

interesting remarks, but we must reserve these for another opportunity, when we shall have occasion to bring together the opinions of several leading men on that subject.

#### CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCRIPTURE READERS' ASSOCIATION.

The eleventh annual meeting of this association, was held on the 20th of April,—the Bishop of London in the chair. The Rev. Dr. Spence read the Report. In order to present a definite and comprehensive view of the work in which the readers are engaged, a condensed summary was given of the number of visits made by them during the past year:—Hours actually employed in visiting, 181,801; number of families visited in the districts aided, as nearly as can be ascertained, 140,812; number of persons to whom the Scriptures have been read, 319,266. Number of persons actually visited:—Professing to belong to the Church of England, 243,999; other Protestant denominations, 41,360; the Church of Rome, 34,167; no religious communion, 85,871; professing to attend divine worship regularly, 122,321; ditto sometimes, 173,755; ditto never, 119,270. The balance sheet of the society, showed that the income during the past year amounted to £9,892, 14s. 6d., and the expenditure to £9,447, 19s. 8d., leaving a balance in hand of £444, 14s. 10d. The Bishop of Melbourne, Rev. C. Baring, Hon. and Rev. J. T. Pelham, Rev. D. Moore, Lord Robert Grosvenor, and Rev. T. R. Redwar, addressed the meeting.

#### HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY (CONGREGATIONAL.)

The following abstract of the proceedings of this society for the past year was submitted to the meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales:—

"The Home Missionary Society has persevered in its course with unabated vigour. In many an agricultural district the faithful missionary continues his zealous and self-denying labours amid great difficulties and much opposition. Puseyism, worldliness, ignorance, and vice, present obstacles all but insuperable to the progress of Evangelical truth. The only source of hope is found in the assurances of Him who hath promised that his word shall not return unto him void. Nor have destitute towns been overlooked. In many cases temporary aid has been afforded, by which congregations have been gathered and churches have been formed, which have ultimately become self-sustaining, and have united with their brethren in diffusing the gospel in the regions around them. Neither have the young been neglected. Many thousands of children have been collected in Sabbath and day schools, and are taught to lisp the praises of that Saviour who had said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, of such is the kingdom of God.' Numerous copies of the Scriptures have been circulated, and tens of thousands of tracts distributed. It only requires that the system of means adopted and pursued by the society could be extended throughout the country, and the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit be realised, and the moral wastes, over which the Christian philanthropist mourns, would soon become as the garden of the Lord. The income of the society during the past year has been £4,605, which, with the sum of £2,047, 14s. 3d. in legacies, makes a total of £6,653, 9s. 3d., and its expenditure £6,400."

#### RAGGED CHURCH AND CHAPEL UNION.

The second annual meeting of this society was held on Tuesday week in Exeter Hall,—the Earl of Shaftes-

bury in the chair. The proceedings having been opened with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Leask, Mr. J. A. Merrington, Hon. Secretary, read the report, which stated, that although the committee had not yet achieved great results, they had reason to feel gratified with the great encouragement they had experienced. The object of the Union was to provide places of worship for the destitute poor, and it was to be regretted that the metropolitan churches had not yet more cheerfully recognised it as an auxiliary in reclaiming the ignorant and criminal population, when it was remembered, that out of the whole population, one in every thirty-three were taken before the criminal courts. Although their funds were limited, they were, nevertheless, able to extend assistance in every instance where it was required. Their operations were not of an expensive nature, so that the money contributed was exclusively applied to the object for which it was intended. They had now established 30 preaching stations, affording accommodation to between 3000 and 4000 persons; of whom there was an average attendance of from 1,300 to 1,400, and it was believed that not five in a hundred of these persons would attend a place of public worship but for the facilities afforded by the Union. These stations embraced some of the most fashionable districts of the metropolis, since it happened that the extremes of poverty and wealth were in immediate contact in many neighbourhoods. From the reports of the missionaries at the different stations, they had the most gratifying evidence of the usefulness of the society, the poor people, in many instances, saying, "We like them gentlemen, they speak so plain, and make it so clear to us." They had erected a church at King Edward Street, Mile-end, New Town, capable of accommodating 300 or 400 persons. In addition to the public services in different places, various auxiliary efforts had arisen out of them, open-air preaching having been held in some places, provident societies commenced, Sunday-schools established and prospering, thousands of tracts delivered, lectures delivered, and the dwellings of the poor visited. The balance-sheet for the past year showed the receipt of £183 in subscriptions, giving, with the amount in hand, a fund of £480; the expenditure amounted to £315, leaving a balance in hand of £165. The Earl of Shaftesbury thought that the committee might have taken greater credit for the result of their exertions. It appeared that although they had many difficulties to overcome, they had accomplished a great deal, and he only hoped that no chilling influence would be thrown over their exertions to damp their ardour and zeal. He believed that through the agencies of the Union, large masses of the poor and ignorant might be reclaimed from a state of degradation and crime, and the successful method was that which adapted itself not only to their capacities, but to their tastes and habits. The Rev. Mr. Whitmore proposed the adopting of the report, which was agreed to. The meeting was then addressed by the Rev. Mr. Dickenson, the Rev. Mr. Leask, and other gentlemen. The proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the chairman.

#### RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

The fifty-sixth annual meeting was held on the 4th May, the Earl of Shaftesbury presiding.

The report gave a brief sketch of the society's operations during the year, in the printing and circulation of religious periodicals in various parts of the world,—as France, Germany, India, Burmah, China, Polynesia, Madagascar, Australia, &c. The benevolent income had attained an increase of £928. The grants amount to £10,187, 16s. 5d., being an excess over