

had been no such thing as blasphemy in New Zealand, for the obvious reason that before there could be blasphemy there must be some religion recognised by the State. This was clear from the case of *Regina v. Gathercole*, in which Baron Alderson said: "The point is whether there is only a libel on the whole Roman Church generally, or on Stouton munnery. In the former case the defendant is entitled to acquittal. A person may, without being liable to prosecution for it, attack Judaism or Mormonism, or even any sect of the Christian religion save the established religion of the country; and the only reason why the latter is in a different situation from the others is because it is *the form established by law*, and it is therefore a part of the constitution of the country. In like manner, and for the same reasons, any general attack on Christianity is the subject of a criminal prosecution because Christianity is the established religion of the country." In the criminal code introduced last session but held over, there was a clause creating the crime of blasphemy. [We printed the clause in the December number of the Review.] Mr. Stout concluded his speech (to be published in our next) by moving a resolution, "That in the opinion of this meeting of Freethinkers assembled it is unwise, unjust, and unconstitutional to create what are termed crimes against religion in New Zealand, and this meeting protests against the blasphemy clause in the proposed criminal code, which purports to create such crimes." The motion was seconded by Mr. Rutherford, supported by Mr. I. N. Watt, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Charles Bright gave an address on "The Fellowship of Freethought throughout the World," concluding by proposing the following resolution:—"That this meeting of Freethinkers of New Zealand in conference assembled desires to express its sympathy with Charles Bradlaugh, member of Parliament for Northampton, in the arduous struggle against bigotry and injustice in which he has been engaged for the past four years, and its hope that ere long he may be completely triumphant, thus achieving a victory for freedom of conscience which will be hailed with delight by Freethinkers in all parts of the world." Mr. Dickson seconded the motion. Mr. Farnie, speaking in support, remarked that the majority of young men of his acquaintance were Freethinkers, but they were not members of the Association. He argued that if there was any occasion to take part here in any such struggle as was going on in England at the present day, Freethinkers in New Zealand would see the necessity of joining the organisation. The resolution was carried with enthusiasm.

Mr. Willis, delegate from Wanganui, gave an interesting address. In Wanganui they were surprised that such a large city as Dunedin should only have one Freethought Association. There was a Freethought Association at Woodville, and it was proposed to form one at Palmerston North, and another at Patea. He proposed, "That this meeting is specially desirous of holding out the hand of fellowship to all lovers of freedom in New Zealand, and hails with satisfaction the commencement of an organisation on behalf of freethought." Mr. W. N. Merry seconded the motion, which was carried.

On the motion of Mr. Low, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the chairman.

Mr. C. Bright proposed that a vote of thanks should be passed to the City Council for the use of the Town Hall. He was aware that the request for the use of the Hall had only been granted because the privilege had been previously accorded to a religious body, and in common justice the application of the Freethinkers could not be refused. But still "common justice" to freedom of thought was such an unusual thing that in this instance the meeting should not allow it to pass without special recognition.

The Chairman remarked that the Council's action in this matter was a good omen for this colony—it indicated that in future there would be no such thing as one religion being recognised as having one position more than another.

The vote of thanks having been passed to the Council, the meeting terminated.

Science Notes.

An American Doctor recently made the experiment of administering chloroform to a sleeping child whilst he extracted a piece of broken glass from its hand. So successful was the experiment that it is likely to become popular in cases of small children, thus preventing undue excitement.

Professor Flower, in one of his lectures at the Royal Institution, brought before the popular mind the conclusion at which the scientific has arrived, that the whale is but a water ungulate, or hoofed animal, gradually adapted to aquatic life. The hippopotamus seems to represent the intermediate form.—DR. AVELING.

Both Langley and Edison have devised heat measures so delicate, that a change of temperature quite unnoticed by the ordinary thermometer, or far more delicate thermo-pile, is readily recorded. It has been suggested to utilise the principle, by placing a proper apparatus at the ship's head, so that any sudden reduction of temperature indicating the near approach of an iceberg, should give out an automatic sound warning, or in some other way announce danger.

We are penetrating very deeply now-a-days into the heart of things. We are solving even such problems as the size of atoms, only a few years back called immeasurably small. Sir William Thomson has shown that the atoms of the air are at least as much as $\frac{1}{100000000}$ of a centimetre (about $\frac{1}{100000000}$ inch) in diameter, and that in any liquid, transparent solid, or seemingly opaque solid, the mean distance between the centres of contiguous molecules is less than the $\frac{1}{100000000}$, and greater than the $\frac{1}{1000000000}$ of a centimetre.—DR. AVELING.

The necessity of pure water for cattle has been much discussed of late years. A well-known microscopist after examining some farm yards reeking with filth, the liquid portion of which drained into some adjacent ponds, says:—"I examined numerous specimens of the water of the farms, and also the milk of the cows, and almost invariably discovered in both the same species of bacteria." He goes on to say, that the wife of a farm labourer, suffering from a low form of fever, was giving her child its natural nourishment, which under the microscope also shewed the same species of bacteria.

A great many attempts have been made at different times, to utilise the sun's rays for the production of heat. Professor E. S. Morse of Massachusetts has devised a means of warming and ventilating by means of the solar rays; it consists of a surface of slates, painted black (so as to absorb as much heat as possible) fixed in a frame;—this frame is placed vertically against the wall; and in connection with it are flues to carry the heated air to the interior of the building operated upon. It is stated that a frame 8 feet by 3 feet is found sufficient to warm a room 20 feet long, except on dull days; and that under favourable circumstances it creates a rise of about 30 degrees during four or five hours of the most sunshining portion of the day.

Everyone talks now-a-days of ether. But not everyone has a clear conception of its nature and functions. Dr. Oliver Lodge, in his lecture on ether given at the London Institute, did good work. He taught the many therein that which the philosophic few have for some time past held—viz., that the simplest conception of the material universe which has yet occurred to man is of one universal substance, perfectly homogeneous and continuous and simple in structure, extending to the furthest limits of space of which we have any knowledge, existing equally everywhere. The whirling portions constitute what we call matter; their motion gives them rigidity, and of them our bodies and all other material bodies with which we are acquainted are built up. One continuous substance filling all space; which can vibrate as light; which can be sheared into positive and negative electricity; which in whirls constitutes matter; and which transmits by continuity, and not by impact, every action and reaction of which matter is capable. This is the modern view of the ether and its functions.—DR. AVELING IN 'NATIONAL REFORMER.'