

The revenue from endowments is increasing, and this year will amount to £33,000—thus relieving the pressure due to the annual increase in the average attendance. The cost of education is less than it was before the introduction of the present Act. In 1877 the cost per head on the average attendance was £4 15s, and in 1883 it had fallen to £4 3s 6d. But the friends of the system, while defending it against the ignorance and malignity of its opponents, must not take up the false position of saying that reductions cannot be made. True economy and the best defence equally demand that every item in the expenditure shall be sharply criticised. The statutory capitation allowance is £3 15s, and this is supplemented by 5s in the annual appropriations. Here perhaps economy will require that we should stand by the Act—effecting a saving of £18,000 a year. The extra votes for scholarships, inspection, normal schools, etc., might be considerably cut down, with the view of ultimately making the statutory sum of £3 15s cover the whole cost of primary education. When this result has been achieved the friends of our free secular and compulsory system will at least be in a position to vindicate it from the economical side against all the assaults of its enemies. The question of higher education must be dealt with separately.

The "modified denominationalists" have not achieved any decided success during the elections, it being open to doubt if they are as numerous in the present as they were in the last Parliament.—The evidence given last session before the select committee shows a hopeless conflict of opinion among the denominationalists. They have not yet agreed upon any plan which would impart religious instruction in the schools in the rural districts. Nor have they given any reason for the distinction to have "conscience" recognised in towns while it is left in the charge of the State in the country. It could hardly be maintained seriously that the urban is more sensitive than the rural conscience. The best thing to be done is to complete the enquiry which was begun last session, allowing the friends of the present system to place on record their opinions. When the enquiry is complete the Legislative will be in a position, with some hope of arriving at a final conclusion, to discuss the bills and resolutions that aim at modification.

There are in the United States of America, according to the last census, over one thousand Japanese. The majority of these are either merchants or clerks in mercantile houses. It is moreover stated, that in no instance as yet has a criminal charge been laid against one of these Japanese foreigners. Some few years ago, the Japanese Government sent a commission to Europe, charged with instructions to observe the conduct of the Christian nations, with a view of deciding whether it would be beneficial to adopt, as a state religion, the Christian faith. The commissioners unanimously reported that the Christian nations were brutal, dissipated, and more criminal than their own people! Would it not be as well for some Christian nation, (say England) to send a commission to Japan to report on the moral fruits of the Japanese religion?

"History repeats itself." A religious delusion has broken out amongst the negroes of some of the counties of Georgia, U. S. One of their own people has proclaimed himself as the Son of God, sent to judge the

world, as the end of all things is at hand. Crowds of disciples have gathered around him, fully believing in his divine mission. But for the growing disbelief in the miraculous, the result of centuries of scientific enquiry and Freethought, this ignorant or designing negro might become the founder of a sect as numerous and powerful as the Mahomedan or the Christian. As it is, he will probably remain the prophet of a few deluded negroes as ignorant and numerous as the followers of Jesus were before the Christian faith, by a peculiar combination of circumstances, was adopted, and protected by the civil power of Rome.

The nineteenth century has produced another disturbing element in the churches in the peculiar craze known as the Salvation Army. On the one hand, we have the clergy denouncing the movement as being blasphemous and ribald; and, on the other hand, we have them countenancing and taking part in the services. A Church of England clergyman, at a recent "barrack" meeting, claimed St. Paul as one of the Army. We have always held that both Jesus and St. Paul were Salvationists—for we fail to see the distinction between the street preachings and riots of St. Paul, the shouting processions and disturbances of Jesus, and the pranks and absurdities of the Salvation Army. That the Army has obtained a hold on numbers of English-speaking people cannot be denied, and that many are sincere in their belief is evinced by the readiness with which they subscribe to defray the expenses of the campaign. How many of the clergy of the older churches must have read with envy of the recent collection of £12,600 made in one day at General Booth's barracks!

However, we believe that in many cases, more especially amongst the more educated and intellectual of the Army, that this form of religious hysteria will be short-lived, and that in the reaction of calmer moments they will feel ashamed of their former participation in the extravagant language and behaviour of the Salvation Army; and in the mental revolution, which will certainly be the result of this reaction, reason will compel faith to resign her usurpation, and the ranks of Freethought will be recruited. So we anticipate that the ulterior result will be an accession to the numbers and the strength of the Freethought Associations. That the Salvation Army should still retain its hold on the grosser and more brutal natures is perhaps desirable—men and women who are only deterred from leading vicious lives by the vivid presentiment of the burning fires of hell!

Science Notes.

The Telephone has been successfully used by a Frenchman to communicate between two vessels, one of which was towing the other. The wire was carried along one of the hawsers, and the circuit was completed through the copper on the bottom of ships, and the water. Conversation was carried on distinctly.

Professor Radziszewski has been making experiments upon the "*Pelagia noctiluca*," one of the phosphorescent jelly fish of the ocean. Having dried 180 specimens, he dissolved out of the residue a peculiar kind of fat, this mixed with potasse, or pure potash, gave out when shaken phosphorescent flashes. The living animal when at rest is not luminous, but if shaken or rubbed it flashes. The remarkable feature of the case is that these creatures supply light without heat.