

JEWISH CONFIRMATION.

SERVICE AT THE SYNAGOGUE.

An interesting service was held at the Jewish Synagogue, Argyle-street, on Saturday morning, when Master Harry Henry Edwards, son of Mr. and Mrs. Nat. Edwards, of Alstonia, Macquarie-street, was confirmed according to the Jewish rites. According to the Jewish law every boy on attaining his 13th birthday must be confirmed, and this ceremony makes him eligible for all the privileges of Judaism. All the members of the Jewish community assembled at the Synagogue for the occasion, and there were also present so-religionists from the mainland, and a large and representative gathering of citizens of other religious denominations. Master Edwards acquitted himself admirably, reading his "Portion," the Blessings, etc., in a clear and sweet tone, which delighted all who were present, and he also recited a special prayer suitable to the occasion. At the conclusion of the ceremony he was warmly congratulated on the efficient manner in which he had performed as a confirmant, reflecting great credit on the officiating minister (Rabbi Morris), as well as on himself. During the service Rabbi Morris preached an interesting sermon on "The comforting quality of religion," his text being, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul" (Psalm xciv., 19). He said that this was a sentiment which must find a sympathetic echo in the heart of every thoughtful person who had had any experience of life, with its conflicts and contradictions. Most people were beset by the strife of conflicting ideas and doubts, and to them, what a comfort and joy it was to have something on which they could rely and by which they could be guided, which gave them a sense of certainty and assurance. He often felt like reading "Berib sarapai" for "Berob sarapai," thus, "When my thoughts are in conflict, at strife, with one another, my soul finds delight in Thy comforts, O Lord." Mr. Gilbert Cannan had said, "There are only two religions in the world, the religion of doubt and the religion of the humble." The existence of evil perplexed the men of the Bible, and though many ages had passed, poets and philosophers still grappled with the problem of it. In the presence of the inexplicable ills of the world the modern mind was just as baffled and bewildered as were the men of the Bible. The war had served to re-emphasise the problem, and they could not help asking why all this enormity of suffering and pain should have been allowed to overtake the world and to cause so much misery among the innocent and so much disappointment to every builder of ideals and dreamer of dreams on behalf of humanity. There was only one way to front the evil of the world, the unexplainable and unconquerable evil, and that was with the eye of faith and with the courage and assurance and confidence of faith, as only faith could aid and comfort them when the ordeals

confidence of faith, as only faith could aid and comfort them when the ordeals and perplexities of suffering entered their experience. There was a reciprocal relation between suffering and faith. Suffering refined, deepened, and intensified faith, and many a faith that was but formal or conventional had become personal and genuine by passing through the furnace of sorrow and affliction. It was sorrow coupled with faith, as Paul Bourget pointed out in one of his stories, which purified and ennobled. Without faith, sorrow was apt to deaden and dull their spirit, and to make them callous and indifferent. There was another everlasting source of doubt as to the hereafter. Who knew what awaited them beyond the tomb? Many had speculated on the subject, and human thought had been divided about it, but no one could so prove anything that no vestige of doubt remained. Faith sustained them as to the hereafter, and comforted them in their daily life. If they made faith their companion, then, come good, come ill, they would have a sure source of comfort and strength.

After the service, Mr. and Mrs. Nat. Edwards were "at home" to a large number of guests, in order to celebrate the occasion, about 100 friends being entertained at dinner, at which the usual toasts were honoured. On behalf of the Hebrew congregation, Mr. J. Levy presented the confirmant with a framed confirmation certificate, suitably inscribed. After dinner the guests enjoyed a delightful musical evening.

Yesterday afternoon, a large number of children were entertained at Alstonia, and all heartily appreciated the kindness and hospitality extended to them by Mr. and Mrs. Edwards.

In honour of the occasion, Mr. and Mrs. Edwards have issued invitations to a large circle of friends to a ball to be held at the Masonic-hall this evening.