

Stalls which have not, and never have had, any *Præbenda* can be called by this name passes our understanding. It is a notorious fact that no Cathedrals in England of the new foundation have this title for any of their officials. Then the title of Canon Residentiary is an evident misnomer, seeing that there is neither endowment nor residence for any one of them. The honorary canons would seem to be the only class that are rightly designated; although, indeed, it is somewhat difficult to see the honour involved in being the third order in a Cathedral body, and this without duties or privileges.

For all this, the Cathedral body of Toronto may some day turn out to be a useful portion of the Anglican Church system. The best way would be to sweep away all this cumbrous and unmeaning machinery, and start by appointing twelve or twenty of the foremost clergymen of the Church to simple canonries. There is no reason why certain holders of these canonries should not hold distinctive titles as Chancellor, Precentor, and the like; and these titles might involve certain duties. These duties might afterwards be recognized by having some emolument attached to them, and by-and-by residences might be built for such officers as were required for work connected with the Cathedral. It was in some such way as this that the foundations were laid, centuries ago, for the Cathedral institutions which now exist, and common sense seems to dictate the same course of action in meeting our present needs. M. A.

LONDON LETTER.

IT was late when I turned the handle of the lecture hall door at the South Kensington Museum this afternoon; so late that Mr. Andrew Lang was already speaking from the platform, and his voice was ringing above the heads of the people; so late that it was with difficulty I found a seat at the back among some long-haired, keen-faced, art students. Settled to my satisfaction I turned to the lecturer, who by the ripple of genteel laughter about us was, I am sure, saying something very funny. But I found I could make out nothing by reason of a curious roll of the "r" and an occasional crack in the high-pitched tones which rendered his words unintelligible to me. Giving myself up for lost, then, I determined to take out the shilling I had expended in a manner most profitable to myself, so I spent the first ten minutes, while Mr. Lang alternately shrieked and mumbled, in noting the personal appearance of the poet, essayist and critic.

I have no fault to find with Mr. Lang's appearance, far from it. He was worth the entrance money, every penny. He is tall, and lissom, like the lily in his poem. He lifted eyes all ashine with humour to the ceiling as he nervously addressed his sympathetic audience. His "brindled" locks, smoothly parted, are long, as becomes a literary person. The outline of him as he stood under the gaslight was perfectly satisfactory. If you wished to be hypercritical you might take exception to his chin, which is weak (like Achilles, Mr. Lang has a vulnerable spot), but you would only do that if you were perched, as I was, on a back seat. There, in default of anything else to occupy your mind, you would concentrate your attention on that unfortunate feature, I have no doubt.

High above me rolled the "r's." About me the ends of the sentences finished in an "unintelligible whinner." I, and the young Raphaels and Reynolds by my side—gentlemen who possessed refined faces and most unrefined voices—caught a word here and there of which we tried to make sense. But the endeavour was fruitless on my part, so giving it up as a bad business I let my thoughts wander to another entertainment which I had attended a few days before.

There the lecturer was a philosopher, but a philosopher deficient in humour, who spoke in a commonplace fashion on a poetic subject, and who did not resemble one's idea of a philosopher in the least. The entertainment took place in a pretty Cheyne Walk house, the one in which for many years Rossetti lived, and which now Mr. Haweis of "Music and Morals" fame has made his roof tree. It was once honoured, so they say, by the presence of Catherine of Baganza, whose twisted initials are pointed out in the iron tracery of one of the balconies. Here in the long panelled drawing-room, still decorated with the colours chosen by the great pre-Raphaelite, Mr. Sinnett stood in our midst and discoursed in calm, grave accents on "Astral Philosophy."

The candles, flickering, lighted with little points of brilliance the dark corners of the charming old room. The firelight fell on the earnest eyes of the lecturer, who was impressive even to the most frivolous of his listeners by reason of an honest truthfulness of manner and voice. Every now and then some one, entering softly, would set tinkling the little Tangerine gong which is hung on the drawing-room door, and announces, in the shrill tones of the loved musical cart of one's childhood, the arrival of a new comer. Outside, the whistle of a passing steamer on the river or the roll of the cabs along the embankment. Inside, silence among Mrs. Haweis' guests, as we listened in different attitudes of attention to the author of "The Occult World," as, much in the tone of a person describing a recent visit paid, let us say, to the Army and Navy Stores, he spoke of the Astral Plain.

