

Marlborough has a place in history. In that history splendour and disgrace are curiously blended. The career of its present chief representative is about as disgraceful as it could well be. The exposures in the courts leave no possible doubt as to the character of the man who wears ducal honours. This discredited individual comes to the United States, where, so popular fiction says, republican simplicity prevails. He is courted and fêted by so-called leaders of fashion. As soon as he conveniently can he proposes to a wealthy widow, is accepted and weds her, leading her in triumph to the high places of social fashion in England. Cable despatches are lengthy and minute in chronicling the magnificent festivities and receptions accorded the man who has set the proprieties of life, and the moral law at defiance. Certain social leaders had simply willed that the dissolute duke should be socially disinfected and they have done it. Those to whom "Society" and its ways are an earthly paradise silently acquiesce and by their action vote every thing charming. When such things are, there is something wrong with society that bodes no good.

There is one thing that shows public and social virtues are yet robust in England. The Queen has never lent her countenance to those who are disposed to regard vice as a trivial thing. Society may open its doors freely to those who can wield certain influences but the royal court is peremptorily closed against the entrance of all such. The Queen's personal and social influence has been consistently directed against all whose conduct has been unworthy of the stations they occupied. Efforts have again and again been made to secure a modification of her Majesty's stern purpose in the case of certain favoured individuals, but without avail. Even where higher considerations do not prevail, the course followed by the Queen and the force of her own example will not be without their effect.

Because society enfolds many who live disgraceful lives, it would be absurd to conclude that social life in England was honeycombed with corruption. There are men and women occupying the highest places of honour who are living noble, self-sacrificing and useful lives, trying to do all the good they can. These and the work in which they are engaged do not receive the same publicity that falls to the share of the scapegraces who bring odium on themselves and the circles to which they belong. Those who live quietly and decorously do not attract attention. They pursue the even tenor of their way, and as none living are without influence either for good or evil, their example is doing its work.

That wickedness in high places is more rampant and shameless than it was even a quarter of a century ago is generally conceded, and that in certain quarters there is a growing indifference to moral distinctions is made plain by more than one recent event in the political and social life of England. We now do and say things and are to be seen in company from which their fathers and mothers would have shrunk. This disregard of moral considerations, apart from better and loftier purposes, is in itself a danger signal. Moral deterioration proceeds at a rapid pace, and the present reckless behaviour and callous indifference as to consequences bode disaster which might cause even the most thoughtless to pause and consider. It is for the Christian community to maintain a position of firm and energetic protest against the moral laxity that prevails. The reign of vice is a far greater foe to national well-being than a threatened invasion of armed men. It may be right and proper to strengthen the naval and military defences of Great Britain, it is absolutely imperative that the festering corruption preying on the nation's vital centres should be checked, and that a vigorous and healthy moral tone be maintained, before which even those who brazenly flaunt their shame may shrink abashed.

SAYS the *Christian World*: The gathering in Regent Square Church, on Tuesday, when Principal Dykes occupied his old familiar pulpit and preached to the Pan Presbyterian delegates, was doubtless the most influential and unique that has ever assembled within the cathedral of metropolitan Presbyterianism. Dr. Dykes was addressing representatives of over fifty different sections of the great Presbyterian family. The prayer at the close of the service with which Dr. Dykes constituted the Alliance was most comprehensive and impressive. It is not generally known that Dr. Dykes writes his prayers and commits them to memory.

Books and Magazines.

FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES. Their State and Prospects. By J. Murray Mitchell, M.A., LL.D. (Toronto: Willard Tract Depot.)—In several respects this is a very timely, as it is certain to prove a very useful, little book. It deals with a subject of growing interest in all evangelical Churches. Its author is well and widely known as a devoted friend of missions. In short space it gives a comprehensive view of the whole subject as will be seen by glancing at the contents. What Missions have done, State of the Chief Pagan Religions; Modes of Missionary Action; What Next? and then an appendix giving much valuable information, together with an index that makes reference easy.

THE MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, Toronto: William Briggs.) The contents of the July number show no falling off in industry or interest. There is a breadth and fulness, a variety and freshness in them that is a perpetual wonder. The cause of missions certainly has reason to rejoice in the establishment and marked success of such a monthly—in literary ability the peer of the secular monthlies, while in religious force and spirit of consecration to missions all that the most ardent friends of the cause can desire. Among the noteworthy articles in literature section, eleven in all, we specially note "The Romance of Modern Missions," "The Great Commission," "Mission Problems and Work in Abyssinia," and "Miracles of Missions." The first is one of the most thrilling narratives ever written. We have also reports from nine societies, intensely interesting correspondence from nine important fields, the "International" pages, the Monthly Concert Service, the Monthly Bulletin, giving the latest news and facts from the whole world-field, and the Statistics of the World's Missions. The number is quite the equal of any that have gone before.

THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.)—The opening paper in this quarter's issue of the *Presbyterian Review* is one of much ability by Professor Ransom B. Welch, D.D., LL.D., on "Christian Unity and the Historic Episcopate." This is followed by the discussion of "Primitive Justice," by Professor A. G. Hopkins, D.D. The Rev. J. A. McIlvain gives an interesting sketch of "Ninian Beal, an American Elder of the Seventeenth Century." Then comes an admirable paper by Rev. William T. Herridge, B.D., of St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa, on "Christianity and Culture." Professor W. G. Blakie, of Edinburgh, gives an interesting account of "The Rise of the Scottish Pulpit." Dr. Erskine N. White discusses the question "Can the Being of God be Demonstrated?" There is a historical note of great value by Dr. Samuel T. Lawrie, giving "An Account of the Scripture Proofs Attached to the Confession of Faith and Larger Catechism." There are in addition editorial and critical notes and copious yet compact reviews of recent theological literature. The July number of this valuable *Review* is a splendid one.

STUBBLE OR WHEAT. A story of more lives than one. By S. Bayard Dod. (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., Toronto: Book and Tract Depository.)—The purpose of this book is to face the tide of pessimism that is sweeping through our literature, and ask men to listen to both sides of the question. The plan of the book is to tell a simple domestic story and show the outcome of a life modelled on the pessimistic philosophy; and how, under ordinary circumstances, an earnest nature will be led, who adopts this as the guiding influence of his life; the inevitable trend of its teachings. In contrast to the story of the writer's friend, we are shown the lives of others interwoven with his, affected by the same circumstances, and each one led to look on life according to the source from which he seeks his light. The story of the young man's life, around which the main incidents of the book cluster, is carried on through school and college and after graduation. Incidentally the methods of discipline in different colleges, and the question of college athletics, are warmly debated, in a way to interest college men. The exhibition of the pessimist's theory, contrasted with that of a sound Christian philosophy, suggests the answer to the question of the title; which makes of life a field of barren stubble, and which a harvest of ripened grain?

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

A SABBATH SCHOOL FESTIVAL IN THE NEW HEBRIDES.

Mrs. Mackenzie, of Efate, New Hebrides, wrote the following letter which appears in the *Halifax Presbyterian Witness* to the members of the Light Bearers Band, Truro:

We had more children present at our festival this year than on any previous year. We invited the children of the other schools. In former years we had the children all attending the school at Erakor, but now we have a very hopeful children's school both at "Fila" and "Tankaro." These schools are in the hands of competent teachers, young men and their wives, who were trained at Erakor, and we felt it was right that the little ones in both these places should share in the enjoyments of the day. There were ninety-five children when all assembled; and those of Erakor were very hearty in providing food for their guests. We were able to give each child a ready-made garment. For these we were indebted to our dear friends in Truro and other places. The larger girls we supplied with hats. Prizes were given to each school separately, according to merit. Three in each school for reading, two for mental and two for slate arithmetic, two for Bible knowledge; two for writing; two for English in the Erakor schools only; two for dictation. We used discretion in giving prizes. Where a destitute child was the recipient we gave a garment or piece of print. In other cases axes, knives, basins, pannikins, etc.; and last but not least came the candy bags. Some of the most diligent went away quite laden with presents and prizes. I did not see a look of displeasure on any face. Between one and two they dispersed for games, but about three the rain began to fall heavily, and the fun was ended. I forgot to mention that we distributed a large number of cards, with which the children were delighted. I wish you could all have seen how much the children enjoyed the day. Then apart from their enjoyment, many of these children are orphans, and depend on us almost entirely for clothing. Very many thanks for the tidy, pin-cushion, etc. The note paper came in nicely for the young men and boys in the training class. They used a large part of it for transcribing the *Peep of Day* for the press. It is quite an item of interest that we have the *Peep of Day* translated by our own natives, and transcribed ready for the press. It is now in the printer's hands, and we hope to have it ready to take down with us to Sydney. I asked Mr. Mackenzie, when the *Peep of Day* was finished, why he did not give them *Line upon Line* to translate,—it would be such a boon to the natives and contains so much Bible history. "Well," he said, "they would translate it and then I could not have it printed, for I have no money to pay for it." Oh! I thought, why should the Lord's work be crippled for want of money? We had a very good passage from Aneityum to Sydney. Got to anchor on New Year's morning in time to attend Church. We spent a few weeks in Sydney, and as soon as the doctor would allow me to leave we came up here—a distance of ninety-five miles. Other places were recommended, but terms here are cheaper, and the climate equal in point of health to any other place. A walk of a few miles in different directions brings us to very fine scenery. We have met some very nice people here, good Christian people. The schoolmaster is one such. We will remain here until the middle of March. After we had spent a week here and become acquainted with the teacher we decided to send our two boys to school. It was a new experience for them, and they have taken to it nicely. We will leave Norman, the elder, in Sydney at school and return with Morrison and Alice to the islands. You have probably heard of a severe epidemic that passed over our side of Efate a year ago, and which took from us our youngest child. Since that time the children have all enjoyed good health. Mr. Mackenzie's health is good at present except a cold: this is matter for thankfulness. We have not forgotten our pleasant visit to Truro and the many kind friends we there. I sincerely hope the "Light Bearers" are doing much for the Master. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." First give our hearts to the Lord, then let our lives be spent in His service. Mr. Mackenzie unites with me in expressing our sincere thanks for your continued interest in us, also our best wishes for your prosperity.