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When the Rev. Dr Robert Laws was preparing himself for missionary work in Central Africa in the 1870s, he went to work in a Glasgow medical mission. He was taken by the Superintendent to visit houses in the slums, 'frightful dens of viciousness and dirt', in one of which a 'Roman Catholic virago attacked them as heretics, flourishing a long knife in their faces, and threatened to murder them' (W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, n.d. [c. 1924], p. 29). Later he was involved in 'drives' in which students of divinity and medicine would act as decoys to lure prostitutes to a hall for a late-night revivalist meeting. On one occasion they collected together a hundred and 'about forty declared for a new life' (*ibid.*, pp. 32–3). In the same period and in another Scottish city, Dundee, Mary Slessor, preparing for missionary work in West Africa and herself a slum dweller, was caught up in the establishment of a mission in slums even poorer than her own. There, she and her fellow workers were subjected to violence and frequently found the mission room wrecked (W.P. Livingstone, *Mary Slessor of Calabar*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1916, p. 9).

In the 1950s, the same sense of social proselytization survived into my own lifetime and experience. In the West End of Glasgow, Finnieston (later Kelvingrove) Church of Scotland, a middle-class and upper-working-class congregation in a grand Victorian classical building adjacent to the great gates of Kelvingrove Park, continued to maintain a mission in the nearby slums of the Glasgow docklands. It was in a street appropriately named for a mission, but not for the poverty and misery to be found there, Grace Street. In my youthful mind, brought up to loathe the pubs, the drunkenness and alleged criminal fecklessness of such 'darker' regions of the city, there was unquestionably a parallel between the Grace Street mission and the stations of the missionaries who came, on furlough, to speak about India and Africa. Indeed, I soon made the connection myself by going to live in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia).

This analogy between missions to the 'heathen' poor of Britain and the 'heathen' peoples of Africa and Asia is now well known, though it has never been fully researched. In this book, John Marriott takes up this theme, and much more, in relation to the mutually constitutive aspects of encounters with the London poor and with the peoples of India. Travel accounts, topographical mapping, descriptions of the 'Other', the adoption of the language of 'tribe' and race, anxieties about 'nomadic' people who cannot be pinned down and rendered subject to the requirements of the bourgeois state, fears of revolt and revolution, anxieties about degeneration, all reveal striking parallels in the language, form and style used in relation to the London poor and to the inhabitants of India. In its breadth of source material and its range of illustrations, this book constitutes a notable study of these parallel phenomena.

There can be little doubt that similar studies, as indicated above, could be attempted for other parts of Britain and other continents, notably Africa. The

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conclusions that we can draw include the extraordinary complexity of the processes of 'othering', which have too often been rendered in over-simplified form; the fluid interpenetration of concepts of class and race; and the manner in which these are written upon both urban and rural landscapes. This book is therefore about spatial as well as demographic conceptualizations. It analyses the rhetoric of discovery as well as the rhetoric of forms of social and religious 'redemption', partially bound up in the central notion of 'progress'. It also surveys a dynamic which spans the eighteenth to the late nineteenth centuries, demonstrating the intellectual and conceptual transformations that occur during this period. But it also reveals striking continuities, just as my Scottish examples do. The vision of a relationship between 'darkest England' or 'darkest Scotland' and 'darkest' India or Africa was a remarkably durable one.

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