

SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES IN EDINBURGH.

On Sunday night Mr E. Reginald Statham, who has recently taken up the movement begun by the late Mr Cranbrook some 4 or 5 years ago, delivered a lecture preliminary to a series which he purposes giving in the Freemasons' Hall during the autumn and winter months. In the commencement of his lecture, which was entitled "Our Aims and Endeavours," Mr Statham adverted to the circumstances under which he first came to Edinburgh last November, showing how, of necessity, the conditions under which he commenced lecturing were experimental; and he then went on to explain sundry alterations which experience had shown to be advisable with regard to the general character of the meetings which they had been in the habit of holding every Sunday in that hall. Most particularly he dwelt on the fact that they did not meet there for worship—worship being, in his opinion, a thing for which an earnest mind would make its own place and its own opportunities—set times and seasons, moreover, being dangerous, as encouraging the idea that religion, our highest duty, was a matter which could be separated from ordinary life. He, therefore, intended in future to avoid all proceedings which might be misconstrued into acts of public worship, and to concentrate his efforts on what he had found by experience to be the most real part of his work, viz., the Sunday evening lectures, still giving an occasional lecture, however, on Sunday morning whenever he had anything to say which could not be so well said to the more mixed audiences of the evening. And by this means he hoped, among other things, to relieve their meetings there of any appearance of sectarianism, and himself from being regarded as a religious minister—a position which he entirely disclaimed and objected to. Speaking of the future, Mr Statham went on to say that as he regarded himself as the late Mr Cranbrook's legitimate successor, he wished it to be thought that he was engaged in continuing and completing two reformations which Mr Cranbrook began. A reformation, he might remind them, was, as the name implied, much more a work of building up than of breaking down; that it necessitated the erecting, with new materials and upon new ground, of structures which might adequately express those wants of humanity for which the old structures had become inadequate; and that, unless the new materials were at hand, prepared quite independently, no true reformation could take place. Still, a reformation invariably passed through two phases, in the first of which the destruction of the old forms was made apparent, and in the second the nature and tendency of the new. Applying this definition to the case in point, he should say that Mr Cranbrook had represented the first phase of two reformations—first, in respect of the position of perfect freedom which he demanded; for being driven into this position, it became to him a position of protest and antagonism. This demand for freedom from creed-subscription and church-censure was by no means an unimportant matter, in proof of which he could point to the increasing number of the clergy who were becoming dissatisfied with their position. For his own part, he had some time ago, before ever he thought of visiting Edinburgh, and for quite independent reasons, concluded that such a position of perfect freedom and individuality, in respect of which he was Mr Cranbrook's successor, was the only one possible for any man who assumed the position of either a philosophical or religious teacher; and he therefore thought he was justified in believing that their meetings in that hall represented the second or constructive phase of one of those two reformations, the first phases of which were represented by the late Mr Cranbrook. The other reformation was a more general one, and might be described as the fading away of the old Hebraic philosophy which had served us so long, before the wider establishment of the newer philosophy which had developed with the development of European civilisation. In respect of this reformation, also, Mr Cranbrook could hardly help representing the first or destructive phase. He had had a long theological experience, and consequently when his opinions began to change he did not simply cast off his old convictions, but assumed towards them a position of antagonism, his public work having had mostly a destructive tendency. Mr Statham concluded by saying that it was his wish not to help in any work of destruction, but rather to make his endeavours representative of the second phase of this more general reformation, in assisting to elucidate the laws we live by—social, moral, mental, and physical; to show that there was room in the newer philosophy for all the higher aspirations of humanity, and all the reverence which is at the root of true religion; and thus to counteract, if possible, the distrust with which that philosophy was regarded. That but little could be accomplished by weekly lectures he was aware, but still what was done in one place might, and he believed would, be done in others. The new thoughts were spreading rapidly; and even though those who met there might only have a handful of outward sympathisers, he yet believed that in truth there were more with them than against them; for if they were expressing, as he hoped, the thoughts which have been growing up silently side by side with European civilisation, they had the whole force of nature behind them, and were mounting on a wave that would carry humanity irresistibly towards a destiny which they could not help believing was nothing but good.—(Communicated.)

