

these. On the contrary, difficulties often prove to be a beneficent discipline, since they stimulated endeavour and called forth the power to breast and conquer them. If that institution in the course of its existence should have been found helpful to some who had passed middle life or arrived at old age, to some to whom ill-health or sorrow had brought weary hours, it would always redound to the credit and honour of its founders that by its aid the monotony of these hours had been lightened or their tediousness beguiled. The greatest of meditative poets, Wordsworth, had said in one of his finest sonnets—

Books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good,
Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness may grow.

Assuredly an intimate communion with the minds of the wisest and most gifted of our race rarely failed to bring with it not only patience and hope wherewith to meet the inevitable cares and disappointments of life, but also fortitude to bear its worst calamities.

On the motion of Mr. J. W. Southern, seconded by Mr. J. H. Nodal, Mr. Ireland was warmly thanked for his address.

Mr. Ireland, in responding, called on Mr. Sutton to present him with "the greatest book in the world, Shakspeare's plays, a book that will live to the end of the world." A copy of the "Leopold Shakspeare" was then lent to Mr. Ireland.

Alderman Dr. Russell proposed, and Mr. Reynolds seconded, a vote of thanks to the Mayor, which was passed.

Opening of the Stoke Newington (London) Library.

SPEECH BY MR. PASSMORE EDWARDS.

ON Saturday, July 23rd, Mr. J. Passmore Edwards opened the new premises of the Stoke Newington Public Library, which have been erected in Church Street to replace the small hall at the Assembly Rooms, in Defoe Road, where the library has hitherto been situated. The new building is a handsome structure of red brick, with buff-stone "dressings." It contains a spacious lending library, a news and magazine room, librarian's office and residence, and other accommodation. The site was purchased from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for £1,000; £2,621 is to be expended on the fabric and £379 in furniture. Space is provided for 40,000 volumes, the number of books at present being about 6,000, including a gift of 1,000 volumes from Mr. Edwards. The architects were Messrs. Brigidman and Goss, and the builder Mr. W. M. Dabbs. There was a large gathering of the residents of the neighbourhood at the opening proceedings, over which Prebendary Shelford (Rector of Stoke Newington) presided. The Chairman gave Mr. Edwards a hearty welcome, and called upon him to open the library.

Mr. Edwards, who was heartily cheered, then proceeded to address the assembly. He congratulated them on the light and spacious premises that had been erected. He said he had never seen a better return for money expended. This was pre-eminently an educational age. Unlike those who had been contesting at the recent elections, those who availed themselves of free libraries were all victors and none were vanquished. Many people were apprehensive that we were going a little too fast, and that what were called the "people" were getting power a little too rapidly. Then by all means let them educate the

people. Let them have more public libraries. Let the people be a reading people. A reading people would be a thoughtful people, and a thoughtful people would take care of the Empire. If it was desirable to have splendid men and chaste women, how could they be produced better than by institutions of this kind? By having good men we should have a great nation; and by having a great nation we should have a great Empire. He believed that the greatest fact in human history at the present time—and he did not speak of it with any particular pride—was the British Empire. This world had seen great Empires which had flourished, and then passed away. If the British Empire was to be maintained, it must be by the quality rather than by the quantity of those who composed it. If we had improved citizens we should have a great nation which would be the centre of a great Empire. One thing about institutions of the kind which most pleased him was that they were especially for the people. Nowadays, the individual was fast losing himself in the community. We were approaching a time when all must be for everyone and everyone for all. Everyone who contributed, in however small a degree, to the rates of that district, was entitled to the use of that library and to feel that he had a share in it. Some one might say "We have only one library in the midst of a population of 30,000 or 40,000 people." Then they must have other libraries. Free education had recently been established. Why should we not have free libraries on a similar system? Why should not the parish and the nation each contribute its quota? He saw no reason whatever. If that were done they would soon have three or four libraries in the district. He never went to the seaside, or listened at the opera, or read Milton, Scott, or Dickens, without wishing that the people too might participate in such pleasures. If they were in the East of London, he should probably have told them that the East had great claims on the West. The waste in the West almost corresponded with its wealth. But his hearers were not in the East. They were in a comparatively well-to-do district, and he could not appeal to the West on their behalf. But he appealed to Stoke Newington. The library wanted some thousands more volumes, and it looked to the district to supply them.

The Rev. J. D. Kewer Williams moved that the warmest thanks of the meeting be given to Mr. Edwards for his presence and munificent gift.

Mr. Eve, in seconding, mentioned that Mr. Edwards had given 40,000 volumes to different libraries, and, not satisfied with that generosity, he had built a library as well. It had therefore been unanimously agreed amongst them that, if possible, he above anyone else should be asked to open this library.

The vote having been carried by acclamation, was acknowledged by Mr. Edwards, who then declared the library open, and the company dispersed.

Opening of the Otley (Works) Free Library.

SPEECH BY THE REV. DR. ROBERT COLLYER.

ON Tuesday, August 2nd, the formal dedication and handing over of a library and free school which has been built, furnished, and endowed at the sole expense of Mr. Robinson Gill, stone merchant, of New York, and formerly a resident in the district, took place in the presence of a numerous gathering, and was accompanied by much rejoicing on the part of the inhabitants of Timble Great, Timble Little, and the hamlets