

"egged" him on. I hope the legal difficulties which seem to beset Sunday concerts will soon be cleared up, and, if the difficulties are real, cleared away, for these concerts would be the supply of a want very much felt, and during the winter months several could be maintained in this city."

FREETHOUGHT IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

An energetic and staunch Freethinker at Newcastle, N.S.W., to whom some REVIEWS were recently sent from New Plymouth, in a private letter to a friend under date 27th July, remarks:—

"There are some really good things in the REVIEWS you sent. I hope the issue is self-supporting. The proprietor and editor have both enterprise and ability of a superior order, and deserve success. In reference to Freethought here, there is no question of its progress. There are now between 600 and 700 shares in our new hall taken up and deposits received upon the same. The ground is secured on a ten years' lease, with the option of purchase at upset price, £357. Building materials, stone, and timber are already on the ground, which will be used next week in the structure. Mr. Walker, of Sydney, has been here during this week giving two lectures—one at Wallsend, and the other, last night, at Newcastle here."

The same writer also mentions that he has sent to England for £10 worth of Freethought literature, which he intends to offer for sale at the Sunday evening lectures when the new hall is opened. He adds emphatically—"Progress must be made."

A FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION AT STRATFORD.

We have much pleasure in publishing the following communication, and hope we shall have to announce in our next number the accomplishment of the object:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW.

SIR,—The enclosed clipping taken from a letter of the Taranaki 'Budget's' Stratford Correspondent led to my writing the letter therein enclosed to the editor of that paper, with the view of encouraging my unknown colleague in Freethought, but as the columns were closed upon the subject, I have to request you to find room in the Review if possible for both clipping and letter.

I remain, &c.,

THOS. G. LEECH,
Inglewood, Taranaki.

(Paragraph referred to.)

As a proof of the desire of the present generation for the acquisition of knowledge and truth, there is already a talk of forming a Freethought Association in the district, as there are many of the settlers holding advanced views who feel the want of a place of meeting where they can openly and freely discuss the facts and plain truths that science is daily laying before us, to the complete overthrow of the old superstitious dogmas, and I trust shortly to be able to report that the Association has been successfully formed.

"ADVANCE STRATFORD."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW.

SIR,—The establishment of a Freethought society at Stratford, as indicated by your Stratford and Ngairu correspondent in a letter to you dated 10th inst., will be hailed with pleasure by many settlers round about Inglewood, who, as appears to be the case at Stratford, "feel the want of a place of meeting" ("especially on Sunday") "where they can openly and freely discuss the facts and plain truths that science is daily laying before us, to the complete overthrow of the old superstitious dogmas" now rejected by thousands who formerly believed in them, not so much from choice as from chance, because they happened to be the dogmas of the country in which they were born. I with many others in this district shall anxiously look forward for the report which your correspondent trusts he will be able shortly to send, informing you of the successful formation of the aforesaid association; step of advancement, which I firmly believe will be followed by Inglewood and New Plymouth.

Yours &c.,

THOS. G. LEECH.

Inglewood,

MELBOURNE.

Our Melbourne correspondent remits the following brief epitome of the month's proceedings of the Association there:—

Debates are the order of the day. Shortly after the controversy between Mr. Symes and the Rev. D. M. Berry, the Rev. Canon Potter opposed Mr. Symes for one evening on the proposition: "Is Atheism or Christianity the more reasonable belief?" This, in reality, was not a debate at all, for the two half-hour speeches of the Canon's were read from manuscript. After he had read them, Mr. Potter handed them to the reporter of the 'Daily Telegraph,'

