

student and scholar to consider as matter of information the framework of the Bible, the authorship of its component parts and the matter of textual criticism. It is the province of the priest and pastor to convey to his people in a clear and convincing manner the divine message the Book contains, and that he was commissioned to impart. It is the business of a shipbuilder to know the various parts of a ship, their relation to one another, and how to fit them together. The general public are mainly concerned in it, as a safe and sure means of transportation of themselves or their freight. The preacher who attempts to turn his pulpit into a professor's desk is making a serious blunder, it matters not how wide his scholarship or how ingenious his turn for argument may be.

#### Veterans of the Meeting.

Of the eleven hundred survivors of the campaign of 1857-58 we are told that upwards of five hundred officers and men were present at the banquet recently organized for them by the proprietors of the Daily Telegraph. Christmas hampers being sent to those, who, from age or infirmity, were unable to attend. There were kindly messages read from the King, Lord Minto and Lord Kitchener, and doubtless many old friendships were renewed, but what a stirring of the depths there must have been among the men who heard the toast of "The Survivors of the Indian Mutiny," proposed by Lord Curzon, and listened to Lord Roberts' reply as he re-called with reverence the names of heroes long passed away. The sounding of the "Last Post" and the recitation of the following lines by Mr. Kipling were a fitting ending to a strangely memorable celebration.

"1857-1907

To-day, across our father's graves  
The astonished years reveal  
The remnant of that desperate host  
Which cleansed our East with steel.

Hail and farewell! we greet you here  
With tears that none will scorn  
Oh keepers of the house of old,  
Or ever we were born!

One service more we dare to ask:  
Pray for us, heroes, pray,  
That when Fate lays on us our Task,  
We do not shame the day."

#### The Power of a Hymn.

The Daily Chronicle has instanced the influences which may develop from good words or good actions. A Mrs. Keogh's husband was vicar of a pretty country village in Buckinghamshire, and one of his favourite hymns was "Weary of Earth," written by the Rev. S. J. Stone, vicar of St. Paul's, Haggerston. After Mr. Keogh's death some twenty years ago his widow, who has just died, wrote to Mr. Stone, and finding through correspondence that his parish was one of the poorest in London decided to give up her pretty country home. She removed to Lansdowne Road, London Fields, and devoted the rest of her life to helping the poor people in trouble and alleviating their distress or suffering.

#### Criminals and Crime.

These words bring before us one of the most difficult of human problems. Difficult it has been and difficult it ever will be. Sir Alfred Wills, Sir Robert Anderson, and some other students of penology are at present in favour of life imprisonment for habitual criminals. Mr. H. J. B. Montgomery, who has had the experience which nearly four years imprisonment gives, writes in the January number of the Nineteenth Century an argument against this drastic course. He urges that the attitude of society towards the criminal is mainly responsible for his continuing to be a criminal, and maintains that if society would treat the

criminal as an erring brother, both before and after imprisonment, we should go far towards solving one of the gravest of social problems. There can be, no doubt, that the hope of the reclamation of the criminal lies not in the process of imprisonment itself, but in the recognition of his manhood and in the wise, sympathetic and persistent effort to get him not only to recognize that fact himself but earnestly and honestly to assume the burden and responsibility of an honest life and to acquit himself as a decent and useful member of the community. It is absurd to suppose that it will be an easy task for him. But there are good men and true who will stand by him. He will also have the proud consciousness of proving himself a victor in perhaps the hardest fight that is possible to life.

#### Looking Up Absentees.

There is one department of Church work to which we fear there is too little attention paid. It is that described in our title. How important this branch of Church work is can only be realized by those who are vitally interested in the progress and stability of the cause they have at heart. System is the true handmaid of this endeavour. And sympathy is the spring which energizes it. No clergyman who spends his time about his rectory, whether in his study, or garden, or in any other way in which he may choose to exercise himself; and who, though he may from time to time visit those who regularly attend the services, yet neglects the absentees, can be said to be doing his full duty. Absentees should be looked up. There are, or should be, in each parish laymen or women who by proper encouragement would lend a helping hand in this matter.