SATURDAY EVENING CONCERTS.—The principal attraction at the concert of Saturday evening was the presence of Messrs Nicholson, Lazarus, and Hughes, three of our best English instrumentalists. The programme included excerpts from "Il Trovatore," "Maritana," and a selection of English airs; besides a duet between the flute and the clarinet and solos on Scotch airs by Mr Hughes and Mr Lazarus. Of the merits of the various performances it is not needful to speak, the reputation of the artists being widely known, but it was gratifying to observe the intelligent appreciation evinced by an audience quite filling the hall—a manifest proof of the good work the society is doing in elevating and refining the tastes of the people. The vocalists were Madame Thaddeus Wells and Miss Jessie Blair. Madame Wells opened with a careful rendering of the romance, "When the Gentle Eve" from "Preciosa," following it up by Bishop's song ("Oh, hear the gentle Lark," to which Mr Nicholson played an exquisite flute accompaniment. "Pack Clouds and Away," with clarinet, obligato, by Mr Lazarus, was also fairly well sung. Miss Jessie Blair's most successful efforts were "The Last Rose of Summer" and "My heart is sair," the latter one being encored for "The Meeting of the Waters." Mr Kemp accompanied on the pianoforte; and Mr Lambeth presided at the organ.

GROVE STREET HALL SATURDAY EVENING CONCERTS.—The first of a series of concerts which are to take place during the winter in Grove Street Hall was given on Saturday night last. Though the weather was unfavourable, there was a good attendance. Mr Macgill occupied the chair, and in his opening remarks he expressed his gratification at seeing so many present, and the hope that the committee would be able to supply concerts that would be the means of enabling the citizens in the north-west district of the city to enjoy themselves pleasantly and agreeably on a Saturday evening. The hall has been newly painted, and the proceeds of the entertainment were devoted to defray the expenses connected with the improvement. Misses King and Haine, and Messrs Laurie, Fraser, and Alexander were the vocalists. Mr Dunbar played the accompaniments, and Mr Weir gave two or three Scotch readings. As a whole, the concert was a success, and should the committee be supported in their present endeavours there is little doubt that they will use their best exertions to provide enjoyable concerts during the season.

THE MAYOR OF SHEFFIELD.—The Town Council of Sheffield have decided to present Mr Alderman Moore, who is now completing his fourth year of office as Mayor, with a full-length portrait of himself. The portrait, which is being painted by a Scotch artist, Mr H. F. Crighton, will represent the Mayor in his official robes of scarlet.

A JAPANESE RAILWAY.—We understand that a contract has been entered into with an English railway contractor for the construction of the Yokohama Railway. As soon as the arrangements are completed in Liverpool and Manchester work will be commenced, and it is expected that in less than a year the first English railway in Japan will be opened. The carriages are to be built in this city.—*Manchester Guardian.*

FORTUNE-TELLING EXTRAORDINARY.—Our Plymouth correspondent writes that a woman, 50 years of age, was committed to prison for six weeks at Devonport on Saturday, for duping a woman only ten years her junior, under circumstances indicating an amount of credulity akin to lunacy. In order to obtain a "cut of the cards," which resulted in the information that "a fair woman was very treacherous towards her," the dupe—having admitted that she had no money to buy food for her children—consented to sell her furniture. The prisoner is a shopkeeper, and her dupe is not illiterate.

FATAL AND SERIOUS ACCIDENTS.—On Saturday, the body of a ballast guard, named Edward Wheatcroft, lay at the Black Bull Inn, Masbro', awaiting the coroner's inquest. The previous night, Wheatcroft, while engaged at Killmarsh Station shunting a ballast train, was caught between the buffers of a waggon and terribly crushed. He died while being taken to the Infirmary. Wheatcroft has left a widow and one child.—A railway official at Peristone, proceeding home by the line, was overtaken by the express and cut to pieces.—In the village of Charlesworth, a woman, named Bennett, was going along the street, when a cow rushed at her, knocked her down, and gored her in the neck. One of the horns made a frightful gash under the jaw, which was torn open an inch wide.—Mr Wm. Sneesby, cattle dealer, Sheffield, has sustained a loss of £150, by six bullocks straying on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, where they were cut into butcher meat by a goods train.