

is no such registry. The births are only known by the baptisms, the records of which are handed in to the prothonotary by some of the clergymen with great unpunctuality; and there are several large societies of christians who do not practice infant baptism at all. The deaths are only known by the interments at the cemeteries; where many bodies are buried from outlying districts, while many of the city dead may be interred elsewhere. There is no officer to analyze even these imperfect returns, and no official *resumés* of them are presented to the public. We must, however, except the Province of Nova Scotia from condemnation for this uncivilized neglect. They have had there for three or four years, established by law, a good system of registration of vital statistics, under the able and careful management of Mr. Costley, the secretary of the Board.

In Massachusetts, there is besides a "Board of State Charities," which collects all the statistics of crime, insanity, destitution and the like, and makes full reports on all the institutions which grapple with these evils. The Board yearly discusses some of the subjects presented in the statistics, giving suggestions on the working of existing laws and plans, and proposing new enactments or systems of management. These reports are among the most valuable public documents which have ever been issued, and deserve much greater attention in this and other countries, than they have yet received. They go far towards justifying the boast of the Bostonians, that the Old Bay State coins the ideas for the continent.

It would be a fit question for our legislators to discuss, whether a similar board could be established for the Dominion; or, if not, for each Province. The forthcoming census can give but a fraction of the information desired, and those who have the charge of it, are limited to the mere collection of facts, without being able to offer those discussions on them, which form the great value of the Massachusetts Reports. But whatever is done by the Government, much more is necessarily to be performed by individual exertion.

An influential association has long existed in England, for the promotion of Social Science, formed on the model of the "British Association for the advancement of (physical and natural) Science." At its yearly meetings, all subjects of social interest are open for discussion in the several sections. A similar association has been established in the United States, which is open to Canadians. Another, formed on the same model, has been organized in Hindostan. In this country perhaps it is not to be expected that members could be brought together from such wide distances as separate the inhabitants of the Dominion. Let us then modify our plans; not, indeed, according to our *wants*, for these are the same in all countries; but, according to our capacities.

In every community there are generally at least a few persons who are interested in the public good, in other ways than the ordinary political, religious, educational and charitable organizations. Such persons often work alone, and not unfrequently devote their spare energies to single objects. In large cities, there are often separate societies for such objects, each of which has its committee meetings and subscription lists. The promoters of each are generally too busy to pay attention to the proceedings of the rest. Now, just as in a Natural History Society, one man devotes himself to beetles, another to ferns, and another to fossils; but all meet, and discuss the various contributions to science; why should not all those working for the public good, either in separate societies or as individuals, form in each city a Social Science Association, and thus not only economize time, (and probably money,) but combine their energies, and thus bring more power to bear on the community?

Suppose, for instance, that in Montreal such a society were formed, including branches for sanitary reform, cruelty to animals, preservation of insectivorous birds, education, temperance, statistics, and as many other branches as there could be found men to work. On the committee nights, the members would draft off into little sub-committees of twos and threes, for doing the necessary work of each section. This could generally be got through in much less than the usual time. Members could leave one branch for a time, at a special call from another department, and go back to their own work. After the sub-committees had done their separate work, the whole body might confirm minutes, discuss matters of general interest, apportion the funds, and stimulate each other by their mutual interest. Alternately with the committee nights, might be held public meetings for papers, speeches and discussions. If these were sufficiently varied, each branch would draw its special sympathizers, and a fair audience be secured.

In cities which are not large enough to maintain an association, the few who are interested in the public good could form a committee. They could meet and arrange their individual work, and by stimulating each other, and carefully dividing the labour, they could accomplish more than by independent exertions.

Even in country places, there might be many a social science committee, consisting of