

collection in place of charging a small fee for admission. The hue and cry arose from the fact that Dunning's Opera Troupe advertised a sacred concert to be given on a Sunday. They were threatened with a prosecution if they made a charge. The result was that the doors of the Opera House were thrown open, or, I might more properly say, forced open, and the public entered and occupied indiscriminately both dress circle and body of the building without paying anything, except a few unfortunates who had, previous to the threatened prosecution, purchased reserved seat tickets, and they as a rule did not get in at all. The liberality of the assembled multitude was tested as they left the building by having a hat held up before them, in which they were requested to deposit any spare cash they might have about them, and the total amount collected from some 1,700 people was about £20, a few shankless buttons, and a lady's partial set of teeth, dropped doubtless in the excitement of the hour. As the Act does not mention the word lecture—only amusements and debates—our Association determined to make the usual charge during Mr. Selby's engagement, and last Sunday again charged the 1/- at the doors, and the result was a considerable increase over the previous Sunday's receipts, which was upon the voluntary principle. But the meeting was hardly as pleasant as usual, being shorn of its social character, although the lecture was most excellent and gave every satisfaction. You are by this time probably aware that we intend to test the question of the applicability of the above-mentioned Act of George III. to this colony as soon as we are assured of the material support of kindred societies, believing, as our new Premier telegraphs us, that it is not in force, adding the encouraging words "No surrender," to which I add "Nil Desperandum."

In addition to the somewhat exciting occurrences mentioned above, there has been a debate between Mr. Selby and Mr. John Buchanan, the latter gentleman representing the Christian Evidence Society, the President of which Society is the Bishop of this Diocese; subject—"Is the Mosaic account of Creation at variance with Science." Mr. Selby, affirmative; Mr. J. Buchanan, negative. The supporters of Mr. J. B. must have had very little faith in their champion, or in their cause, as very few indeed shewed up, the audience being almost entirely composed of Rationalists. They so far neglected him as not to furnish him with a lamp, water, and glass, which omission probably accounted in some measure for his continually floundering about in the dark as though he was very much fogged.—I am, &c.,

W. C. DENNES, Hon. Sec.

Auckland, Aug. 15, 1884.

WAVERLEY FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

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

Sir,—Notwithstanding the inclement weather, our regular meetings have been well attended; readings by the several members being much approved of. We have altered our hour of meeting from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., as this gives our country members a better chance of attendance. Our Association has joined the N.Z. Federal Association, Dunedin. This is much better than remaining an isolated part of the body. The old cry of "unity is strength" will apply here. Our Vice-President, when in Wanganui, having chosen several works bearing on our principles, the Association unanimously approved of the choice of works made, thus forming the nucleus of what we hope to be a very strong Library. I see in the 'Chronicle' of the 22nd, that the Salvationists state they have received a letter from a Freethinker of Waverley inviting them to lay seige to their town. The Freethinkers cannot be responsible for what one member may choose to do, but the Association itself has nothing to do with the invitation, and I question very much if the name signed is on the books of the Association at all.

Yours truly,

W. G. WILKINSON,

Secretary.

Waverley, August 23. E. M. 2, 84.

CANTERBURY FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

We have to acknowledge the following items from Mr. F. C. Hall, Secretary of the above Association:—

Sir,—The following sermons were delivered to very good congregations: July 20, "Spiritualism in its Relation to Science," by Mr. Chas. Bright; July 27, "Infidelity," by Ivo; Aug. 3, an address by Mr. E. Billeliff; Aug. 10, "Ghosts, Witches, Apparitions" (being the first of two lectures attacking Spiritualism), by Ivo.

On the 25th ult. an invitation ball took place at the Hall, which was got up for the young folk attending our Sunday evening services.

Two or three pages of the lives of the Holy Fathers are read each Sunday. Some of us Infidels begin to take quite an interest in the old scoundrels.

An ex-member of ours sent us from the top of Blue Mountains, N.S.W., a P.O.O. for one pound towards the funds, with the wish that he could have made it for £50.

