

favour of "Land Nationalisation." The two following Wednesdays, the respective lecturers have been: Mr. James Donovan on "The Extent of Free-will in Man"; and Mr. Montague Miller on "The Duties of Secularists." These have so far proved very successful.

The Secular Sunday School has had the good fortune of securing a piano for the use of the school. This has been wanted a long time, and should now prove a great help to the popularising of this useful institution.

The Eclectic Association of Victoria has just completed the 15th year of its existence, and, judging from the Secretary's Annual Report, it is in a flourishing condition. Two fine book-cases and a number of valuable books have been added to its already excellent library. On April 9, after the preliminary business had been disposed of, Mr. Rusden read an interesting and carefully-written paper on the perplexing question, "Is Might Right?" A fair discussion followed; but owing to the rapid utterance of the speaker, and the depth of the subject, it was not quite so brisk a discussion as the paper merited.

Judge Williams's remarkable book has just been re-issued at a shilling, and is having an enormous sale, thanks partly to a hostile clergy and an equally hostile Press, who have favoured it with a cheap and widespread advertisement such as the FREETHOUGHT REVIEW might well envy. In this cheap and enlarged edition, the Judge states that he will probably publish an exhaustive treatise on the same subject in a few years' time. In the meantime he is going to let his critics alone for a while, so that they may continue their misrepresentations uninterrupted till they "run down." He may well leave them to themselves, when they stoop to such mean actions as that of the religious paper "The Daily Telegraph," in its dealings with his Honor. The Judge's letter to the "Argus," and "Age" of the 11th ult., is a merciless exposure of the underhand tricks to which these religion-perpetuation-at-any-price gentry will resort when they wish to "raise the wind."

Some of the clergy, as you know, cannot find enough Freethinkers to quarrel with, so they occasionally fall out with members of their own Church-hold. The Scotch theologians have long been noted for this kind of thing, and they evidently desire to retain this unenviable notoriety. The Scots' Church (Melbourne) congregation were astonished one Sunday in last month by finding in their pews a number of circulars, which had been placed there at the instigation of the Presbytery, and which notified the horrified readers that they were wanted to sign a paper acknowledging their allegiance to the constitutional authority of the Church and the Presbytery, of course, in particular. A meeting of the congregation was held, when, after some discussion, they decided to take no notice of the insolent order. On Sunday last the congregation were formally instructed to place their replies in the box then and there. Another instance of theological tyranny has just been afforded by that other bright body, the Wesleyans. The Rev. J. N. Harle, upon leaving St. Kilda, announced a farewell lecture on "Mesmerism." A large audience assembled. The lecturer appeared. To the astonishment of those assembled he apologised for not being able to fulfil his engagement, as the ruling authorities in the Wesleyan denomination had informed him that they objected to his frequent lecturing, and he must either give up lecturing, or resign his position in the ministry. He, therefore, bid them farewell, and left without delivering his lecture. There was some little confusion, and one gentleman proposed that "those present should express their sympathy with Mr. Harle, whom he regarded as a victim of religious intolerance and narrow-minded bigotry." Eventually another gentleman lectured instead upon the same subject. The Rev. J. A. Dowie, of the Free Christian Tabernacle, has been getting himself into trouble by persistently parading the streets with his lunatic followers. He acted in a most ridiculous manner to the constable who interfered, threatening him with prosecution, and telling him that under Part I, Section 32, sub-section 5, of the Criminal Law and Practice Statute, he was liable to two years' imprisonment for obstructing a clergyman on his way to conduct "divine service." This is Dowie's third offence, and his congregation will be spared the infliction of his tomfoolery for one month, at the end of which time he will be released from custody. As to his disciples, the Bench, wishing to act leniently, asked them if they intended to offend again. They readily stated that they would at the first opportunity. They were each fined £5 with costs.

In Ballarat, matters are progressing very satisfactorily, a regular course of lectures being kept up. In Tasmania, Miss Ada Campbell has been lecturing with marked success. This talented lady also challenged the Rev. W. H. Bove to public debate; but he declined on the cowardly plea that he had never challenged Mr. Symes to debate, that it might become interminable, and that no good ever comes of such debates. Another gentleman, Mr. George Peacock, took up the gauntlet, and succeeded in making a very poor stand and allowing Miss Campbell an easy victory.

In Sydney (N.S.W.), the A.S.A. is doing well. A mutual improvement class has been started, and at the half-yearly meeting which was held last month, the Association was shown to be in a flourishing condition. The bigots there are active, however. They have expelled the "Liberator" from the School of Arts, though not without a petition from 60 members calling a meeting to re-consider its exclusion. They have prosecuted Mr. Walker for publicly lecturing on "Malthusianism," and illustrating the lecture with diagrams copied from standard works on Surgery and Physiology, more especially those relating to the generative system. Holy hypocrisy's horrified as a matter of course; and Mr. Walker has consequently been prosecuted for "exhibiting obscene diagrams." He was fined £10 and £4 9s. 6d. costs, with, I believe, the option of imprisonment.

