

Free Thought Review.

SCIENCE. RELIGION. PHILOSOPHY.

VOL. I.—No. II.

WANGANUI, N.Z.: AUGUST 1, 1884.

PRICE: 6D. [6s per annum; or, post paid to any part of N.Z., 6s 6d.]

The Wilnot controversy, a portion of which is given in our present issue, ends in a curious defence of his conduct by the Wesleyan Minister who narrated the story of the death-bed repentance. The fact transpires that the Rev. Mr. Garlick conveyed the impression in his account of the affair in the 'New Zealand Wesleyan,' that he had received the dying person's recantation from her own lips. It now turns out that the Minister was guilty of deception. It is true he never distinctly said he was not present when Mrs. Wilnot died. But he did what amounted to the same thing—he worded his account to read as if he had been present. Nor does it appear as if Mr. Garlick acted even in the spirit of the Good Samaritan. He declined to assist to furnish private apartments because some persons expressed the opinion that the dying woman should be sent to the hospital. Then, why was not this stated in his narrative of the circumstances in the 'Wesleyan?' It was surely very essential to truth, when a charge was made against Freethinkers that they had not come to her assistance. His accident prevented him attending his "regular duties;" but a destitute and dying person imposed an extraordinary duty! It will be seen that the Rev. Mr. Garlick's reply to Mr. Jardine is evasive and shuffling. His rejoinder about the "drunken cobbler" and his "hovel" illustrate at the same time his intelligence and his veracity.

Mr. Garlick has made a still more curious explanation. His M.S. (he uses the plural, with what purpose we know not) contained, he says, the words—"Up to the time of her death she was visited by me, the Presbyterian Minister, and other friends. In the article it reads 'and other friends'—an important difference." We do not know what he means. His accident interfered with his visits after April 10th, but up to the time of her death "she was visited by me"! All this equivocation tends to discredit the reverend gentleman's veracity. Has the Rev. Mr. Rogers anything to say in the matter? It would appear that Mr. Garlick acted towards the woman with a harshness which does not convey a flattering impression of his conduct as a man, yet this is the person who throws a stone at Freethinkers!

In the debate between the representative of organised Socialism in England and Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, the former, Mr. H. M. Hyndman, gave the following definition: "Socialism is an endeavour to substitute for the anarchical struggle or fight for existence an organised co-operation for existence." This definition by itself does not mean much. Individualism might say, with at least equal truth, the same thing. No Individualist believes that anarchy is an essential condition of competition. Nor is co-operation Socialism. Mr. Bradlaugh in his reply urged that in a Socialistic State there would be "no inducement to

"thrift, no individual savings, no accumulation, no check upon waste." This is virtually a counter definition. If the State regulated every economical movement on the basis of equality, and allowed no superiority of ability its rewards, the inducement to all exertion would undoubtedly be wanting. But might not the State agree by common consent to award prizes of merit? Then Mr. Bradlaugh would of course contend that this would not be Socialism, since it admitted the element of individual exertion with its appropriate reward. This is the pivot on which the dialectical victory turned, and it is not difficult to see that, pressing with all the skill of a practised and accomplished debater, Mr. Bradlaugh must have driven his opponent from the field.

The Socialist took up most of his time describing the evils of modern society. These however might have been postulated in a few words, and then the labor of the debate would have been expended on the efficacy of the remedy—Socialism. Mr. Bradlaugh's marked triumph consisted, apart from his greater power as a debater, in establishing the fact that rapid progress in the condition of society had taken place without the assistance of Governments—he might have shown, in spite of them. We do not exactly understand Mr. Bradlaugh's apparent opposition to the principle of land nationalization. For land nationalization is not in the direction of socialism so long as the tenants are secured their improvements. The essence of Individualism is to secure to the individual the reward of his own industry. If Mr. Bradlaugh means that he is opposed to Mr. Henry George's scheme of appropriation, without compensation, of what has always been recognised as property—a proposal which ought to be termed robbery—his position is clear; and is worthy of him. Mr. Bradlaugh's part in the debate is calculated to destroy the popularity of socialistic fallacies.

One of the issues raised at the election just concluded is the costliness of education, and it is wonderful the variety of statements which have been made regarding matters of fact about which there ought to be official data. The exaggeration respecting the cost of education seems to have been due to the absence of any debate in which the figures and the facts could have been brought to light by one of the friends of the present system. It is not surprising that the sum total of votes, loans, and proceeds of endowments should appear so large. The charge on the consolidated revenue last year for primary education was about £274,000, and the proceeds of endowments for the same purpose amounted to £24,000. The interest on the money borrowed for buildings since 1878 (say £500,000) at five per cent. would be £25,000 a year—giving a total charge of about £323,000 a year. Whether this is an extravagant expenditure for education depends on comparisons.