Mr. Sinnett, looking the personification of an ordinary prosperous, professional Englishman, spoke an hour by the clock about the Astral Plain and about the Astral bodies. I am afraid I cannot recollect much of what he said, though I know it was all very clear and direct, and as far as it went was very interesting. Mr. Sinnett stated his knowledge as if he were an honest lawyer certain of his case. There were no pretty embroideries; no dropping into picturesque reflections, or, like Silas Wegg, into poetry. Beginning with the departure from the earth-body of the Vital Spark we followed it from point to point of its after life. We watched how it left, after a time, a second envelope or body, on the Plain, which body does not die in our sense, but lives to frighten timid folks in haunted houses if its bent is that way inclined. On goes the Soul to higher climes, till, poor Soul, it returns again to this restless earth, where, with due consideration for its character and talents, it is placed, or boarded out, in a family who will be supposed to take an interest in it. Then come in swift succession the old, old griefs and pleasures, and then the familiar face of death. This round of adventures, says Mr. Sinnett, happens a thousand times to one life, and then Nirvana. "I'm not a-arguing with you, I'm a-telling of you," quotes Mr. Sinnett in effect, but from whom he has his private knowledge I cannot imagine. If from a Mahatma in the mountains of Thibet I trust he is a more reliable guide than he of the Fallen Idol. I must confess, and I dare say I was not the only one in the company who thought of it, that the cruel message on the twist of paper crossed my mind more than once. But our quiet Englishman is very different to Mr. Anstey's excitable German. It was all plain sailing in this Chelsea drawing-room; no attempt at posturing or tricks; just the unvarnished truth (according to Mr. Sinnett), told in the same level voice in which one would discuss a grocer's price-list. We of Kensington, Knightsbridge, and the adjacent districts, heard with our ears all the theosophist had to tell us. Then, afterwards, when I found myself on the river-walk, with the church clocks striking, I must confess I grudged the hour spent on Astral Philosophy. Better a penny boat down to Kew, in the dark, under the stars.

It's a far cry from Mr. Sinnett, so very much in earnest, and dealing with such a tremendous subject, to the humorous Mr. Lang making laughter to sound in the decorous little theatre in the museum. I, too, care to laugh, and it is tantalizing to be cut off from the enjoyment of one's neighbour. It was not till I had been sometime in the hall, and had moved my place, that at last I came within sound, and could make sense of what Mr. Lang was saying. Perhaps I cannot describe the lecture better than by telling you it was like a dozen new *Daily News* leaders, mixed together with two or three old ones with which one was agreeably familiar. Every now and then, among the ear-piercing cracks of the lecturer's voice, I heard sentences that I had read, and pondered on, over the breakfast table, ever so long ago. But that was pleasant and showed me that my memory was in proper working order.

After the lecture the first row rose as one man, climbed on to the platform, and surrounded Mr. Lang. Literary beings have rare privileges. Did I see him giving his notes to the ladies who closed around him? By my faith, it looked like it. I found a friend standing up in the middle of the theatre, immovable, glaring at the lecturer. "He has the true poet's eyes," she began. "But his chin——" I ventured to hint. "Don't," she answered. "How humorous he is! And how graceful!" And I left her, planted there in the middle of the stalls.

So poor old Martin Tupper is dead! I met him last at a suburban garden party (entertainments he affected and where he was immensely sought after), when he told me of his schooldays. He was at Charterhouse with Thackeray, and how he hated every minute of the time spent there, and how cruelly hard all the masters were! Indeed, he attributed a stammering he never lost to the nervousness which fell upon him in those deadly years. He did not strike me favourably. I thought his intolerable conceit amongst the least of his faults. "The moment a man can really do his work he becomes speechless about it," says Ruskin, an author with whom Martin Tupper had no sympathy. WALTER POWELL.

A DISTINGUISHED company assembled in the Kensington Vestry Hall recently, when Princess Louise declared the building open in its new capacity of the Central Free Public Library of the parish. The Princess was accompanied by Lord Lorne, and there were present the Rev. and Hon. E. Carr-Glyn and Lady Mary Carr-Glyn, Sir Algernon Borthwick, the Attorney-General, Sir Lyon Playfair, Mr. H. C. Saunders, Q.C., and Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Lang. The Princess wore a black cashmere dress trimmed with velvet and jet, a grey bonnet trimmed with chinchilla, and a long grey boa. Mr. Saunders, in explaining the growth of the institution, admitted that London had been slow to follow the example of the great cities of the North in the matter of public libraries, and for thirteen years Kensington was indebted to the generosity of Mr. James Heywood for its library. Now, however, it has been found possible, by imposing a rate of a halfpenny in the pound, to provide three free libraries. The total number of books in these three institutions is over 15,000, and it is proposed to provide about 200 periodicals for the central library and 100 for each of the others. The Marquis of Lorne, in expressing the Princess's appreciation of the vote of thanks accorded to her, dwelt on the fact that books were valuable, not only as a relaxation after work, but as nerving to work.

