

to books. Many a man has had through life to mourn the day when, in the impressive time of his youth, he met with a bad book. The mind becomes enfeebled, the moral tone lowered, and the life corrupted, by access to vicious literature in early life.—*Christian Home Life.*

IV. Papers on Libraries and Books.

1. PRACTICAL VALUE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

A teacher who is conversant with the philosophy of education perfectly recognizes the fact, that there are auxiliary agencies outside of the regular work of the school-room which are of great importance in assisting him to train the minds and hearts of his pupils; and among these agencies a well-selected school library will be found to hold a prominent place. Any teacher, whose scholars have been fortunate enough to have access to a collection of good books, will readily agree to this; and indeed hardly anybody will dispute it. But we, nevertheless, find very few school libraries; in fact they are exceedingly few and far between. Now, there are several reasons for this, one of the principal of which is, that teachers generally have too lofty an idea of the matter. I propose in this brief article to lay before those of the teachers who read our *Journal* a few practical suggestions in relation to school libraries, which, it is hoped, may be productive at least of some reflection upon the subject. It is one of great interest to me, for during the period of my experience as a teacher, I have hardly ever been in charge of a school where there was not a library; and I can also speak from experience of the beneficial effects upon scholars.

And first, a few words upon the results to be expected: We all know that one great evil to be dreaded in schools is the habit of routine, into which scholars so readily fall—the inclination to learn just what is set down for them, and to consider everything once recited as something to be dismissed from their minds—a *receptive* habit of mind, if I may so express it, waiting to have knowledge poured into their minds, instead of raising their own mental powers to the best advantage, and by that very use, learning constantly to use them better. Every wide-awake teacher knows this tendency perfectly, and accordingly sets himself at work to counteract it. He knows very well that the great aim of education is to cultivate and draw forth the powers of the mind—to awaken a consciousness of its own strength, and to teach the pupil *how* to learn. In aid of this he draws constantly upon the exhaustless stores of his well-trained intellect, and by every means in his power he assists the healthy growth of the intellect of his scholars. Now, a collection of well-chosen books are so many silent helpers in this work—they are doing quietly the work of the teacher, and he knows and appreciates their value. Again, it is of great benefit to establish a habit of reading in youth. Many young persons have been kept from vicious amusements by a taste for reading, and have been saved from follies into which others have fallen, not so much from perverted inclinations as from that restlessness of youth which *must* be occupied in something, and for want of some safe employment turns to that which is hurtful. The general information, too, of scholars is of course greatly increased by reading—a matter of much importance, as their range of thought is correspondingly widened.

But I am aware that many who will agree to all this, will still be disposed to think that the establishment of a library for their schools would be next to impossible. Well, it is not such a difficult matter. Let us see. How many boys are there who could not easily get fifty cents or a dollar to buy a book? Now, let ten, fifteen, or twenty boys and girls contribute no more than what each would be willing to spend to purchase a single volume, and lo, the result is a library! Instead of each one having the reading of a single book he has the reading of twenty. It is only the old principle of association, of joint effort, and with this advantage—that the efforts of each one are multiplied, as it were, by the whole number; in fact, the matter only needs to be understood to be appreciated. There is not a school in the Country where a beginning may not be made—a beginning, too, which will, in all probability, lead to valuable results. A dozen well-chosen books in a school will be enough to awaken a taste for reading, which will be very likely to lead to the procuring of another dozen, and so on indefinitely.

It is, however a matter of great importance that books for a school library should be selected with judgment. They must not be too light nor too heavy. They *must* be interesting, or those for whose benefit they are intended will not read them—a fact of which very many excellent people who have had the selection of Sabbath-school libraries have seemed oblivious. Any well-informed teacher will be able to make such a selection by a little care and effort. In some cases, where it does not seem easy to awaken an interest in the subject, the purchase of a half a dozen volumes by the teacher, to be loaned to the scholars, would doubtless be followed by the desired effect.

