

to be done for the salvation of far off heathen lands. If it can, however, be shown that such a condition of things as that alluded to by the Chinese gentleman in Melbourne exists, all uninterfered with and that, while they are wholly neglectful of it, the members of the Presbytery are ardently engaged in aiding missions abroad, the case becomes different; then their inconsistency is to be much blamed, and their sincerity, moreover, is to be greatly doubted. Meantime, whatever may be the case in Melbourne, while Exeter Hall has been occupied with the affairs of foreign missions, and while volumes have been published as to the success of English missionaries abroad, we have ample reason to believe that a very culpable neglect of a state of things hardly to be surpassed in any heathen country has been going on within earshot of its platform. It is something, nevertheless, if even thus late in the day, a Protestant society has penetrated into the dark parts of London and revealed to the public the horrors to be found there—let us hope for their complete removal and remedy. But of this, we must say, we should feel more hopeful had not the state of things now fully revealed been already, for many years, in great part known, and were we not accustomed to hear every now and then of exposures made of evils that seemed only exposed for a time to be once more forgotten and allowed to continue as before. The state of things, however, now published concerning London, is almost beyond belief, and such as may well alarm all the dwellers in that great city, and even in the country of which it is the capital.—Misery, filth, vice, infamy—all that is unspeakable, and almost unimaginable, has been brought to light. Take, for example, this picture: "Few have any adequate conception of what the pestilential human rookeries are where tens of thousands of the London poor are crowded together. To get into them you have to penetrate courts reeking with poisonous and malodorous gases arising from accumulations of sewage and refuse scattered in all directions, and often flowing beneath your feet; courts which the sun never penetrates, and which are never visited by a breath of fresh air. You have to ascend rotten staircases which threaten to give way beneath every step, and which, in some places, have already broken down, leaving gaps that imperil the limbs and lives of the unwary. You have to grope your way along dark and filthy passages swarming with vermin. Then, if you are not driven back by the intolerable stench, you may gain admittance to the dens in which these thousands of beings herd together. Should you ascend to the attic, where, at least, some approach to fresh air might be expected to enter by the open or broken windows, you find that the sickly air which finds its way into the room has to pass over the putrefying carcasses of dead cats or birds, or viler abominations still. Here is a hole in the wall which has been repaired by the landlord. He has done it by nailing a few pieces of an old soap-box over the place, and for this has put threepence a week on the rent! And this is the best paying property in London! Three shillings, four and sixpence, as much as six shillings a week is readily paid for one of these horrible rooms. Houses that have been condemned by the authorities as unfit for habitation are very gold mines to sleek speculators who fatten upon the wretchedness of the poor." And yet again: "Every room in these rotten and reeking tenements houses a family, often two. In one cellar have been found a father, mother three children, and four pigs! In another is a man ill with the small-pox, his wife just recovering from her eighth confinement, and the children running about half naked and covered with dirt. Here are seven people living in one underground kitchen, and a little dead child lying in the same room. Another apartment contains father, mother, and six children, two of whom are ill with scarlet fever. In another nine brothers and sisters, from 29 years of age downwards, live, eat, and sleep together. Here is a mother who turns her children into the street in the early evening because she lets her room for immoral purposes until long after midnight, when the poor little wretches creep back again if they have not found some miserable shelter elsewhere. In many cases matters are made worse by the unhealthy occupations of those who dwell in these habitations. Here you are choked as you enter by the superfluous fur pulled from the skins of rabbits, rats, dogs, and other animals, in their preparation for the furrier. Here the smell of paste and of dry match-boxes, mingled with other sickly odours, overpowers you; or it may be the fragrance of stale fish or vegetables, not sold on the previous day, and kept in the room overnight. Who can wonder that young girls wander off into a life of immorality? Who can wonder that the public houses should still be the 'Elysian field of the tired toiler?'—Who can wonder, indeed, that every sense of decency is dead, and that the brutal conditions of their surroundings only form a fit index to the minds and natures of those who live among them?—The standing of England, then, as a missionary nation may well be questioned. In her own proud and far-famed capital are to be found hordes whose debasement exceeds that of the lowest savages, and whose misery is unequalled, and what has she done to reclaim them or what is she about to do? Perhaps, indeed, the exposure made by this Protestant Society may be as little relished by Exeter Hall as, according to the *Argus*, was the suggestion of Mr. Cheong by the elders of the Melbourne presbytery, and we may find that conquests in Madagascar, and prayer-meetings in the New

Hebrides are still preferred before the conversion of the brethren near at hand—as appears to be the state of affairs in Melbourne.

