

objectionable term "poetess" excluded them from the list of writers of whom our correspondent desired whatever little information we could here afford him. In this utilitarian age, and in the prosaic surroundings of life's work in Canada, it is surely worth while to preserve one's love for poetry, and to keep burning the flickering flame of patriotism, which, but for the poets and a few writers of tabooed sentiment in our midst, would be in danger of going out. The inquiry made of us must be assuring to those to whom we refer, and we hail it as an expression of interest in poesy which we had almost thought did not now and here exist.

ANOTHER reader of THE WEEK inquires of us the meaning of the word "Kermesse," and asks why the word is used when applied to the forthcoming bazaar, or world's fair, to be held in Toronto. Our correspondent states that she cannot find the word in any dictionary, nor does it appear in the cyclopædias she seems to have consulted. The term is one which society has of late affected, as a novelty, and so more likely "to draw" than the old-fashioned words "fair" and "bazaar." It is of Dutch origin, derived from *Kerk-misse* (Church-mass), and is applied in Holland and Belgium to those annual parish *fêtes* which are celebrated on the Continent with such rejoicing. In Holland and the Low Countries, the Kermesse seems to be an old national institution, resembling our fairs, which the Church has turned to her own profit by christening, and by connecting with it the celebration of some patron saint's day in the ecclesiastical calendar. In Holland and Belgium these festivals retain much of the quaint old Flemish customs and manners, with national representations, shows, and processions on the streets, sometimes of a curious mythological character. At the great annual Kermesse at Antwerp, for instance, three days are devoted to the festivities, and the people crowd into the city from all parts and give themselves up to all kinds of feasting, libations, sports and amusements. Here, as everywhere else on the Continent, the Church endeavours to utilise these civic festivals and to subordinate them to the great ecclesiastical ceremonies, which are sometimes very imposing. Where the Church dominates, fairs and commercial transactions are permitted as accessories in the main to the Church's funds, though, as we have said, the people come for amusement rather than for worship and the apostolic benediction. In the motherland, fairs were long ago abolished in the great towns, in consequence of their evil effects on public morals. On the Continent, where they are still in vogue, the necessity for abolition on this score happily does not seem to exist.

WE have, as a rule, a great antipathy to the reading, and a much greater antipathy to the discussion, of the sensational stories with which writers of books on psychological science, or rather on the mental phenomena of Occultism, as it is called, love to gull their readers, and to harrow, or, as more often happens, to unhinge, weak minds. We do not now specially refer to Spiritualism, that species of charlatanry which has so great a hold, and exercises so malign an influence, upon a large class of people, particularly in the United States. We refer more especially to the literature which deals with hallucinations and the phenomena elicited by modern psychic research, of which we have now a long list, written by English and foreign authors. Perhaps the best known of these works are Mrs. Crowe's "Night Side of Nature," De Boissmont's "Hallucinations," Robert Dale Owen's "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World," the works of Home, the Medium, and a volume issued by the London Society for Psychical Research, under the supervision of the eminent chemist, Dr. Wm. Crookes. In the first of these works there are chapters of such gruesomeness that their perusal at the approach of midnight would compel the bravest to render the tribute of fear. So appalling, indeed, are some of the stories that their horror, we believe we are not wrong in saying, for a time unsettled the reason of their writer, and made her the victim of her own distorted imagination. The other works we have mentioned comprise a library of the marvellous, and set forth much curious and seemingly inexplicable matter. Now comes an important addition to them, in the issue of two portly volumes from a London press, bearing the title of "Phantasms of the Living." The volumes are the compilation of three Masters of Arts, one of whom we identify as Fred. W. H. Myers, the young English poet, and all are, we believe, connected with the London Society for Psychical Research, an organisation which numbers among its members many of the leading English scientists, and not a few other hard-headed professional men. The design of this new and startling work is to gather and lay before the public all the well-authenticated records of the phenomena of percipience and telepathy, or, to use more familiar terms, of presentiment, and what the Scotch call "second sight." These latter terms, however, do not correctly explain the character of the cases cited by the authors under the scientific terms they have adopted. Under percipience,