"DIED, AT VENICE, ROBERT BROWNING."

WHAT was that you said—
"Robert Browning's dead?"
No—it can't be!
See, friend—all the world's alive,
You and I move, eat, drink, thrive—
There must be some mistake!
See—it shan't be!
We'll pledge him yet,
We'll meet him yet,
Somewhere over the seas, and slake
Our thirst at the fount of genius, met
With reverence, tears—I do not forget
How much he was to you, I remember
That night in a bleak and dark December
When we bent together o'er "Caliban;"
You cried—what a mind—what a man!
So—Browning's dead,
And here to hand is "Asolando,"
What to do with it I hardly know.
To "review" in cold blood when the blood is cold
Seems cold-blooded. "Slow,"
"Obscure," the critics who love him not
Will dub the book, but to you and me,
We who loved him, without a blot—
Save tears—
This last and precious page appears.
See—the familiar odd contriving
Of words, and all the quaint, strong striving
After expression; then, there,
Where you least expect it, a rare
Thought like a full pure rose
That pink in a garden of cacti blows!
Let him twist, distort as he will,
It is all with an exquisite skill,
And he was human, our Browning.
He wrestled, be sure, with Life,
Something he knew of its Strife—
I think—
He will always wrestle.
But I may be wrong,
Even now, there may have come to his Song
The calm sweet ending, the proud and strong
As well as the restless, wistful. So—
It is true then—Browning is dead;
You and I, at least, weep, lower the head;
We loved him—what more can be said?

SERANUS.

PARIS LETTER.

THE sight-seeing public are no longer permitted to visit the exhibition building and grounds and enjoy the pleasure of witnessing the demolitions. In fact the best view, of the breaking up, is for the curious-minded to stop outside the gates and look at the drays laden with the vanished delights. Very curious machines are followed by cases of shrubs muffled up in straw; then succeed deities imploring to be lent an ulster to cover their nudity, when the thermometer is rapidly sinking below freezing point. Nothing is more desolating than the spectacle of statues, all standing naked in the open air of a keen, frosty, December day. There is a close relation between the fine arts and the thermometer. Frost adds to the tortures of a bound Prometheus; it takes away from Cupid all the charms of his power: his bow and arrow covered with two inches of a white frost is the symbol of utter helplessness. Diana chasing is more in season, only in addition to her Grecian jupon, she would be improved by the fashionable coachman's triple pelerine. Jupiter's beard was so heavily covered with the rime, that he might be labelled Old Time, or Father Christmas *en deshabille*. The most singular fact about the removals is the haste of exhibitors to get away, as if the Champ de Mars was a plague-stricken centre.

An American banker is purchasing all the unused exhibition tickets offered at the rate of fr. 2½ per 100. His client is said to be a shop-keeper in Chicago, who has struck on a way and means to utilize them. The artists continue to wage a fierce war against M. Alphaud's plan to transfer the holding of the Salon or Annual Picture Show to the Champ de Mars, in place of the Palace of Industry—its fashionable and central city home for many years. It would seem that the more closely the project, to preserve the exhibition and its grounds, is examined, the more it approaches to the white elephant glory. The latest proposition is to convert into a vast colonial and trade institute. But the main difficulty is to make the plan self-supporting. In summer, people avoid museums; in winter, they flock to them, but on condition that they be heated. To keep the exhibition buildings at blood-heat would exact a fortune. The Trocadero alone is shunned, on account of its Boreal gusts, and is said to be a favourite place for expectant nephews to bring rich, old and wheezing uncles; or sons-in-law to squat the angel of a household—a mother-in-law—for a few hours, to enjoy Chopin's Dead March or variations on Mozart's Requiem.

The strike among the carriage builders of the Great Western Railway has terminated. It is a victory for the men; but it is more, it has enabled the operatives to feel their way, and to form a federation with the employés of the other grand companies, as soon as the law on associations is voted. Seventy years ago the people of England could not combine. Did they hold a public meet-