THE question, moreover, arises as to what, in addition to the disgrace of the state of things reported in connection with London, may be the danger of it. That a great portion of the people so situated are vicious and criminal in the extreme, we are told, and such a people stirred to violence, would be of reckless brutality and cruelty. That, again, those people who have remained untainted by crime or grosser vices among the baser crew are still callous and indifferent of necessity to the infamy of what goes on around them we learn from another source, for we had already seen in the *Pictorial World*, a London newspaper, a series of sketches entitled, "How the poor live," in which the publication of this Protestant Society already alluded to had been in many particulars forestalled. The following details, for example, we owe to the newspaper in question:—The constant association of the poor and the criminal class," says the writer, "has deadened in the former nearly all sense of right and wrong. In the words of one of them, 'they can't afford to be particular about their choice of neighbours.' I was but the other day in a room in this district occupied by a widow woman, her daughters of seventeen and sixteen, her sons of fourteen and thirteen, and two younger children. Her wretched apartment was on the street level, and behind it was the common yard of the tenement. In this yard the previous night a drunken sailor had been dreadfully maltreated and left for dead. I asked the woman if she had not heard the noise, and why she didn't interfere. 'Heard it?' was the reply; 'well, we ain't deaf, but they're a rum lot in this here house, and we're used to rows. There ain't a night passes as there ain't a fight in the passage or a drunken row; but why should I interfere? 'Tain't no business of mine. As a matter of fact, this woman, her grown-up daughters, and her boys must have lain in that room night after night, hearing the most obscene language, having a perfect knowledge of the proceedings of the vilest and most depraved of profligate men and women forced upon them, hearing cries of murder and the sound of blows, knowing that almost every crime in the Decalogue was being committed in that awful back yard on which that broken casement looked, and yet not one of them had ever dreamed of stirring hand or foot. They were saturated with the spirit of the place, and though they were respectable people themselves they saw nothing criminal in the behaviour of their neighbours." It is evident, then, that in London the poorer classes are being trained in a school where they cannot but learn all the qualities that shall fit them for red revolution, and to take a suitable part in whatever convulsions may eventually disturb society. In the country, also, as Dr. Jessop has recently told us, the peasantry are being similarly schooled, and the leadership of a few demagogues seems all that is needed to set both country and town ablaze. But that the leaders may not long be wanting there are many things to warn us. The temper of the times is singularly favourable to their growth, and the small philosophers, paltry, mischievous, conceits, and self-sufficient ignorance of the day cannot fail to produce them any more than rotteness does to produce its particular mould or fungus. The condition of the classes referred to, then, is not a question for Exeter Hall only, but of much wider interest, and to be remedied by something more efficacious than an effate and amile piety, or the pretence of it.

ANOTHER picture, which we borrow also from the writer in the *Pictorial World*, a gentleman who had accompanied the Board School officer for a certain district in his rounds, has a bearing on the dangers that children are exposed to in the State schools. It is this:—"Wait outside while we knock at this door. Knock, knock. No answer? Knock, knock, knock. A child's voice answers, 'What is it?' We give the answer—the answer which has been our 'open sesame' everywhere—and after a pause a woman opens a door a little and asks us to wait a moment. Presently we are admitted. A woman pleasing looking and with a certain refinement in her features holds the door open for us. She has evidently made a hurried toilet and put on an ulster over her night attire. She has also put a brass chain and locket round her neck. There is a little rouge left on her cheeks and a little of the burnt hairpin colour left under her eye from overnight. At the table having their breakfast are two neat and clean little girls of seven and eight. They rise and curtsy as we enter. We ask them a few questions, and they answer intelligently—they are at the Board School and are making admirable progress—charming children, interesting and well-behaved in every way. They have a perfect knowledge of good and evil—one of them has taken a scripture prize—and yet these two charming and intelligent little girls live in that room night and day with their mother, and this is the den to which she snares her dissolute prey. I would gladly have passed over this scene in silence, but it is one part of the question which directly bears on the theory of State interference. It is by shutting our eyes to evils that we allow them to continue unreformed so long. I maintain that such cases as these are fit ones