

ment of such an institution impracticable at the present time, solely for the want of funds.

The Committee state that the plan proposed appeared at first sight very feasible, but the amount which the city of Portland is by law authorized to devote to such a purpose is only five thousand dollars, and although additional sums could probably be secured by the subscriptions of citizens, the Committee did not consider it advisable to attempt to found a free library on a basis so limited. The population of Portland is thirty thousand, and the demands of this large number of persons could hardly be met by any institution founded upon a small scale. In this view it is deemed expedient to relinquish, for the present at least, the idea of establishing a free public library, and the project falls through, because the laws of Maine do not permit the expenditure of money in this direction. The gentlemen composing the Committee, headed by John W. Chickering, as Chairman, do not, however, despair of ultimate success, but have appointed a sub-Committee, who are charged with the duty of conferring with parties who may be inclined to co-operate with the movement to an extent which will ensure the proper fulfilment of the original.

The state of New York is more favored than its sister states, in the matter of free Libraries. From the Hudson to the Lake, there is not a school district that is destitute of a set of books to which all may have access. This is one distinguishing peculiarity of our glorious common school system. A separate item in the literature fund provides for the disbursement of \$55,000 by the state, for the purchase of books for the use of district libraries; and it is also provided by statute that whenever the number of volumes shall exceed a given ratio, the voters in each district may appropriate all or any portion of the library money belonging to the district for the current year to the purchase of maps, globes, black-boards, or other scientific apparatus, for the use of the school. These are simply the school libraries, intended mainly for the young, and designed and selected for their use.

Of the great public libraries in this city, only one is ostensibly a free institution, but all are so accessible at a small rate of yearly payment, as to merit the name of free libraries. The growth of these establishments continues unchecked. Others of similar character are springing up around us.—*New York Publishers' Circular.*

INDIANA TOWNSHIP LIBRARIES.

During the past year the last third of our township libraries has been received and distributed. Of these libraries there are six hundred and ninety-one, containing three hundred and twenty-six volumes each; making in all over 225,000 volumes. \$70,000 will be expended this summer in the purchase of books to be added to the aforesaid number. These libraries scattered all over our State, if read, cannot fail of exerting an immense influence for good upon the literary and educational interests of the State. The only question in regard to them must be, Will they be used? So recent has been their introduction, that time has not been given as yet to collect statistics for a large portion of the State, but the following in reference to Township Libraries, furnished us by the State Superintendent, will be read with interest, and will afford means of judging with tolerable accuracy of the extent to which they are used and of the work they are doing:

"A brief historical sketch of the library feature of our system may very properly precede the financial exhibit of the receipts and expenditures. The law of 1825 imposed a tax of a *quarter of a mill* on the property, and an assessment of *twenty-five cents* on the poll, for the purpose of establishing a library in every civil township in the commonwealth. This tax was limited to the period of two years. The assessments for the aforesaid purpose, during these two years, amounted to \$186,327. The amount realized from that levy, was \$176,336, leaving a delinquency of only \$9,991. The revised school law of 1855 provides for a similar levy for only *one* year, which will amount, according to the data found on page 54 of the Auditor's Report, viz. \$301,858,474 of property, and \$178,877 polls, to the handsome sum of \$123,183. The uncertainty incident to such legislation is enough to damage the reputation and interests of even the best of causes. Were a similar policy adopted, relative to any other great interest of the State, it would be deemed unwise and ruinous in the extreme. It is, however, to be hoped that such expressions as the following will not be lost on the public mind: 'Nearly all the books have been drawn out as much as *twenty-five* times, many of them oftener, and quite a number of the books are not permitted to remain in the library an hour before they are withdrawn.' Says another: 'Our library is doing more good than any thing that has ever been done by the Legislature of the State. Great interest is manifested in it here.' The latter remark represents the state of things in a rural district in the oldest vicinity in the State, and the former pourtrays the condition of the library enterprise in a large river city in the 'pocket.'

"One township reports 1,230 volumes taken out in 3½ months; another 687 in 4 months; another 1,242 in 9 months; another 1,050 in 6 months; another 700 in 9 months; another 1,540 in 10 months; another 1,127 in 8½ months. No two of the said townships are in the

same county, and none of these libraries contained more than 330 volumes."

