

didate. It will be accompanied by a certificate from the Society setting forth the special character of the prize, and the various certificates for which it was granted. Several friends of the Society have authorized the Council to offer additional prizes for Practical Mechanics; Animal Physiology in relation to Health; Agriculture; Botany; Mining and Metallurgy; Political, Social and Domestic Economy; and English History and Literature. The Council gratefully appreciate the thoughtful interest which His Royal Highness our President has always manifested in the labours of the Society, and the liberal encouragement to the work of self-instruction which the valuable prize now offered will give to the intelligent and persevering student. To win that prize will be the highest distinction within the reach of the candidates for the Society's rewards.

Evening Schools and Classes.

The importance of evening schools and classes is now universally recognized; and though the provision for those objects is, as yet, in no adequate proportion to the want, it appears from the report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the state of popular education in England, made in the present year, that there now exist 2,036 evening schools, containing 80,996 scholars, in which the instruction is almost entirely elementary. The school life of those children whose parents are employed in manual labour must ever terminate at a very early age, and the tendency of late years has been rather to accelerate than retard the removal from school to work, and to shorten the duration of school life.

It appears from the report of the Commissioners that 65 per cent. of the children in elementary public schools are between the ages of 6 and 12; few go before 6, very few before 3; that attendance diminishes rapidly after 11, and ceases almost entirely at 13, only 5 per cent. of the children at our day-schools being over that age.

Very much of the instruction acquired before 13 in the day-school will be lost before 18 in the workshop, if not preserved and extended in the night-school; and in proportion as the day-school is extended, will be the growth of a consciousness on the part of our young people that the night-school should complete what the day-school has begun. It has been found, as the result of careful inquiry by the Commissioners, that two millions and a half of children are now on the books of week-day schools, and that upwards of two millions of the children of working men are receiving education on week days. Year by year, hundreds of thousands of children exchange school for labour, and yet of this vast array our night-schools provide for less than a hundred thousand young persons. Can Christian philanthropy present higher aims than the intelligent and religious teaching and training of these adolescents during those years when the passions are strong, and the allurements to vicious gratifications well nigh overwhelming. And without neglecting its other objects, the Society has sought to encourage every suitable agency for the systematic instruction of the adult student, rewarding the meritorious by certificates of excellence, distinguishing the most successful by prizes of a substantial character, and affording to all the opportunity, by judiciously conducted examina-

tions, of measuring their strength, discerning their short-comings, and obtaining at length the just rewards of persevering study.

Sanitary Improvements.

The improvement of the metropolis, by affording a complete system of sewerage, and an ample supply of pure water; by diminishing atmospheric impurities; by embanking the river; and by facilitating locomotion within and between the several quarters of the wide area of the London of our day, has frequently occupied the attention of our Society, and been forced upon the notice of the public by papers and discussions in this room. In a single decade, 400,000 persons have been added to the population of the metropolis. Its thoroughfares are thronged, not only by its own population thus increased, and by the numerous passengers who daily arrive at and leave the termini of its various railways, but by the countless productions which are either consumed within its borders, or constitute its exports and imports. The magnitude of its commerce is attested by its railways, its docks, and its shipping; and it may suffice to state here that in the year 1860, nearly 20,000 vessels, of an average tonnage exceeding five millions of tons, entered inwards or cleared outwards to or from our colonies and foreign countries, and upwards of 27,000 vessels of an aggregate tonnage exceeding four millions of tons, entered or left with cargoes from or for places within the United Kingdom.

Locomotion.

Notwithstanding the great rapidity with which long journeys by sea or land may now be performed, so that a traveller may reach Dublin from London in 12 hours, London from Geneva in 26 hours, and Liverpool from New York in eight or nine days, it requires now as much time to cross the metropolis, whether from north to south, or east to west, as when the journey from Dublin to London occupied three days, from Geneva to London six days, and from Liverpool to New York six weeks or two months.

The thoroughfares and means of locomotion which sufficed for 1851, are wholly unequal to the wants of 1861; and to provide adequate accommodation for the transit of the metropolitan traffic, involves questions which have hitherto received no satisfactory solution. In a few years districts have been added to the metropolis which would of themselves constitute large cities, and this extension proceeds in an accelerated ratio.

Meanwhile, considerable progress has been made in the construction of subways, which were regarded as visionary in 1851, when a discussion took place in this room on a proposal for combining with the embankment of the Thames a terraced highway with a railway arcade and tunnels for water, sewage and gas. What practical difficulties might prevent the completion of such an undertaking, I know not; but whether regarded for its combinations, its grandeur, or its usefulness, such a work would rank with those structures which, more than aught besides, even in their ruins, testify to the greatness and power of the Roman Empire.

Cotton.

There are few subjects to which the Council has more perseveringly directed the attention of our