

degradation, suffering and crime? Are civilization and abject squalor, like the Siamese twins, inseparable? Is civilization doomed to be for ever pursued by an inevitable and relentless barbarism? A Christless civilization is by the nature of the case a doomed civilization. This is a fact that all past history attests. Material prosperity based mainly on selfishness has in it the elements of its own decay. Greek, Roman and Byzantine splendour fell by the weight of their inherent corruption. The eternal laws of the Governor of this universe are not subject to the modifications of time or geographical position. Ancient and modern civilizations are alike amenable to Him who rules over all. The nation that will not serve God shall perish.

What hideous disclosures of degradation and suffering in the East of London have just been made. The bitter cry raised a few years ago was shrill and piercing enough to attract general attention, and prompt to remedial efforts. These have been utterly inadequate to cope with even a fringe of the existing distress, and a still more startling state of affairs is now being brought to light. The condition of many of these dwellers in East London is rapidly sinking from bad to worse. With many work is scarce, and with most wages are wretchedly low. As a result their condition is no more enviable than was that of the slaves in the Southern States before the American war. In some respects the condition of the sable slaves was pleasant in comparison. The industrial conditions existing in East London would seem impossible in a Christian land. Had they been detailed by unaccredited observers their narratives would have been set down to the wild imagination of an ingenious romance. The victims of the "sweating" system have told their almost incredible tales before a committee of the British House of Lords. They have been subjected to the searching cross-examination of skilful experts, and the sad facts remain that there are brother men and sister women toiling sixteen and eighteen hours out of the twenty-four for a pittance that cannot long keep body and soul together, living on scantiest possible supplies of food among filth and squalor supposedly impossible. What can such miserable kennels in which these incessant toilers pass day and night be but breeding places of foul disease and deadly immorality? These terrible recitals before the House of Lord's Committee have been confirmed and amplified by the enterprising and painstaking commissioners appointed by the *British Weekly*, who have done much to draw attention to the moral and material dangers that abound in the British metropolis. The plain, straight-forward, unexaggerated story of these commissioners is sufficient to dispel the dream that existence is a happy and joyous thing for a very large number of London citizens. That such awful misery should exist to the extent it does is simply appalling.

Much of the misery is no doubt due to vice and crime, to intemperance and improvidence. That such is the case is painfully true. The gin palace is to all appearance the most prosperous institution in East London, and adds its large quotas to the prevailing distress. When this is admitted all is not accounted for. If there have been startling disclosures of crime and suffering in the east of London, have there not also been astounding revelations of what is only too common amid the stately surroundings of the west? The conditions of existence to which thousands in East London are condemned without hope of escape while life lasts are neither Christian nor human. They cannot go on for ever. If the gigantic evils are not wisely and firmly confronted and abated they will lead to consequences at which many will stand aghast. For the abatement of these evils the cure must be radical and thorough. Half-way measures, and what is called rose-pink philanthropy will be worse than useless. Emigration is proposed, and under proper conditions might afford some relief. This, however, would only be a burden on peoples who were in no wise responsible for the wrongs and miseries of these sufferers in the battle of life. The remedy and responsibility both primarily belong where the evils abound. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the one sole remedy for the cure of decadence whether in East London or West Africa. The Gospel, not in theory, but practically applied, the good news of God alone can still the bitter cry of the suffering and the degraded. But what have we in prosperous Canada to do with the evils incident to dense populations where bread is dear and flesh and blood so cheap? Much prevention is better than cure. Let there be no corner of the land, no congested portions of towns and cities where the light and preserving power of the Gospel do not penetrate.

## Books and Magazines.

**THE ERRORS OF THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.** By the Very Rev. James Carmichael, M.A., D.C.L., Dean of Montreal. (Montreal: W. Drysdale & Co.)—This brief but clear and able refutation of Plymouthistic errors has already reached a third edition. It is well-fitted to put the unwary on their guard against the plausible sophistries of the most sectarian of all the sects.

**THE VEILED BEYOND.** By Sigmund B. Alexander. (New York: Cassell & Company; Toronto: W. J. Gage & Co.)—This is a remarkably attractive issue of a new series of choice fiction by an eminent publishing house, whose past record is a guarantee that only works of genuine merit and wholesome character will find a place in the series. "The Veiled Beyond" is forcibly written and the characters are well drawn and distinct in their individuality. It will be read with an unflagging interest.

**ORION, THE GOLD-BEATER.** By Sylvanus Cobb, jr. (New York: Cassells & Company; Toronto: W. J. Gage & Co.)—Sylvanus Cobb, an American writer who justly attained eminence among his countrymen, has added works of permanent value to literature. The book whose title heads this notice can be confidently recommended. It is interestingly written and its tone is pure. In these days when sensational and purposeless fiction is so prominent, it is pleasing to find that works of real merit, without dullness and without vapidness, can be placed before the reading public at a cheap rate.

**THE SILENT MAN'S LEGACY.** By Annette L. Noble. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication.)—Once before we have met the same family in the author's book, "The Professor's Girls." Here we have the story of the household during times of anxiety and considerable distress, and learn many good lessons on the true way to endure such experiences so as to get from them the discipline and strength they are designed to give. The book is specially adapted to young girls, during and after school age. Its lessons are healthful and stimulating.