In reference to these libraries our State Superintendent remarks:

"Such an exposé would doubtless convince the most sceptical, that *one quarter of a mill* property and a *twenty-five cents* poll tax never accomplished so much for education in any other way, and that it better be left unrestricted in time, or the period of experiment be prolonged to three or four years. Nothing could be more disastrous, impolitic and unwise than the intermittent policy. Chills and fever are not very desirable, whether real or figurative, and their influence on the body politic, as far as educational interests are concerned, is as unhappy as the veritable tertian on the physical corporation.—*Indiana School Journal.*

HOW TO RISE—BIOGRAPHICAL EXAMPLES.

The great question of the age—the question which is asked on all hands by philanthropists, real or pretended—is, how are the people to be elevated? The extent of the popular ignorance, and of the popular debasement resulting from it, has long been acknowledged; yet evidences of the low moral condition of the majority of the humbler orders of society seem to accumulate day by day, in spite of all that is done by the schoolmaster and the Press to diffuse intelligence and create the desire of improvement—We are convinced that this last mentioned thing—the desire, the determination, to achieve independence and excellence—is the grand desideratum, the one thing most wanting, towards a satisfactory solution of the great question. It is vain for the philanthropist and the preacher to cry out, "Excelsior! Excelsior!" unless the cry meet a response in the hearts of those to whom it is directed. There is no excelling without climbing, and nobody can climb without an effort and a succession of efforts. What is wanting is the inducements, to make the necessary exertion. Let us see if we can supply some of these inducements, not, this time, by reasoning on the subject, but by the citation of some examples which, by shewing that it is possible for a man to raise himself in the social and intellectual scale, may stir up some of us to make at least a resolute and persevering attempt.

About a hundred and fifty years ago, there was running about the garden and grounds of the then Duke of Argyle, a child of eight years of age, the son of the duke's gardener. The little fellow was ignorant of everything but what grew in the garden or was to be seen in his father's cottage. His parents had no means of giving him an education; but a servant of the duke's household took him in hand out of compassion, and taught him his letters and the elements of reading. Reading grew into a habit, and with the habit of reading grew the desire and love of knowledge. It happened that while the boy was thus storing his mind with information of various kinds the duke commenced building a new wing to the mansion. The child looked on curiously at the work as it proceeded day by day, and seeing the architect make use of a rule and compasses to make his calculations, he inquired the meaning of the proceeding, and then learned what he did not know before, that there was such a science as arithmetic; and that he might know all about it in books. He managed to buy or borrow a book on arithmetic, and, setting himself to work, thoroughly mastered its contents. Hearing from the builders that there was another important science called geometry, he procured a book upon that, and soon mastered that also in like manner. His reading informed him that the best books on this science were written in Latin, whereupon he bought a Latin dictionary, and grammar and laboured diligently till he had acquired the language. Some one told him that there were excellent scientific works in the French tongue; so he got possession of a French dictionary and grammar, and successfully learned that language also. The curious part of the business is that the boy did all this while learning his trade as a gardener under his father between the ages of eight and eighteen, and without suspecting all along that he was doing anything extraordinary. He was eighteen years of age when the duke coming into the garden one day, saw a Latin copy of Sir Isaac Newton's celebrated "*Principia*" lying on the grass. Conceiving that it belonged to himself he gave orders that it should be carried back to the library. The young gardener stepped forward—

"Your Grace the book belongs to me."

"To you!" said his Grace; "do you understand geometry,—Latin, Newton?"

"I know a little of them," said the youth with an air of simplicity arising from a profound ignorance of his own knowledge and talents.

The duke, an accomplished man, with a turn for the exact sciences, commenced a conversation on the subject of mathematics. He asked him several searching questions, and was astonished with the force, the accuracy, and the simplicity of his answers. He then questioned him on his past life, and learned from the lad's own lips the details given above. There was nothing like boasting in the young man's narrative, and no apparent consciousness that he deserved praise for what he had done; it only seemed to him a natural consequence that whoever could read might learn whatever he chose.