There are many districts where a small amount of money could be raised by subscription, sufficient to give a good start to a library; but the best method, and one which is available almost everywhere, is that referred to above—union of resources. It is to be hoped that teachers will give more attention to the matter than they have hitherto done. There is no good reason why there should not be a library in every well-established school in the Country—a condition of things which would cause our worthy and indefatigable Superintendent, with whom the matter has been one of deep attention, to rejoice sincerely—knowing, as he does, how much it would raise the character and efficiency of the whole educational system of the Country.—*D. C. S., in California Teacher.*

2. LORD STANLEY ON THE VALUE OF FREE LIBRARIES.

Amongst the more marked and better tendencies of the present age is a disposition to place those amenities and conveniences of civilization which before were accounted to be only for the wealthy few, within the reach of the humble many. This is seen in the means of locomotion, both in town and country, in many of our higher amusements, and last, and perhaps greatest, in our cheapened literature. Yet fabulously cheap as really good books have become, something more remains to be done. So long as the intellect remains sound and clear, the appetite for reading, either for instruction or entertainment never ceases. Who is there that has not seen the placid and venerable countenance of old age, lighted up with an evening ray of pleasure, as, with spectacles on nose, the page of some old and favorite divine, or some work of modern discovery, making the researches of youth seem obsolete was perused; or possibly once again returning to the story of Robiusion Crusoe, which charmed half a century ago. But it is more particularly for the literary requirements of youth and middle age that something beyond cheap books is required. However low priced the book may be, the large private library remains, and ever must remain, beyond the reach of the working man. How is this to be remedied? Seemingly by means of the establishment of free libraries in large towns and cities, and such as we hope yet to see founded in Montreal. Of these England gives us several noble examples, and amongst the latest is the Birmingham Central Free Library, which has been inaugurated during the meeting of the British Association in that town. On that occasion Lord Stanley, eldest son of the Earl of Derby, and who is one of the most promising young men amongst the English aristocracy, and indeed, amongst the numerous educated class in Britain, said many good things, and of which, as his observations are almost equally applicable to a large proportion of our community as to that of Birmingham (Eng.), we here produce some extracts.

Speaking of the necessity of these free libraries in the midst of a populous town he says:

"And yet, when one comes to think of it, where was there ever a state of things in which (to drop the educational view of the subject for a moment) rational amusement was more needed than in these vast industrial centres? Consider our climate; look at the country we have round about; and what I say of this place applies equally to Manchester, to Glasgow, or any other great manufacturing town. Take the case of a man who lives it may be alone in a lodging, or with his family in a small house. I do not take an extreme case; I do not speak of a very poor man. I suppose he may have all that is requisite for decency, and even for some degree of comfort. When his day's work is over, where is he to go? It is not cheerful for a man to oscillate backwards and forwards with the regularity of a pendulum twelve times a week from his bedroom to the workshop in the morning, and from the workshop to his bedroom in the evening. It is not pleasant—at any rate it is not much to my taste—to walk about the streets of a manufacturing town after dark, especially on a drizzling November evening, and in an atmosphere which, notwithstanding the Smoke Prevention Act, can never be quite pure.—(Hear, hear.) Cheap clubs may do much; I hope, as I think, that we shall have many more of them. Still at the present time very few of them exist. There seem to be many practical difficulties in the way of their establishment, and as a matter of fact they are institutions for a single class; and your Mayor has properly and wisely reminded you that an institution of this kind is not for the exclusive benefit of the working or any other class, it is for the benefit of all classes impartially.—(Hear, hear.) I say, without fear of contradiction, that a free reading-room, and, what I regard as more important, a free lending library, are conveniences for the poorer part of the community for which a real demand exists, and which, when once they have been fairly set on foot, will not be given up for want of support.—(Hear, hear.) Probably there was never a larger number than at the present time of educated persons of comparatively small means. The addition to the local burdens by the establishment of such institutions as this is nothing. The addition to general enjoyment is not insignificant; and when I say to