for instance, we have a collection of seemingly well-vouched for cases of presentiment, that is, mental impressions of mishap to some friend or relative in whose welfare the narrator is much interested, the mental impressions occurring at the precise moment of the mishap, though thousands of miles may separate the two. Under telepathy, we have the record of cases occurring in which the narrator has not only the impression that some misfortune has happened to a friend, but that he himself feels the pain of his friend's accident, whatever it may be, and seems to be struck by the same blow, and to suffer from the same injury, which has prostrated and disabled the friend. We cannot here enter, of course, into any of these instances, however curious and interesting they would be to the reader; nor can we attempt any explanation of the phenomena, either on the hypothesis of "brain-waves," or on the theory that some subtle mental telegraphy is implanted by Nature in the case of those whose sympathies are acute, and whose attachments are strong and abiding. In most of the cases cited it would seem as impossible to doubt the facts as, in the present state of mental science, it is beyond one's power to explain them. Those who wish to regale themselves with a feast of marvels, and to gauge the limit of the reasoning faculties, in seeking an explanation of the phenomena described, will find in these volumes abundant material for the purpose, as well as endless puzzles.

THE death of America's most distinguished divine recalls the fact that he was the leader of what may be aptly termed the modern style of preaching—a style as different from the preaching of a century ago as the style of acting affected by Irving differs from that of Garrick. That Mr. Beecher did not go to anything like the length to which his followers have gone is indeed true. The preaching of the Rev. Sam Jones, for instance, he would not probably have recognised as resembling his own school in the least; but we can hardly judge of a school of anything, painting, preaching, or schoolboys, without taking heed of its most humble as well as of its most illustrious followers. Besides, the late Mr. Beecher and Mr. Jones had some features in common, as we shall point out further on. The style of modern preaching is very evidently affected by the needs of the age and of the majority of congregations. The fact that there is more haste, more bustle, and more disturbance than in days of old, necessitates a different style of preaching. The average church-goer of the present day seeks animated, energetic, and vigorous preaching rather than that which is logical and ornate. As a consequence, sermons have become shorter, more commonplace perhaps, but more opportune, dealing less in vague generalities and more in passing events. The modern minister feels that his congregation will go to sleep if some greater temptation is not offered them to keep them awake. Where logic fails, oddness may succeed. This, we imagine, is the true secret of the method of the Rev. Sam Jones, for instance. His eccentricities, his jokes—sometimes very unseemly and in bad taste,—his irreverence, all these are means to an end, intended to arouse flagging attention. When this attention has been secured, irreverence, eccentricity, and jesting are thrown aside as having done their work. Mr. Beecher had eccentricity, sometimes displaying irreverence also. Whether this is desirable, whether the means in this case justify the end, is a moot point. The true solution would seem to lie in this, that toil that makes Sunday a day on which it is impossible to keep one's eyes open is toil beyond what is right or fitting, and an age in which clergymen have to stoop, as it were, to conquer is an age vitiated and debased. Mr. Beecher was the highest exponent of this school, Sam Jones one of the lowest.

THE Buffalo Library was enriched the other day with a magnificent collection of autographs, mostly of literary men, the gift of Mr. Gluck. Autographs are most interesting things, and it will be a pity on this account if the typograph puts an end to handwriting. About the greatest collector of our day was the late Lord Houghton. He had a religious book which had belonged to Cromwell, with some religious words inscribed by Cromwell's own hand on the fly leaf. He had on the same page of his album some love verses written by Robespierre in youth, and a death warrant signed by him under the Reign of Terror. When he entertained General Grant at breakfast, the first thing which met General Grant's eye on entering the room was a round-robin signed by himself when he was a cadet at West Point. Lord Houghton would not tell how he became possessed of the round-robin. Probably there was a moral mystery. For the collector of autographs the rules of morality are suspended, or give place to a higher law. We have heard an excellent minister of religion recount, with evangelical complacency, how he had bribed the wife of a librarian to give him a little clipping from a manuscript supposed to be the autograph of some great man. Virtuosos, in general, enjoy nearly the same immunity from the technical restraints of ethics.