which paper published them verbatim, at the same time, with customary fairness, considerably condensing Mr. Symes' portion. This discussion was followed up by another occupying two evenings, between Mr. Symes and E. G. Higg, M.D., the Government medical officer. The subjects discussed were—"Is Natural History, or Darwin's or any other Materialistic Theory, a true Science?" on August 7th.; and—"Is Man a Reality in a Spiritual, or a Materialistic Sense?" on the 8th. The Doctor showed himself to be thoroughly at home when speaking on corporeal matters, but as soon as he attempted to deduce spiritualistic conclusions from them, he no more understood his own logic than did his hearers. In none of the debates that Mr. Symes has engaged in up to the present, has he met a foe man worthy of his steel. The one with Mr. Berry was the most successful, the other two being merely calculated to bring controversy into contempt. As a forlorn hope of bringing about a tussle with the Bishop, the A.S.A. have determined to write to that gentleman, inviting him to meet their representative in the Melbourne Town Hall, the entire proceeds to be devoted to the Austin Hospital. Should he decline, as is most probable, it is their intention to insert the challenge as an advertisement in the daily papers.

This month occurs the second anniversary of the Australian Secular Association. When it was organised by Mr. Thomas Walker, assisted by a few enthusiastic Freethinkers, our opponents prophesied its utter collapse in three months. Instead of that taking place, however, we have reached our second birthday without any disease. In fact, we are so healthy, and have grown so fast, that we now number nearly as many as our older brother, the Young Men's Christian Association. Our latest move is the introduction of weekly suburban lectures. One has already been delivered with fair success at Richmond. The next takes place this week at Collingwood. Previous to the lecture there will be an entertainment by members of the A.S.A., assisted by the excellent band of the association. As there will be free admission to the hall, with collection, it is anticipated that many of the orthodox will take advantage of the opportunity to listen to our case, and probably will also accept the invitation to combat Mr. Symes' views,

W. C. A.

August 11th, 1884.

WOODVILLE FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary of the Woodville Association forwards the following particulars:—

SIR,—The report for the month is not of a very inspiring nature. Owing to the severe cold and wet weather we have experienced, our attendances have been small—so much so that we have decided temporarily to hold our meetings once a month. Our members are scattered over a large district, but though we have a fair number of members living within a stone's throw of our meeting house, they will not attend, but prefer to go to Church at the same time as we hold our meetings, and burlesque Christianity. The same members are ever ready to help with their purse, but for some reason or other hardly ever attend, and thereby discourage in a great degree those few who do. The various papers for the month have all been read by our brave President, and seem to have been so convincing that no discussion followed. The attendance of the public has been very good, considering the weather; and if the whole of the members would only pull together, and be a little more aggressive in their work, we should soon make good progress. There is, however, some talk of reorganization. Some of the members wish to have music and singing instead of discussions on theological subjects. We are promised a debate on the first Sunday in September between a Mr. Rendle and our President.

I am, &c.,

GEO. HUTCHINS, Secretary W.F.A.

P.S.—I had quite forgot to mention that Mr. Hugo had been on a visit here, lecturing upon Physiognomy, and that on Sunday evening, the 17th, he gave a lecture against Spiritualism, at which I was unable to be present, but which I am told was a very good one. It may say that the people here, Religionists and non-Religionists, have been holding circles for the investigation of Spiritualism. In fact, it has almost become a craze, nearly everyone you meet either giving or asking to be given some information with regard to the phenomena. From what I can see and learn of it, I am persuaded that it is perfectly useless to mankind for good, even supposing it to be true. Its only good feature is that at present the majority of its adherents are anti-Christians, but a host of the lesser lights are striving to get the Churches to take it up as a last resource against what they term the "Infidelity of the Age."

AUCKLAND RATIONALISTIC ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary of the above Association again favours us with a *resumé* of the month's work, which will be found interesting. He writes:—

SIR,—At the time of writing my last report we had just commenced a short engagement with Mr. Isaac Selby to lecture for us on Sunday evenings, and all was going on swimmingly, our receipts answering the expectations of the lecturer and the Association, when, lo and behold! the Argus-eyed Inspector of Police suddenly discovered that during the reign of that righteous old mediocore, George III., an Act was passed to prevent charging for admission to Sunday amusements—not to prevent the amusement, but the method of getting paid for the same; for we are allowed to meet in the usual manner, have the same class of entertainment, including lecture and debate, but must substitute the voluntary mode of