

in the path of self-reliance, how generally would young men grow up with the practical conviction that to their own advancing intelligence and virtues must they mainly look to work out their own social welfare!"

This admirable advice was not lost. One institution after another embraced the plan, and preliminary savings-banks were shortly established in connection with the principal mechanics' institutes throughout Yorkshire. Those established at Huddersfield, Halifax, Bradford, Leeds, and York were exceedingly successful. The penny banks established at Halifax consisted of a central bank and seven subordinate branches. The number of members, and the average amount of the sums deposited with them, continued to increase from year to year. Fourteen penny banks were established at Bradford: and after the depositors had formed the habit of saving in the smaller banks, they transferred them in bulk to the ordinary savings-bank.

Thirty-six penny banks were established in and around Glasgow. The committee, in their report stated that they were calculated "to check that reckless expenditure of little sums which so often leads to a confirmed habit of wastefulness and improvidence;" and they urged the support of the penny banks as the best means of extending the usefulness of the savings-banks. The penny bank established at the small country town of Farnham is estimated to have contributed within a few years a hundred and fifty regular depositors to the savings-bank of the same place. The fact that as large a proportion as two-thirds of the whole amount deposited is drawn out within the year shows that penny banks are principally used as places of safe deposit for very small sums of money, until they are wanted for some special object, such as rent, clothes, furniture, the doctor's bill, and such-like purposes.

Thus the penny bank is emphatically the poor man's purse. The great mass of the deposits are paid in sums not exceeding sixpence, and the average of the whole does not exceed a shilling. The depositors consist of the very humblest members of the working-class, and by far the greatest number of them have never before been accustomed to lay by any portion of their earnings. The Rev. Mr. Clarke, of Derby, who took an active interest in the extension of these useful institutions, has stated that one-tenth of the whole amount received by the Derby penny bank was deposited in copper money, and a large portion of the remainder in threepenny and fourpenny pieces.

It is clear, therefore, that the penny bank reaches a class of persons of very small means, whose ability to save is much less than that of the highly paid workman, and who, if the money were left in their pockets, would in most cases spend it in the nearest public-house. Hence, when a penny bank was established at Putney, and the deposits were added up at the end of the first year, a brewer, who was on the committee, made the remark, "Well, that represents thirty thousand pints of beer *not drunk*."

At one of the penny banks in Yorkshire, an old man in receipt of parish outdoor relief was found using the penny bank as a place of deposit for his pennies until he had accumulated enough to buy a coat. Others save to buy an eight-day clock, or a musical instrument, or for a railway trip.

But the principal supporters of the penny banks are boys, and this is their most hopeful feature; for it is out of boys that men are made. At Huddersfield many of the lads go in bands from the mills to the penny banks; emulation as well as example urging them on. They save for various purpose—one to buy



a chest of tools; another, a watch; a third, a grammar or a dictionary.

One evening a boy presented himself to draw one pound ten shillings. According to the rules of the penny bank, a week's notice must be given before any sum exceeding twenty shillings can be withdrawn, and the cashier demurred to making the payment. "Well," said the boy, "the reason's this; mother can't pay her rent; I'm goin' to pay it, for, as long as I have owt, she shall hev' it." In another case, a youth drew twenty pounds to buy off his brother who had enlisted. "Mother frets so," said the lad, "that she'll break her heart if he isn't bought off; and I can not bear that."

Thus these institutions give help and strength in many ways, and, besides enabling young people to keep out of debt and honestly to pay their way, furnish them with the means of performing kindly and generous acts in times of family trial and emergency. It is an admirable feature of the ragged schools that almost every one of them has a penny bank connected with it, for the purpose of training the scholars in good habits which they most need; and it is a remarkable fact that in one year not less than £8880 was deposited, in 25,637 sums, by the scholars connected with the Ragged-school Union. And when this can be done by the poor boys of the ragged schools, what might not be accomplished by the highly paid operatives and mechanics of England?

But another capital feature in the working of penny banks, as regards the cultivation of prudent habits among the people, is the circumstance that the example of boys and girls depositing their spare weekly pennies has often the effect of drawing their parents after them. A boy goes on for weeks paying his pence, and

taking home his pass-book. The book shows that he has a "ledger folio" at the bank expressly devoted to him; that his pennies are all duly entered, together with the respective dates of their deposits; that these savings are not lying idle, but bear interest at two and a half per cent. per annum, and that he can have them restored to him at any time, if under twenty shillings, without notice; and if above twenty shillings, then after a week's notice has been given.

