

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

Scientific, Literary, & Social.

(By FREDERICK SESSIONS).

Educationalists talk much to-day about their "laddering" of our national training of boys and girls from Kindergarten to University. Evolution and development are assumed to be the one universal law of Nature and of Society. Even the human race, we are assured, sprang from a being now classified in text books as "Proto-man," and speculative philosophers announce that the next stage to our own in the upward process will prove a something to be labelled one day "Super-man." At the present time "Proto-man" has been placed in no museum, and no geographical discoverer has unveiled the abode of "Super-man." Meanwhile there are many interesting varieties of Homo Sapiens to be studied—enough to last our own span of life.

Three primary races there are, and only three, one eminent anthropologist assures us. The White, the Yellow, and the Black, or Caucasian, Mongol, Negro, who may have each sprung from an independent proto-man, but who never could have had a common origin. One primary race, asserts another even greater authority, is underlying all varieties, and is of sufficiently plastic nature to meet every change of climate and environment by gradual racial adaptation and constitutional change. For details of the argument on either side, almost any public library will furnish the necessary magazines and bulky tomes. I do not purpose traversing bog-land in pursuit of any scientific ignis fatuus. In dealing with unproven hypotheses, and the guesses of clever writers, an attitude of Agnosticism (which means confessed ignorance) is always safe and wise. Things may be as asserted, and we will accept them loyally when we actually know. Until we do we can afford to wait.

But about this Proto-man. What sort of looking creature is he alleged to have been? How shall we know him when we see him? If he is yet alive anywhere on earth—say in some remote recess of Central African or Australian forest? Was he, or is he, a cave dweller, or wholly arboreal? What colour was he? Was he smooth or hairy, and if hairy was his covering silky or woolly? Could he hunt and cook? Could his wife talk? Could his child cry, and did it suck its thumb? What were his pro-

further scientific evolution of humanity in the Creator's hands. Meanwhile, when we read the singular prognostications and guess-work of German visionaries, we fall back upon the hackneyed quotation from "A Midsummer Night's Dream":—

"Imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy
nothing
A local habitation and a name."

The New County High Sheriff.



MR. G. W. L. H. LOWSLEY WILLIAMS.

Gloucestershire Engineering Society.

HIGH-SPEED STEEL IN WORKSHOP PRACTICE.

A meeting of this Society was held at the Municipal Technical Schools on Tuesday night, when a paper was read by Mr. H. B. Buckle, B.Sc., Eng., of the Midland Railway Company.