

Trans-Atlantic Retrospect.

We are pleased to find that the interest manifested in the Special Services held in extra-Ecclesiastical buildings in London during the last few winters has induced their promoters and supporters not only to continue but greatly to extend them. Experience has shown that the class which it is most desirable to reach, the non-church going masses of artisans and labourers, do not form a large proportion of the audiences which have filled Exeter Hall and St. James' Hall; probably, for one reason, because the localities are unsuitable; this winter, therefore, the Committee have taken Garrick Theatre, Whitechapel, and Sadler's Wells Theatre, Clerkenwell, both in the midst of a dense population, consisting mainly of the poorest and most irreligious; the result, so far as the first services are concerned, was most satisfactory. At the Garrick Theatre, the Rev. Newman Hall preached on New Year's Day in the afternoon to an overwhelming audience, and the Rev. George Mansfield, a Church of England Minister, in the evening. While at Sadler's Wells there was a densely packed congregation, and an eloquent sermon preached by the Rev. J. B. Owen, also a Church of England Minister. Of this the *Record* says:—

“Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the practical wisdom of this step, there is little doubt that the crowds thus brought within sound of the Gospel differ essentially from the working-class audiences which assemble in Exeter Hall. We are informed that this was strikingly evident to those who passed Sadler's Wells yesterday evening as the audience was entering. The numbers who thronged the streets included very many of the dissipated and wild classes who are found among the week-day *habitués* of such places. The fact that the invitation to ‘come and hear’ is thus responded to is the best argument for giving a patient trial to the experiment.”

We feel sure that, if no other good result were to follow, it will certainly bring about more love and harmony among the different denominations of Christians, or it is impossible that they should be united together in an effort for the spiritual well-being of their fellow men without learning to love and respect each other more, and to overlook the petty differences which have hitherto prevailed to keep them apart. The plan of the committee is worthy of imitation wherever the necessity and opportunity for such services exist. They say:—

“The committee ‘themselves are quite indifferent as to the particular section of the Church of Christ with which any clergyman or minister they may invite to assist in these services may be connected; their only solicitude being to have Christ faithfully and earnestly preached unto the people. Still, to avoid the appearance of any bias on their part, it is the purpose of the committee to arrange a course of services for the ensuing three months, and to assign an equal number of such services to the clergy of the Established Church, and of the Evangelical Nonconforming bodies. The mode of conducting the services it is proposed to leave open to the judgment of the officiating clergyman or minister.”

The Rev. Archer Gurney, Minister of an Episcopal Chapel in Paris, writes to the *Times* that the service he has conducted for two years past has been peremptorily stopped by the orders of the French Minister of Public Instruction. Mr. Gurney, it appears, never got proper official permission to carry on the service,