The book is a little history in itself, and can not fail to be interesting to the boy's brothers and sisters, as well as to his parents. They call him "good lad," and they see he is a well-conducted lad. The father, if he is a sensible man, naturally bethinks him that if his boy can do so creditable a thing, worthy of praise, so might he himself. Accordingly, on the next Saturday night, when the boy goes to deposit his threepence at the penny bank, the father often sends his shilling.

Thus a good beginning is often made, and a habit initiated, which, if persevered in, very shortly exercises a most salutary influence on the entire domestic condition of the family. The observant mother is quick to observe the effects of this new practice upon the happiness of the home; and in course of time, as the younger children grow up and earn money, she encourages them to follow the elder boy's example. She herself takes them by the hand, leads them to the penny bank, and accustoms them to invest their savings there. Women have even more influence in such matters than men; and where they do exercise it, the beneficial effects are much more lasting.

One evening, a strong, muscular mechanic appeared at the Bradford Savings-bank in his working-dress, bringing with him three children, one of them in his arms. He placed on the counter their deposit-books,



which his wife had previously been accustomed to present, together with ten shillings, to be equally apportioned among the three. Pressing to his bosom the child in his arms, the man said, "Poor things! they have lost their mother since they were here last; but I must do the best I can for them." And he continued the good lesson to his children which his wife had begun, bringing them with him each time to see their little deposits made.

There is an old English proverb which says, "He that would thrive must first ask his wife;" but the wife must not only let her husband thrive, but help him, otherwise she is not the "helpmeet" which is as needful for the domestic comfort and satisfaction of the working-man, as of every other man who undertakes the responsibility of a family. Women form the moral atmosphere in which we grow when children; and they have a great deal to do with the life we lead when we become men. It is true that the men may hold the reins; but it is generally the women who tell them which way to drive. What Rousseau said is very near the truth: "Men will always be what women make them."

Not long ago, Mr. Sikes encountered in a second-class carriage a well-dressed workman travelling from Sheffield to Glasgow, during holiday times, to see his mother. "I am glad," said Mr. Sikes, "to find a workman traveling so great a distance for a purpose like that." "Yes," said the man, "and I am glad to say that I can afford to do it." "And do many of the workmen employed in your workshop save money?" asked Mr. Sikes. "No," said the other, "not more than about two in the hundred. The spare earnings of the others go, not to the savings-banks, but to the drink-shops." "And when did you begin to save?"

"When I was no bigger than *that*," indicating the height of a little boy: "the first money I saved was in a penny bank, and I have gone on saving ever since."

Such being the influence of early practice and example, we are glad to find that Economy is now being taught at public schools. The Rev. Mr. Crallan, of the Sussex County Asylum, has long taught lessons of thrift to poor boys and girls. He urges the establishment of penny banks in connection with savings-banks, in all elementary schools. He wisely contends that simple lessons on money, its nature, its value, and its uses, together with the various duties of giving, spending, and saving, would have a vast influence on the rising generation.

The practice of teaching children provident habits has been adopted for about eight years in the National Schools of Belgium, the School Board of Ghent being convinced of the favorable influence that saving has upon the moral and material well-being of the working-classes, and believing that the best means of causing the spirit of economy to penetrate their habits is to teach it to the children under tuition, and to make them practice it.

It is always very difficult to teach any thing new to adults, and especially lessons of thrift to men who are thriftless. Their method of living is fixed, Traditional and inveterate habits of expenditure exist among them. With men it is the drinking-shop; with women it is dress. They spend what they earn, and think nothing of to-morrow. When reduced to a state of distress, they feel no shame in begging; for the feeling of human dignity has not yet been sufficiently developed in them.

With children it is very different. They have no in-



veterate habits to get rid of. They will, for the most part, do as they are taught. And they can be taught economy, just as they can be taught arithmetic. They can, at all events, be inspired by a clever teacher with habits of economy and thrift. Every child has a few pence at times. The master may induce them to save these for some worthy purpose. At Ghent, a savings-bank has been introduced in every school, and the children deposit their pennies there. It is introduced into the paying schools as well as the free schools; for habits of thrift are as useful to men and women of the richer as of the poorer classes. The results of the lessons on economy have been highly satisfactory. The children belonging to the schools of Ghent have accumulated eighteen thousand pounds, which are deposited in the State Savings-bank, at three per cent. interest. This system is spreading into Holland, France, and Italy. It has also, to a certain extent, been adopted in this country. Thus Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Great Ilford, and the London Orphan Asylum, all show specimens of school banks; and we trust that, before long, they will be established in every school throughout the kingdom.

