homes for the unfortunate indigent, public libraries or educational endowments, and yet he may have done good by stealth. Certainly in his business transactions he was thorough, masterly and met his engagements in accordance with the terms thereof. The Christianity of man is his saving quality, and it is no more than charitable to oveserve the Latin maxim—*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*—and say nothing but good of the dead.

SOCIAL PROGRESS.

The Boston *Herald* makes the point that when reference is made by some sanguine individual to the possibility of future government and social reforms, we are apt to look upon the proposition as indicative of an excited imagination and as having but little basis of possibility in the experience of mankind. But it is not improbable that those who judge of human nature and social and government institutions by what they see around them are entirely in the wrong as to the adaptability of mankind to better conditions. Mr. Froude pointed out in one of his essays that the difference between men of the present day and their predecessors in early historical times is that, while we believe that the world is improving, that there is a better time coming and that our own condition is preferable to that of our ancestors, the ancients thought that the golden age of the world, when mankind was happiest, and therefore had the best right to be contented, was in the past, and that society was deteriorating instead of improving. This is from a strictly liberal standpoint, but as an abstract proposition its truth may be accepted.

That mankind progresses in the arts and sciences, in the more abstruse departments of physical life and in the means of di-seminating his impressions and information, cannot be disputed; that he has become more humane in civilized modern than in mediæval times, is also undisputed. This incites our cotemporary to place before us a study of cotemporary history — a class of research that was denied to the ancients — as having been the chief cause of our belief in social progress, and this supplies us with evidence of improvements that have taken place within a relatively short space of time. For example, Mr. J. C. Jeffreson has recently collated and printed a large number of extracts from the Middlesex county (Eng.) records, these including indictments, convictions, coroner's investigations, etc., from the seventeenth year of Charles II to the fourth year of his successor, James II; that is, at a period of about 200 years ago. One obtains a tolerably fair idea from the crimes committed, from their character, who committed them and the punishment accorded for them, of the social conditions of the people, and, taking a few of them as samples, the condition of England 200 years ago would seem as impossible to Englishmen of today—if it were not for historical proofs that can be furnished—as the conditions foreshadowed by some of the most radical of social reformers.

A number of cases might be cited showing the intolerance, cruelty and oppression of those in authority toward their subjects in those times, but these are individual instances illustrative of he law's delay or inaction in dealing with one class and its rigorous promptness and severity in dealing with another class, a condition which this age has modified somewhat, but who has the hardihood to say that it has entirely overcome it? The publication of the record entire would add nothing to the general proposition nor take anything from it, so there is no point gained by the repeated references made to cruelty and wrong-doing in the days agone. One more instance, however, being valuable as a feature of those times and people, may be given:

Another offense which these records show to have been very prevalent was that of kidnapping young women, who were seized near the water side, put on board ship and sent to the West Indies to be sold as slaves to the planters. Judging by the number of persons, both male and female, who were convicted of the offense of kidnapping, the crime of thus depriving one's fellow-citizens of their liberty and all that made life enjoyable was astonishingly prevalent in England two centuries ago. Apparently, the punishment for this offense was entirely incommensurate with its enormity. Occasionally, the offenders were heavily fined, and were even sentenced to sit in the pillory, but in many cases the kidnappers escaped with a fine of a few shillings.

But surely we of this generation do, not have to wander so far back on the causeway of time to find incidents of kidnapping for the purpose of selling into slavery, or of indignities and outrages—even crimes—committed upon the victims of that dastardly business. As a plain matter of fact we don't have to go back at all; current history furnishes us with such events now and then, growing fewer and fewer let it be thankfully said, but not yet obsolete. In such light the summing up of our able and always brilliant Boston cotemporary loses something of its force. "From this and other evidence that could be given," it concludes, "one is made aware of the immense distance in social condition and restraint that separates those who lived 200 years ago from those living at the present time. Our progress in this brief space of time has been made toward greater equality and the better protection of individual rights and happiness, which, being the case, one has a right to argue that changes equally great may take place in the years that are to come; for, be it remembered, it is not alone that official guardianship is exercised at the present time, and that individual rights are respected under the law, but the offenses then committed, and the punishments then bestowed are, many of them, of a character which would be considered abhorrent by those now living, even if there were no legal restraint imposed." Certainly, 200 years hence and even much less time will bring upon the earth and the children of the earth many changes, changes of more import and greater extent than are set down in the vocabulary of man.

IF IT wasn't so much trouble to transport furniture, there would probably be economy in moving south for the winter rather than buy coal at the present rates.

A VILE IMPOSITION.

The superstitious negroes of Chicago —and where they are ignorant they are as a rule deusely superstitious—are being practiced upon in a manner calling loudly for the intervention of the law; yet the officers make no interference, although they not only know of the impostors' tricks but have them practiced right before their eyes in the police court if nowhere else. He is named "Professor" James J. Allen; he occupies pretentious apartments in the outskirts and makes no secret of his whereabouts, in fact he prefers to have it known because of the increased business coming to him thereby, and to that end has his name on the door in big gilt letters. His customers are mainly those who want fortunes told or seek to avoid some threatened evil. He has a bigger police court practice than any of the lawyers, those who are "run in" employing him to ward off impending justice or injustice as the case may be; when he has a case of this kind he takes a seat by the side of the accused and, as the latter makes his statement to the judge, the long, bony fingers of the wizard sprinkle some substance over the prisoner and, strange to relate, the "charm" is successful oftener than otherwise.

Allen is said to be fairly educated; he speaks English, French, German and Latin moderately well, and is making a fortune. His charges are very high and he is visited by hundreds every day. The papers of the lake city discuss this matter as though it were a harmless imposition with which they can only interfere to the extent of giving it clever repertorial notice; but it wears a more serious aspect thus far away.

THE RAINMAKERS.

Science wielded by learned men and backed by the federal government has been brought into requisition to assist those occupying the arid regions of the country by compelling rain to fall where it has all along refused to do so, at least in sufficient volume to amount to anything practically. To this end Congress made a big appropriation last session, and a corps of capable men headed by General Dyrenforth has been bombarding the upper deep at a point near the famed Alamo in Texas, with what success those of our readers who keep an eye on the telegraphic dispatches already know; that is, no success whatever worth naming.

While the general and his gunners, balloon men, gasmakers, cannon and magazine stores are pounding away at the impalpable air, the Chicago *Record* gives an account of the adventures of another American manufacturer of thunderstorms who has been among the farmers of Hungary. The "professor," whose field of operations has removed him from his own country, explained to interested farmers near Pesth that rain is produced by lightning. This bit of natural science having been honored with full credence, the next step was to show that by setting traps for the valuable product, catching it and corking it up in caskets specially prepared for its re-