

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

DESCRIBE THE PSYCHIC TEMPERAMENT AND ITS PLACE IN PROGRESSIVE EVOLUTION.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Isabel Macdonald, 10, Orchard Street, London, W.

PRIZE PAPER.

When one grips a pen and faces a sheet of blank paper for this week's question one is faced with a very elusive subject. The psychic temperament is of the nature of "an unknown quantity." It is, indeed, largely a matter of degree, and probably psychic qualities are inherent in every individual, although their possessor may be unconscious of them. In its most primitive aspect the psychic temperament might be described as the suppression of the intellect and of the objective sense; in its highest form it implies the spiritualisation of the intellect. But, between the two stages, except in the cases of such world wonders as a Raphael, a Joan of Arc, or a St. Francis of Assisi, there lie aeons of evolution. Unfortunately now there is a tendency to regard psychic power as claiming a development which suppresses, or is divorced from, the intellect and from common-sense, but, according to certain views which I shall refer to, this tendency is distinctly retrograde, and the path it follows is beset with many dangers. The psychic temperament, if it is to play its appointed part in evolution, must develop in line with the intellect, for only thus can it reach that stage of intuition and inspiration of which it is capable.

But more is required. He who would develop his psychic powers to their full extent—a stage far beyond the simple power to sense another's consciousness or one of primitive clairvoyance and clairaudience—must be able to free himself from egoism, must be able to put the welfare of the community before his own. It is only through the wide sympathy with humanity which such an attitude brings that the psychic temperament can become a real force. So harnessed to the intellect and to the welfare of the world at large it has made many a saint, many a mystic, many a martyr, and many great reformers. It has formed the link between life and matter that has given to us many a leader of men, leaders, it sometimes may have been, of forlorn hopes in their own time, because their vision had advanced beyond that of their generation. In the realm of literature we owe to the psychic quality those great classics in which inspiration transcends the intellect; while, in the material world, it has given us

treasures of art beyond all price. Yet this same psychic quality, when not balanced with the intellect, has also given to the world many fanatics and fools, and, when bound up with egoism and self-interest, has produced what, in the middle ages, came to be known as "black magic." It may be that the future evolution of man lies in finding the proper balance between the psychic and the intellectual, and those who come near to this never grow old, for they are always on the breast of evolution, though sometimes their path may be rough, like the hill roads.

If certain writers are correct in their view that psychic powers—in the sense of clairvoyance and clairaudience—are more apparent in the most recently civilised races, this points to the assumption that the psychic temperament is the natural possession of mankind. A study of comparative religions and the old Scandinavian or Greek mythologies tends to confirm this conclusion. And it is quite in line with the progress of evolution that we should have lost the power to "sense" the superphysical, otherwise man would have remained a creature subject to every influence from without, and with no inclination to develop a mind or individuality of his own or to conquer the world of matter.

One would like to follow the subject of this paper into many tracks. I have been able to touch only the fringe of a question of which, after all, we know no more than we do of meteorology.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Gladys Tatham, Miss Lillian Hayward, Miss Ména M. G. Bielby, Miss M. James.

Miss M. M. G. Bielby writes:—"Those who sometimes long to hurry forward evolution should remember that one cannot save people experience, and that in the vast majority of cases the only effectual teacher is pain. Highly advanced egos continually learn through the mind, assimilating the wisdom offered by others. But most must learn their lessons in their own way, and all we can do to help is to break their falls when possible, and tender them our compassion instead of our censure; and to ensure that the environment, the pressure of which few can resist, is made as uplifting as we can compass."

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What should a nurse know about Venereal Diseases?

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