A few days ago, per s.s. Ruapehu, we sent home a frozen sheep addressed to Chas. Bradlaugh, as a reminder that there are Freethinkers in this colony.

Yours, &c.,

F. C. HALL, Sec. C.F.A.

WELLINGTON FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The following notes from the Secretary of the Wellington Association will be read with interest:—

Sir,—Since my last report I am glad to say our membership has increased rapidly. Our roll now numbers 130, new members joining every week. The fact of our having taken larger premises, with comfortable seating accommodation, has brought this about. We bid fair to be a very strong Association in time. I now give you a list of our lectures for the last five weeks, which have been well attended:—July 19, "Modern Civilisation," by Mr. Inmiss; July 26, "Conquest of Granada," a poem, recited by our President; Aug. 10, "Shadows of London," by Mr. Crook, a member of the Christchurch Freethought Association; and another by him yesterday on "Money and Misery." These lectures were given to crowded audiences, and the lecturer was very impressive in his description of the vice and misery of modern Babylon, and pictured the rich man, with his hordes of gold, beingellowed by vice and misery in that vast city. I presume he is from London, hence his knowledge of the different hovels of wretchedness he had visited, of which he gave us a very graphic account. If this gentleman should call at Wanganui (which I believe he intends to), I should strongly advise the Wanganui Freethought Association to engage him for two or more lectures. His terms are very liberal, and he will work entirely with what the Association thinks best.

Our members are very gratified in the return of Messrs. Ballance and Stout. With these gentlemen in the Cabinet, we trust the bigots will not be quite so spiteful to Freethinkers, but confess there are as good men amongst them as the pious orthodox.

We held our second social gathering last Wednesday, and invited Messrs. Stout and Ballance, who, unfortunately, could not come. It was a great success.

Again thanking you for reports, I am, &c.,

W. TYRRELL, Hon. Sec.

Wellington, Aug. 18, 1884.

WANGANUI FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

Mr. Buckrell has supplied the following report for the month:—

Sir,—Since my last usual report you are aware we have had the misfortune to lose the services of Mr. Jno. Ballance, who is attending his Parliamentary duties in Wellington. There can be no doubt his absence is a serious loss to us; yet, I am pleased to notice, members are taking more interest, and have expressed their determination to do all in their power to sustain the usually high character of our meetings.

Last Sunday, Mr. Jardine, late Secretary of the Wellington Association, gave us a lecture on "London, and its Slums." The two preceding Sundays, Mr. Donovan gave us a lecture in two parts, entitled "Why don't God kill the Devil?" The lecturer, commencing with Adam and Eve, touched briefly on the circumstances attending the killing of Abel by Cain, Noah and the deluge, life of David, and the crucifixion. Then he drew the attention of the audience to the religious wars that had taken place from the time of Constantine to the present, maintaining and showing that the Devil, during all these great calamities, was really at the bottom of them all, and there seemed no good reason whatever why God did not kill him before he had time to do all the mischief he had done in the world. Mr. Donovan has a large store of historical knowledge, which, combined with his national wit and quaint way of expression, makes his lectures highly instructive and amusing.

Our meetings still continue to be a source of attraction, which is largely due to the very excellent music provided for us every Sunday by Mr. King and his band.

Trusting my next communication will be longer and more explicit,

I remain, &c.,

J. J. BUCKRELL,

Sec. W.F.A.

THE PROSECUTION OF MR. CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

We take from the National Reformer the following account of the answers of the jury to the questions submitted, in the action against Mr. Bradlaugh for voting illegally:—

The Lord Chief Justice said: Now, gentlemen, here are the questions you will be good enough to answer in writing. No doubt you would like to retire.

The Foreman of the Jury: If your lordship pleases.

The Court adjourned at 1.50.

The Jury returned into court at 2.30, and retired to consider their verdict.

The Jury returned into court at 5.5.

The Jury handed a paper to his lordship.

The Lord Chief Justice: The first question is—"Was the Speaker, in fact, standing in front of the chair or sitting in the chair at the time when the defendant made and subscribed the oath?"