#### The Future.

The closing words of Lord Curzon's address at Birmingham reproduced in the Nineteenth Century Review are worth quoting: "Preserve with faithful attachment the acquisitions of our forefathers, not tabulating them with vulgar pride, but accepting the legacy with reverence, and holding no sacrifice too great to maintain it. Be sure that in our national character, if we can keep it high and undefiled, still lies our national strength. Count it no shame to acknowledge our imperial mission, but, on the contrary, the greatest disgrace to be untrue to it, and even if God no longer thunders from Sinai, and His oracles are sometimes reported dumb, cling humbly but fervently to the belief that so long as we are worthy we may still remain one of the instruments through whom He chooses to speak to mankind."

#### Our Early Burial Grounds.

From time to time we have appealed against the obliteration of the memorials of the early settlers. Some we remember, are now covered with houses, others with railway shunting tracks. Where the old burial ground was in the way, it disappeared, and all traces were soon erased. With these went all associations with early privation and hopes, and soon the remembrances of the names follow into oblivion. One could welcome the fate of those of whom the English poet wrote:

"Some country nook where o'er thine unknown grave,

Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,  
Under a dark red-fruited yew-tree's shade."

But in this era of expansion, the sepulchres in early settlements are, as we said, too often desecrated and trodden under foot.

#### FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The annual address of our Bishops this year, on the subject of Foreign Missions, was an exceptionally weighty and forcible production, and was calculated to correct at least one very common mistake, current to-day among those who from choice or possibly sometimes from necessity, have

not given the question anything but a very superficial consideration. The common idea among great masses, of often very intelligent and well informed people, is that Foreign Missions, at least during the century just closed, have not been justified by visible results, and that in proportion to the money, lives and labour expended the tangible fruit has been depressingly small. Some of the figures given in the Pastoral will, therefore, come as a great surprise to many staunch Church people, and will tend to dissipate prejudices, that have quite possibly been innocently formed, against supporting Foreign Missions. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the gain in India and Africa alone has been in the neighbourhood of three-quarters of a million and the grand total for the whole world must have reached a total of a million at least, and then this undoubtedly means several additional millions brought under the indirect influence of Christianity, with the certain prospect of immensely increased accessions in the next generation, movements of this kind always growing at progressively increasing proportions as time goes on. At the present rate of increase the whole of India, it is calculated will be Christianized by the middle of the next century, that is to say in the course of a century and a half. According to this almost universal law of progressive rates of increase it is not too much to hope that this result may be accomplished in half the time or at all events well within the present century. And at least the same advance may be predicted of Africa, where the obstacles to the spread of Christianity are not intellectual as they are often in the East, and where there are no age-long and imposing systems to combat and overthrow. Taken altogether, it may safely be said, that the outlook for Foreign Missions to-day was never so re-assuring in the history of modern Christianity. Last century, especially the first three-quarters of it, was essentially the sowing time, now we are entering upon the reaping time, at least wherever good and faithful work has been done. For, of course, vast and almost virgin fields remain. And if there has been no period during the present era in which the prospects were so bright for Foreign Missions, there most assuredly has never been any period in the history of the civilized world when their success was so imperatively necessary for its general well-being. The future of our European civilization, it is hardly too much to say, is bound up with the cause of Foreign Missions. In the Christianizing of the world will be found the solution of those great inter-racial problems, which daily and almost hourly are becoming more pressing and threatening. The opportunity is still with us. The door is still open, how much longer who shall say: "Agree with thine adversary quickly whilst thou art in the way with him." There is still time, let us hope, to make good. Most assuredly there is none to waste. Most cordially, therefore, do we welcome that great movement among laymen of all denominations, which is overspreading this continent, for the furtherance of Foreign Missions. We discern in it the direct influence of an overruling Providence, which even yet, in this eleventh hour will direct the course of human destiny into the paths of safety, and finally and permanently counteract certain tendencies that at the present moment possess our minds with many misgivings and forebodings. Christianity has always held, and will always continue to hold, the key to all human problems great or small. Every problem so far solved, or in process of solution, that has any ethical bearing upon human conditions has been decided upon Christian principles. Our faith is strong enough to warrant our firm belief, that this latest and greatest of all problems will be solved in the same way. But the time is short and we must be up and doing.

The weakest among us has a gift, however seemingly trivial, which is peculiar to him, and which, worthily used, will be a gift also to his race.