By W. H. Withrow, M.A., D.D., F.R.S.C. The Lincolnton Publishing Company, London, Toronto, Philadelphia. 1900.