

THE MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD.

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I.—LITERATURE OF MISSIONS.

LOOKING BACKWARD AND FORWARD.

[EDITORIAL.]

“OUR work is practically that small portion of God's eternal work and will which is allotted to us in our little corner of space and our short minute of time.”

So spake Pasteur Monod, truly and tersely, at the late Mildmay Conference. It is an august conception of service, that, in God's grand sphere, there is a little segment, bearing our name and the date of this present year. The youthful Victoria, when the Archbishop of Canterbury came to announce her father's death and her own accession as Queen of Britain, begged him first of all to pray with her that she might take the throne and wear the crown only as the servant of a Higher Sovereign. But when we rightly conceive of our work, however humble, it becomes invested with a divine dignity. The rudest implement or instrument becomes a scepter, the bench of the workman or of the magistrate alike a throne, and the blouse and ermine alike a royal robe.

A twelvemonth since, this REVIEW, in its present enlarged and modified form, was, with many prayers and not without some fears, launched like a bark upon strange waters. The beginning of the new year naturally suggests a retrospect and a prospect.

Looking back, we thank God and take courage. At every step of the way we trace providential and gracious guidance and help. We undertook the work because we heard a loud call of God and saw a great need of man. A Jericho lay before us to be taken for Christ's crown and covenant; but, between us and success rolled a stream neither narrow nor shallow. Believing that the invisible and invincible Captain of the Lord's host was leading on, we set our foot in this Jordan and have gone over on dry ground. Every difficulty, when approached, has disappeared or been surmounted. Our subscription list has passed our most sanguine expectations. The public press has so cordially commended our work that scarce a word has found its way into print that has been controversial or even critical. Encomiums, that seemed almost extravagant, have come from the secretaries of great Missionary Boards and the editors of other missionary magazines. Letters by the hundred have reached the editors and publishers, referring to our endeavors in the kindest and most fraternal spirit; and contributions to our pages, often gratuitous, have been sent by men and women who stand in the front rank of the Church of Christ.

If we rightly read the signs of the times, it has been clearly demonstrated that just such a Review of universal missions is an imperative need of our day; and that in seeking to supply this need we were simply falling into our