**THE SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY CONTAINED IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM OPENED AND EXPLAINED.** By Rev. A. A. Hodge, D.D., and Rev. J. Aspinwall Hodge, D.D. (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son; Toronto: Williamson & Co.)—This valuable little compend has several features of great interest. It is a posthumous gift by the late Dr. A. A. Hodge, and is in itself a most valuable contribution to the elucidation of Christian doctrine. It is the work of a master in Israel. Impressed with the need of such a book, he undertook its preparation, but was summoned from earthly toil before the completion of the task. The first part, "Belief Concerning God," is from his pen, while the remainder "Duty required of man," has been carefully prepared by his cousin, Rev. J. Aspinwall Hodge, D.D. The entire work, in a clear and direct style, evidences a vigorous understanding and a clear grasp of the doctrines of grace. For personal study, parental and Sabbath school instruction this new book on an old subject is alike valuable. Its merits need only be known to be widely appreciated.

**THIRTY THOUSAND THOUGHTS.** Edited by Very Rev. H. D. M. Spence, D.D., Rev. Joseph S. Exell, M.A., and Rev. Charles Neil, M.A. Volume VI. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; Toronto: William Briggs.)—An extract from the voluminous title page of this most useful and valuable work will give the general reader a good idea of its scope. It contains "Extracts covering a comprehensive circle of religious and allied topics, gathered from the best available sources of all ages and all schools of thought; with suggestive and seminal headings, and homiletical and illuminative framework; the whole arranged upon a scientific basis; with classified and thought-multiplying lists, comparative tables and elaborate indices, alphabetical, topical, textual and scriptural." The present volume contains also a general index to the whole six volumes now issued. This sixth volume is devoted to Scripture biography, to which there is a brief general introduction. There are chronological and other classifications, but all are arranged in two parts, the first comprising all the male characters mentioned in the Old Testament, and the second, all the males whose names occur in the New Testament. For ministers and earnest students of the Bible the work is one of inestimable value.

## THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

### LADIES' MEETING.

The annual meeting for women's missions in connection with the London Missionary Society, was held in the lower hall, Exeter Hall, on Tuesday afternoon, May 8. The Countess of Aberdeen presided. Miss Bennett read a paper relating to the work which is being done through the lady agents.

The Countess in her opening remarks said: We read and hear a great deal about missions; but still there is something unreal about the whole matter until we come face to face with the missionaries. During our visit to India, Lord Aberdeen and I became acquainted with missionary effort, the memory of which will never be effaced from our minds, for we were filled with awe at the importance and interest of the work. Through the kindness of Mr. Hewlett and others we were enabled to visit the schools, hospitals, and zenanas, and to observe the many phases of spiritual labour for women. We could not help feeling grieved at the great need there is of enlightenment amongst our own countrymen, who ought to be helping in all Christian work instead of requiring missionaries to teach them. The number of female agents is not more than one to every 100,000; and we trust that words spoken this afternoon may arouse a more intense interest in helping those who are engaged in this grand enterprise.

Miss Bloomfield, of Berhampur, began her address to the meeting by saying that she should speak chiefly of the country work in which she had been engaged. She described Berhampur as lying about 200 miles north-west of Calcutta, and as being of some historical interest owing to the celebrated people who had lived and died there, or who had been interred in the burial ground. At present the population is over 27,000, and in one large district, including 1,350,000 souls, there are only two or three female workers, so that the lady missionaries feel they are as nothing among so many. The women are nearly half of them Mohammedans, and are increasingly becoming so, not so much from religious principle as owing to their great poverty, for the poorest look to the Mohammedans for some measure of relief. The lower classes are very numerous, and so ignorant that it is difficult to make them understand anything; but having no special faith of any kind, they appear willing to listen to Gospel teaching when it is given them. Miss Bloomfield spoke of the necessity of first getting hold of the boys, and by that means she said she had been able afterwards to induce the parents to allow the girls to come to her schools. The difficulty of visiting the parents was spoken of as being very great, owing to there being no roads, and the ploughed fields being often so rugged that it is impossible for a bullock cart to pass over them. Still the children's interest in the school, after a time, becomes so great that they will surmount almost any obstacle to be present; and in visiting a village every attention, according to the customs of the country, is paid to the English lady visitor.

Miss Philip, of Peking, said that when she was asked to speak she felt a difficulty as to whether she should talk of the needs of the people or the work already accomplished amongst them, and decided that it would be better to mention what was already going on under four different agencies—viz., Bible work, medical work, educational work and itinerant work. The first means employed for reaching the people was the medical work, which opened the hearts of the women, better than anything else, to receive the lady missionaries into their homes. In the dispensary the men and women are gathered in separate rooms, and a lady missionary is present to speak to the women who are waiting for their turn to receive medical advice. Miss Philip described an afternoon in one of the hospitals, where she went to watch the women and children; on her arrival she found a number attentively listening to a native Bible woman, who was explaining, in a somewhat peculiar manner, a Gospel story. The children were mostly suffering from skin diseases, but one girl had run a needle into her leg. The accident had happened from the habit the natives of turning the bed into the sofa for the day, and working upon it. One woman had attempted to commit suicide and was badly wounded in the head, not an uncommon circumstance from the frequent quarrels in the family life. Had she known the Gospel, she said, she would not have attempted suicide.