It will be obvious, from what has been said, that the practice of economy depends very much upon the facilities provided for the laying-by of small sums of money. Let a convenient savings-bank be provided, and deposits gradually flow into it. Let a military savings-bank be established, and private soldiers contrive to save something out of their small pay. Let penny banks be opened, and crowds of depositors immediately present themselves, even the boys of the ragged schools being able to put into them considerable sums of money. It is the same with school banks, as we have seen from the example of the school-children of Ghent.

Now, fifteen years ago, this country was very insufficiently provided with savings-banks for the people. There were then many large towns and villages altogether unprovided with them. Lancashire had only thirty savings-banks for upward of two millions of people. The East Riding of Yorkshire had only four savings-banks. There were fifteen counties in the United Kingdom which had not a single savings-bank. There were only about six hundred savings-banks for about thirty millions of people. These were open only for two or three hours in the week; some were open for only four hours in the month. The workman who had money to save had to carry his spare shillings in his pocket for some time before he could lay them by; and in the mean time he might be exposed to constant temptations to spend them. To keep his shillings safe, he must have acquired the *habit* of saving, which it was the object of savings-banks to train and establish.

Dr. Guthrie, in his book on ragged schools, published in 1860, said, "How are our manufacturing and handicraft youth situated? By public-houses and spirit-shops they are surrounded with innumerable temptations; while to many of them savings-banks are hardly known by name. Dissipation has her nets drawn across every street. In many of our towns, sobriety has to run the gauntlet of half a dozen spirit-shops in the space of a bow-shot. These are near at hand—open by day, and blazing by night, both on Sabbath and Saturday. Drunkenness finds immediate gratification; while economy has to travel a mile, it may be, for her savings-bank; and that opens its door to thrift but once or twice a week.

Many suggestions had been made by friends of the poorer classes, whether it might not be possible to establish a more extended system of savings-banks



throughout the country. As long ago as 1807, Mr. Whitbread introduced a bill into Parliament for the purpose of enabling small deposits to be made at an office to be established in London; the money to be remitted by the postmasters of the districts in which the deposits were made. The bill further contemplated the establishment of a National Assurance Society, by means of which working-people were to be enabled to affect assurances to an extent not exceeding two hundred pounds, and to secure annuities to an amount not exceeding twenty pounds. Mr. Whitbread's bill was rejected, and nothing came of his suggestions.

The exertions of Sir Rowland Hill having given great vitality to the post-office system, and extended its usefulness as a public institution in all directions, it was next suggested that the money-order offices (which were established in 1838) might be applied for the purpose of depositing as well as for transmitting money. Professor Hancock published a pamphlet on the subject in 1852. In November, 1856, Mr. John Bullar, the eminent counsel—whose attention had been directed to the subject by the working of the Putney Penny Bank—suggested to the post-office authorities the employment of money-order offices as a means of extending the savings-bank system; but his suggestion did not meet with approval at the time, and nothing came of it. Similar suggestions were made by other gentlemen—by Mr. Hume, by Mr. M'Corquodale, by Captain Strong, by Mr. Ray Smee, and others.

But it was not until Mr. Sikes, of Huddersfield, took up the question, that these various suggestions became embodied in facts. Suggestions are always useful. They arouse thinking. The most valuable are never lost, but at length work themselves into facts. Most

inventions are the result of original suggestions. Some one attempts to apply the idea. Failures occur at first; but with greater knowledge, greater experience, and greater determination, the suggestion at last succeeds.

Post-office savings-banks owe their success, in the first place, to the numerous suggestions made by Mr. Whitbread and others; next to Sir Rowland Hill, who, by establishing the branch post-offices for the transmission of money, made the suggestions practicable; next to Mr. Sikes, who took up the question in 1850, pushed it, persevered with it, and brought it under the notice of successive chancellors of the exchequer; and lastly to Mr. Gladstone, who, having clearly foreseen the immense benefits of post-office savings-banks, brought in a bill and carried it through Parliament in 1861.

The money order department of the post-office had suggested to Mr. Sikes, as it had already done to other observers, that the organization already existed for making post-office savings-banks practicable throughout the kingdom. Wherever the local inspector found that as many as five money-orders were required in a week, the practice was to make that branch of the post-office a money-order office. It was estimated that such an office was established on an average within three miles of every working-man's door in the kingdom. The offices were open daily. They received money from all comers, and gave vouchers for the amounts transmitted through them. They held the money until it was drawn, and paid it out on a proper voucher being presented. The post-office was, in fact, a bank for the transmission of money, holding it for periods of from twenty-four hours to weeks and months. By enabling it to receive more money from more de-