

WORDS FROM THE MISSION FIELD.

A deeper interest in foreign missions is being aroused in the Church in Canada—an appeal for a Canadian bishop in Japan marks, surely, an era in her history—and some recent utterances of those who have themselves felt the strong attraction of missionary life, as well as shared in its trials and hardships, may well come to us with special force and power.

At a meeting of the London Junior Clergy, associated with the S.P.G., amidst much that was inspiring and hopeful as to the work being done, some of the weaker points in missionary organization were pointed out, and suggestions offered as to possible remedies; at the same time it was strongly urged that such societies as already existed in the Church should be loyally supported and made the best of.

More than one speaker contrasted the methods of the State with those of the Church, instancing the expedition sent out to over-awe King Prempeh, with its picked officers and men, its two or three troop ships, its ocean steamship fitted up as a floating hospital; while a bishop went forth to Zululand to win souls—and none are braver than the Zulus—with an equipment of ten men and £3,000. Was there no disproportion here?

The three great factors of the age are steam, gold, and emigration. What do they mean for the English race? This: that upon the English Church and people is laid a heavier responsibility than any nation has ever borne before—to them is offered a wider opportunity than any nation has ever had before.

Wherever British colonists went they carried with them the blessing of regular, orderly government—did they carry Christianity as well?

The question is whether this great race, spreading like a wave over the world, shall some day need a second St. Augustine to re-convert it, or whether the Church shall now, by timely and united effort, go whither her sons go, and keep alive in them the knowledge of the love of God?

The Bishop of Brisbane, writing to a friend, speaks of the problem with which the majority of colonial bishops are confronted: vast dioceses, scattered people, the minimum of clergy. How is the work to be done? Again, the action of the State furnishes a lesson. The Church of England has a splendid fighting army doing good work at home and abroad, but she has no reserve to meet the cry for men coming continually from all parts of the earth, a force that could be sent here, there, everywhere, just where the need was greatest.

Might there not be a band of men specially enlisted for this purpose; who would enter, say,

for five years, go anywhere, do anything, so that a bishop going forth to plant the Church in a new land would have a band of helpers ready to his hand, helpers who could be supplied with the necessaries of life and travelling expenses from a fund provided for the purpose? What a reinforcement to the colonial bishops if, for a time, one of them could borrow fifteen or twenty men to help to establish the Church in his diocese.

Or, in the case of a great railway striking across a continent, what would it not be to have such a band going up and down the line caring for the scattered sheep until they could provide spiritual ministrations for themselves? Is it impossible for Churchmen to take counsel together and furnish men and means for some such reserve force as a permanent part of the Church's equipment for her work? Men who had served in this way would return with a wider, deeper experience, which would enable them to do still better whatever work might claim them at home.

Nor should such men be stigmatized as "returned empties," any more than the men in the army and navy who have returned after foreign service.

In some places—notably in Burmah—the mission work of the Church has by no means kept pace either with the prosperity of the country under British rule or with the efforts of other Christian bodies. Surely the addition of these vast territories meant more than added wealth; it meant added responsibilities to the Church of England. Are these always fully realized?

The religion of the country—Buddhism—was practically a religion of despair, yet it freed men from caste and left their minds open to receive Christianity. The speaker, who had spent thirty-six years in Burmah, had only once or twice had to ask the S.P.G. for a grant, the Burmese themselves having built and maintained schools for him—the property handed over to the Society being their free-will offerings.

One of the best of the Burmese kings had built a beautiful Christian church at Mandalay.

In very many cases the work begun in our own schools was afterwards carried on by the Roman priests or the American missionaries, simply because the Church was miserably under-staffed. There were stations in Burmah without priests, with people ready and willing to build and maintain schools. Must the message go back to them that there were none in England who would "come over and help" them?

Was there not something wrong here. With a plethora of priests at home could none be spared, were none willing to volunteer for foreign work?

Let no one think that those who advocate the need in other lands underrate the importance of