

the house, that you may talk to him about the interests of his soul, and pray with him. So I went with her, and found the young man in a very low condition, I think in the last stage of consumption. We had a very profitable meeting; the father, mother, and daughter were present, and also some strangers. I saw him once since, when he was very low.

To the Editor of the Canada Temperance Advocate.

MR. EDITOR,—Please to allow me, through the *Advocate*, to plead with my brethren in the ministry to be more engaged in promoting the temperance reformation. We cannot expect that pure religion will prevail until all intoxicating drinks be suppressed.

God has commanded all to do good as they have opportunity; and if ministers of religion, and teachers of the rising generation, will advocate total abstinence, the result would be highly important.

We hear many saying, that we set a good example in using all the good creatures of God without abusing them. But, if Paul would deny himself the use of meat, provided it gave offence to his brethren, ought we not to deny ourselves the use of those articles which not only give offence to many, but which prove to be the means of destroying thousands annually.

Should this city, with its fifty thousand inhabitants, be destroyed by fire, what sympathy and deep regret would be manifested! but strong drink is doing more injury in the British Empire every year, than the loss of Montreal would be, with all its inhabitants. And are not all who use strong drink, as a beverage, accessory to this great calamity?

That all ministers, in church and state, with all teachers of the rising race, may wholly abstain from all that intoxicates, is the prayer of

THADDEUS OSGOOD.

Education.

EFFORTS AT SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT.

(From Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.)

Scarcely a day elapses in which we do not receive one or more documents connected with social progress. It would appear that, all over the country, in small as well as in large towns, efforts are making to establish and sustain institutions calculated to improve the mental condition of the people. In very many instances, these efforts make little or no newspaper appearance. Plans are matured quietly, and carried into execution unobtrusively. So far as we can observe, a number of the institutions thus originating are professedly for mutual improvement. The principle of employing hired lecturers succeeds only in connection with large establishments: where only a handful of persons are concerned, with little money to spare, the members are necessarily driven on their own capabilities—those who have a little more knowledge than the others volunteering to act as instructors. We are hopeful that plans of this kind will answer every reasonable purpose. In every locality there are persons who possess sufficient ability to become the advisers and teachers of others.

A library is the point round which the members of such institutions rally. An improvement society without a library of some kind, would be like a system without a sun. Fortunately, a library is not difficult to commence; and when once begun, it is surprising how soon a collection of books swells into importance. A mutual improvement society lately begun by a few ploughmen in Abingdonshire, has already, we are told, a pretty fair collection of books, and is otherwise doing well. And it could scarcely fail to do so. All that is wanted is a little energy, in union with a little common sense, and any dozen of rural labourers may instruct themselves in a manner which would not discredit much higher circles. The value of a small library of miscellaneous literature in a country district—say no more than a hundred volumes, mostly of a cheap class—cannot be too highly estimated.

Vacant hours in the evening, formerly spent in listless idleness, or degrading amusements, are devoted to reading, and by and by a sensible improvement in the morals of the neighbourhood is effected. A few days ago, when visiting the house of a parish clergyman in a mountainous, though agricultural district of Scotland, he mentioned that a remarkable change for the better had taken place in the morals of the neighbourhood within the last twelve months, in consequence of a small library which he had set on foot. Among the population, young and old, there was already created an eager thirst for reading, which unconsciously banished tastes and habits of a meaner kind.

On our way to the above district, we had occasion to pass through a small country town, where a reading-room on a peculiar plan had been established about a year ago, and was now in a flourishing condition. The way in which this useful engine of instruction had been brought into, and kept in existence, deserves notice. A small committee of management, who assumed the institution and direction of the establishment, procured the use of a public hall gratis; and this apartment was already furnished with a table and forms. Newspapers were supplied from divers individuals, also gratis. Gentlemen at a distance, who take an interest in the undertaking, send London and other papers daily; many papers have come even from America and India, the gift of natives of the town; in short, the quantity of papers which are contributed is immense. On the day of our visit to the room, from forty to fifty different papers—English, Scotch, Irish, Isle of Man, Jersey, British America, United States, Bombay, and Australian—lay on the table; the whole forming quite a feast to the various readers. We were told that the average attendance daily is about fifty persons, most of whom, however, make two or more visits. The only expenses incurred are for one or two newspapers, which it is considered necessary to have regularly and promptly, along with two magazines and a review, at half price. The providing of attendance, and fire in winter, with lights, forms also an unavoidable cause of outlay; but it is confidently expected that the voluntary contributions dropped into a box in the room, and money from the sale of papers, will leave only a trifle to be raised by subscription. Admission is free to all. The whole population are invited to come and read for nothing; and this is a boon of so much value, that one could reasonably have expected to hear of a greater attendance than that above alluded to. The pleasures and advantages of literary recreation, however, are everywhere slowly appreciated. Men accustomed to stand thirty years in the street with their hands in their pockets, do not all at once fall in with the fashion of reading newspapers or monthly periodicals. Everything in the way of mental improvement requires time; and perhaps, after all, little is to be expected from the old or middle-aged. The great thing is to prevent the young from forming bad habits; and this, to all appearance, is done by the reading-room which we speak of. As one means of improvement usually leads to another, a library has just been added, which will greatly promote the objects of the institution.

The account of the above reading-room will suggest what may be accomplished in thousands of situations where no place of resort exists, at least for popular improvement. There must be an incalculable number of newspapers, of one kind or other, wasted after being read. Why should a single paper be destroyed, while there are millions of people mentally famishing for want of any accessible literature? Every newspaper bears a stamp, and this gives it wings to fly over the whole country. Without expense, and with no other trouble than the tying of a piece of string, and the writing of a name, off it will go to any part of the United Kingdom, even to the obscurest hamlet. Hacknied and useless though it seem to the sender, with what delight is it received at its destination! A *Times*, read and tossed aside in a London counting-room, is new to the inhabitants of a village hundreds of miles distant, and is read with an avidity greater than that with which it was received wet from the press. We would, then, endeavour to press on all persons who have used newspapers at disposal, the politeness and benevolence of despatching them to parties who are in the way of seeing them. Little recommendation, however, will be necessary. Most people would be glad to find an outlet for what becomes a nuisance in their parlours. What we must incite people to do, is to get up reading-rooms in various parts of large towns, and also in small towns and villages, to which used papers could be gratuitously sent. Let the directors of these institutions make known their wants to all who are likely to assist them—natives of small towns living in cities or