

as a matter of course. The leading works on Mythology, including Cox's 'Mythology of the Aryan Nations,' Goldziher's 'Mythology of the Hebrews,' Lang's 'Myth, Ritual, and Religion,' and Frazer's 'Golden Bough,' need not be pressed for as Freethought works; but Freethinkers should encourage their introduction.

"6. If a library committee is disposed to meet Freethinkers with some of the liberality usually shown to theological readers, they should further urge the purchase of the 'International Library of Science and Freethought,' which begins with Mr. Bradlaugh's 'Genesis,' and includes Büchner's 'Mind in Animals,' and Haeckel's 'Pedigree of Man.' Mr. Bradlaugh's 'Theological Essays' have also an obvious right of entrance in a public library. The 'Bible Studies' of Mr. J. M. Wheeler, and the forthcoming work of our colleague 'Chilperic' on 'The Witness of Assyria' should further be recommended, and the works of Colonel Ingersoll may be asked for on the score of their great popularity. 'Modern Humanists,' by the editor of this journal, may be named as a rationalistic work; but the 'Social Science Series,' of which it is one, should be asked for bodily.

"There are of course innumerable other books which rationalists will want to see in public libraries; but the foregoing may most fitly be specialised in reply to the appeal we have sought to meet."

### **The Tyssen Library.**

THE Committee of Management of this Library, now placed at the Town Hall, Hackney, under the charge of the Vestry, for public use and reference, desire to draw attention to its interesting and valuable contents, believing that the very existence of such a treasury of local information is unknown to the majority of the inhabitants of the district. The Library owes its existence to the antiquarian research and untiring zeal of the late John Robert Daniel Tyssen, Esq., who was for many years Steward of the Manor of Hackney, and who in virtue of that position had unusual advantages for the collection of books, documents, maps, drawings, portraits, and other relics of Hackney in the olden time. After his death, his collection seems to have been somewhat dispersed, but by the generous and public-spirited action of his representatives is now practically re-united and placed at the disposal of all who feel an interest in these records of the past. The Library, as at present constituted, comes from four distinct sources, viz.: (1) the original gift to the Vestry by the Rev. Ridley Daniel Tyssen, and Amherst Daniel Tyssen, Esq., the sons and executors of the founder of the collection; (2) another large instalment of the same, the gift of W. A. Tyssen-Amherst, Esq., M.P.; (3) a number of books and pamphlets (probably also a portion of Mr. Tyssen's store), sent by Fredk. Daniel, Esq.; and (4) various books, documents, portraits, &c., which have been, and are constantly being added by private donors, and by the deposit of public reports and records.

The contents of the library are principally works of reference, both printed and manuscript, relating to Hackney, such as registers of births, marriages, and deaths, records of transfers of land and houses, maps and drawings of the extent and limit of estates and manors, some of which date back to the year 1253. There are fourteen volumes of armorial bearings of families connected with Hackney, each page bearing a hand-painted coat of arms of such families. The copies of wills, extracts from parish registers, inscriptions on tombs, deeds relating to Lordshold, Grumbold, Kingshold; documents from the Tower, Newcome manuscripts, and nine volumes of Hackney and other pedigrees, church notes, wills,

&c., afford an interesting study to all in search of family histories, and as a genealogical reference for these the collection is simply invaluable. For those who desire to dive into the daily life of our ancestors there are several volumes of newspaper cuttings with the date on each, the earliest of these bearing that of 1720. It would appear from these that highway robberies were almost of nightly occurrence, and that on the whole Hackney bore a most unenviable fame,—Cambridge Heath, which was then verily a heath, was frequently the scene of these, which were often accompanied by violence to the person. For lighter study there are six portfolios of engravings and water-colours of houses, churches, persons, and scenes in Hackney and neighbourhood in its younger days, most interesting to those who examine them. The portraits are especially numerous and interesting, including those of clergymen and ministers of various denominations, and of notable residents in Hackney and its neighbourhood, from the days when Clapton was the county seat of the Lords Brooke and Homerton, a fashionable residential suburb.

The ecclesiastical notes and records are of great value, including as they do minutes of vestries, documents respecting the separation of various parishes from the mother church at Hackney, drawings and plans of churches and chapels; and 500 vols. of sermons by Hackney clergymen and ministers dating from 1642. Since the library has been open to the public, many additions have been made to it, and it is hoped that residents in Hackney, and others who have anything of public interest relating to the district, will bestow such upon the library.

The library is open weekly on Tuesday, from seven until nine, under the care of a member of the Library Committee, who gladly affords any information at his command, and procures any volume or portfolio that may be desired. Originally it was decided that the order of a member of the Vestry was required for admission, but this is not insisted upon, the desire of the Committee being to have so interesting a collection better known, and more freely used.

GEO. CHAMBERS, *Honorary Secretary.*

### **An American Library.**

MR. L. H. STEINER, Litt. Dr., Librarian of "The Enoch Pratt Free Library" at Baltimore, recently contributed an historical sketch of the excellent institution under his charge, to a class in Social Science at the John Hopkins University. This has been issued as a nine-page pamphlet by the University authorities.

From this we gather that the Baltimore City authorities were notified on January 21, 1882, by Mr. Enoch Pratt that he contemplated the erection of "a fire-proof building capable of holding 200,000 volumes, and would, in addition, erect branches in four quarters of the city, and furthermore would give \$833,333, provided the city would grant and create an annuity of \$50,000 per annum for ever, payable quarterly, for the support and maintenance of a Free Public Library."

The offer was accepted; and after certain legal preliminaries were gone through, a Board of Trustees was placed in charge, and an executive officer appointed. The work of forming the Libraries was proceeded with, and the Central Library of 20,000 inaugurated on January 4, 1886. Within two months of this event four branches were made available. These each contained about three thousand volumes. Another branch was opened on November 4, 1888. The stock of books forming these libraries numbered, on January 1, 1890, as follows:—Central Library 51,492; and the five branches 29,478 vols., making a total of