You will see from the foregoing notes, that as soon as peace promises from the great powers we have no common enemy to make faces at; so we immediately set to quarrelling amongst

ourselves, and this is a Christian land! "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

South Yarra, May 6th, 1885.

WELLINGTON.

We have received the following communication from Mr. W. Tyrell, the energetic secretary of the Wellington Secular Society:—

Since my last report we anticipated hearing the very able lecturer, Dr. J. L. York. He called to see us on his way to Sydney, and was pleased with our hall, and has promised to give us a course of lectures on his return, which will be some considerable time hence. We have missed our old friend "Ivo" very much, and we are now waiting the advent of something new, which we believe will soon take place, as we expect the pleasure of listening to Mr. W. A. Ellis, President of the Psychological Society. In my former notice I mentioned that our membership roll had increased to 35; the sentence should have read: that our strength had increased by the addition of 35 members. Thanking you for reports, yours, &c.,

W. TYRELL, Sec.

Lyceum Hall, Wellington, May 18, 1885.

TIMARU.

We have to thank Mr. Robertson for the following items:—

Mr. Fred Crook, Secular lecturer, delivered two lectures in the Theatre Royal here on Sunday evenings, May 10th and 17th. "The Shadows of London," and "Money and Misery" were the subjects, both of which were handled by the lecturer in a highly graphic and entertaining manner. There was a very good attendance at both lectures, and the applause was loud and frequent. Mr. Crook possesses an almost inexhaustible fund of humour, is a really capital mimic, and is gifted with an amount of dramatic force and talent far beyond the ordinary run of lecturers. His descriptions and imitations of the various characters he has met are irresistibly droll, and create no end of amusement. He has also great command over the finer sensibilities of his audience, and some of the pictures drawn by him are pathetic in the extreme. His lectures deal chiefly with the causes of poverty and the social inequalities of modern society, and he bitterly denounces private ownership in land as one of the chief causes, if not the chief cause, of poverty and destitution. He is a firm believer in and an uncompromising disciple of Henry George, whose proposals, he thinks, if carried into practical effect would do more to remove the social cancer that is eating into the very heart of modern society than any other remedy that has yet been suggested. In giving expression to these views Mr. Crook had his audience entirely with him, a fact which clearly indicated the direction in which modern thought is travelling. Mr. Crook has been very fairly treated by the Press of this town, which is a wonder, considering that newspapers generally range themselves on the side of property, and are usually eager to resist any interference with what they are pleased to call "existing rights." Concerning the opening of the theatre on Sunday evenings for Secular purposes, the clergy have remained studiously silent. I was rather surprised at this, as they are generally ready to denounce any attempt to break in upon the sanctity of the Sabbath. They have hitherto looked upon the Sabbath as their special property, and have looked upon any effort to secularise it as an unwarranted interference with "existing rights." The clergy are a long time in learning anything, but the fact is being slowly forced upon them that they are as powerless to stem the tide of infidelity that is setting in on every side of them as they would be to sweep back the Atlantic ocean with a broom. I am glad to say that Mr. Crook's visit has been productive of some practical good, inasmuch as it has been the cause of a few gentlemen combining for the purpose of establishing a Freethought Association in Timaru. It will no doubt be some time before we are strong enough to make our influence felt in the place, but as the saying is, we must "creep before we gang." We will require to meet in private until such time as we feel ourselves sufficiently strong to throw our meetings open to the public. Our society earnestly invites the assistance and co-operation of its elder brothers in any way in which they are able to assist us. I will report progress from time to time, and keep you well posted up as to the state of Freethought in this part of the colony. I am, &c.,

JAMES ROBERTSON, Secretary, *pro tem*.

FEILDING.

Our correspondent at Feilding favours us with the following report:—

Organised freedom of thought, and desire for pursuit and promulgation of truth here may now be fairly looked upon as an accomplished fact. Our members keep well together, and take a warm and lively interest in the meetings. We appear to have made a mistake, however, in electing our President in his absence. In his opening address he declared himself a "Christian." He only presided once more, when a member gave a paper on, "Was Christ Divine?" taking the negative side. After that the President resigned in a very respectful manner, but giving no reasons, and expressing his good wishes for the prosperity of our Society. Thereupon, the committee elected in his stead the Vice-President, who doesn't profess to be a "Christian," and who possesses a far more elephantine skin. In fact the committee wished him to take that office at first, but yielded to his own nomination of the gentleman above referred to. On Sunday, the 3rd instant, a member