

The Press.

During the last month we have simply been inundated with cuttings. Upwards of 500 have been received from Great Britain alone ; in fact the whole press of the country has had something to say of H. P. B. and Theosophy. The majority of the cuttings are favourable and many papers re-produced the life of H. P. B. from *Men and Women of the Time*. A few were eulogistic and some had the bad taste to vilify the dead, heaping on her the most shocking imputations. With regard to these the following protest was drawn up and appeared in quite a host of papers :

“We, the undersigned members of the Theosophical Society, who have known intimately the late H. P. Blavatsky, have read with surprise and disgust the extraordinary and baseless falsehoods concerning her life and moral character circulated by a portion of the press.

“We do not propose to attempt any answer in detail to libels as monstrous as they are vile, libels which deal, moreover, with supposed events laid in distant quarters of the world, without any evidence being adduced to substantiate the allegations. Is it right, even for the sake of soiling a dead woman's memory, to ignore the ordinary rule of law that the *onus* of proof lies on the accuser? What character can be safe if any unsupported slander is to be taken for proved fact? We content ourselves with staking our honour and reputation on the statement that her character was of an exceptionally pure and lofty type, that her life was unsullied and her integrity spotless. It is because we know this that we were and are proud to follow her guidance, and we desire to place on public record the fact that we owe to her the noblest inspirations of our lives.

“As regards the curious idea that Madame Blavatsky's death has given rise to any contest for her 'vacant place', will you permit us to say that the organization of the Theosophical Society remains unaffected by her death. In conjunction with Col. H. S. Olcott, the President of the Society, and Mr. William Q. Judge, a prominent New York lawyer, Vice-President and leader of the movement in America, Madame Blavatsky was the founder of the Theosophical Society, and this is a position that cannot well be carried either by a *coup d'etat* or otherwise. Madame Blavatsky was Corresponding Secretary of the Society, a purely honorary post, which, under the constitution, it is unnecessary to fill at her decease. During the last six months, in consequence of the growth of the Society, she temporarily exercised the presidential authority in Europe by delegation from Colonel Olcott, in order to facilitate the

transaction of business, and with her death the delegation naturally becomes void.

“Her great position in the movement was due to her knowledge, to her ability, to her unswerving loyalty, not to the holding of office ; and the external organization remains practically untouched. Her special function was that of teacher, and he or she who would fill her place must have her knowledge.

(Signed) “ANNIE BESANT.

“C. CARTER BLAKE, Doc. Sci.

“HERBERT BURROWS.

“LAURA M. COOPER.

“ISABEL COOPER-OAKLEY.

“ARCHIBALD KEIGHTLEY, M.B. (*Cantab.*)

“G. R. S. MEAD, B.A. (*Cantab.*), *Sec. European Section T. S.*

“WALTER R. OLD, *Sec. British Section T. S.*

“CONSTANCE, COUNTESS WACHTMEISTER.

“W. WYNN WESTCOTT, M.B. (*Lond.*)”

LONDON, *May 19th, 1891.*

On the whole the newspaper men have shown a desire for fair play ; in fact one prominent journal which had devoted several columns in two succeeding issues to a rehash of the personal opinion that made Mr. Hodgson so notorious, and was so foolishly endorsed by a learned society (perhaps to enliven their otherwise deadly dull reports) sent a representative to visit the Blavatsky Lodge, and gave us an excellent notice in one of its columns.

We have also received many cuttings from the United States, India and the Continent, and have to report on them also as above. It is to be remarked that the press of all these countries, perhaps we may say of the world, has not been contented with a few lines of notice or comment. Many of the leading papers have devoted editorials to the subject, and some contain articles of several columns in length. On the whole, the world imagines that the members of the T. S. are long-haired mystics or credulous imbeciles ; we wonder how they will take it when they find out that we are somewhat business-like people, only a little more in earnest than the majority !