NOTES ON VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT.—No. I.

WHEN broadly considered, the work of the educator is not simply confined to schools and teachers. His aim is to improve society—to lift up to a higher intellectual and moral level the whole human family. In this view, statements of what is being done to improve towns and villages in some parts of the country, notably in Massachusetts and Connecticut, are not out of place in an educational journal. Hon. B. G. Northrop, Secretary of the Board of Education of Connecticut, has given special attention to the subject of village improvement; and as the beginning of a discussion which we shall follow up, we present below some extracts concerning the matter from his late report. He says:

"To the thoughtful mind the connection between the improvement of our villages and our schools is obvious. Public interest once enlisted in the adornment of streets, planting trees, grading and fencing the common, and kindred plans, is sure to embrace the school-house. On the other hand, 'there is no sadder symbol of decline than a bleak, broken, weatherworn, comfortless school-house, for it seems to invest all its surroundings with an atmosphere of discouragement and decay.' When public spirit is once aroused in a community, the school usually becomes one of the first subjects of improvement. The connection between good schools and the growth and prosperity of a town is well understood. The liberal policy of some of our towns is inviting wealthy and desirable residents from other states. The beauty of a village, the excellence of its schools, and other signs of the taste and culture of its people, are usually the causes which attract to it, as neglected streets, poor school-houses and churches, and various marks of a narrow-minded and illiberal policy, repel from others. A good name tends to enrich a town as well as an individual, while a bad one may impoverish both.
EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

THE SCHOOL JOURNAL.
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J. P. WICKERSHAM, . . . . . J. P. McCASKEY.

The greater part of the fine buildings belonging to the State Normal School at Bloomsburg was destroyed by fire on Saturday afternoon, September 4th. The clothing of the students and teachers, the property of the societies, and the furniture in the buildings were, in good part, saved. The building cost over $60,000, and was insured for $30,000. The origin of the fire is unknown. It broke out in a room in the fourth story, and getting between the wall and the mansard roof, could not be extinguished.

This calamity falls very heavily upon the trustees and friends of the school. They had a long and hard struggle in the effort to build it up, and only within the last year or so did they begin to realize that the victory was nearly won. All of our Normal Schools have had their battles to fight, but Bloomsburg has in some respects had more difficulties to encounter than any of them. Devotion and courage alone saved it on more than one occasion from complete destruction. But the dark cloud that had hung over it for years seemed to be rapidly passing away. Under the present principal and faculty the school has been constantly gaining strength. The last graduating class would have been a credit to any of the schools. And the fall term had just opened at the breaking out of the fire, with such a number of students, and such an esprit du corps as to give the greatest encouragement to all concerned. But the fire came, and, with the destruction of the buildings, many high hopes are almost crushed.

Still, the Bloomsburg people are not wholly cast down. On the Monday morning,
after the fire, they assembled in town meeting at the Court House, and after reasoning together as to what should be done, resolved to continue the school in operation; to rebuild the burned buildings; to rent temporary boarding houses for the students; and to collect subscriptions to replace the lost clothing.

The following extract from a circular letter of the principal of the school, dated September 8th, four days after the fire, has the right ring about it:

I am happy to announce to you that our citizens have promptly opened their houses to the students, and all are now provided with comfortable homes in good families.

Our school is running efficiently as usual in Normal Hall building, with a full corps of teachers. Measures are already taken for speedily rebuilding, and it is confidently expected that our new Normal Home will be ready for occupancy by the 22d of February, the anniversary of the recognition of the school as a State institution.

Respectfully yours,

T. L. Griswold, Principal.

The faculty, too, met and resolved to stand by the school, to work without pay and defray their own expenses, if necessary. Our sympathies are deeply moved in behalf of this noble institution and the heroic people who built it up and propose to continue it; and we do hope that good and true men throughout the whole district will now come to their aid.

Since writing the above, we visited Bloomsburg and found the school in operation with a large attendance of students; and teachers, trustees and citizens heroically at work raising money and forming plans for the erection of new buildings.

A COLORED MAN AT LEWISBURG UNIVERSITY.

In accordance with social laws over which conventional regulations and legislative enactments can exercise but a limited control, the colored people of this country have their future destiny in their own hands. If they prove themselves intellectually and morally worthy, the time is not distant when prejudice will melt away before them, and they will obtain, without effort, what otherwise all the civil rights bills that could be crowded into our statute books will not give them. As an illustration of this fact, we will state the case of a young colored man who, at the late commencement, graduated at the Lewisburg University. He is the first man of his race who ever graduated at a Pennsylvania college not specially established for colored people; and the fact is somewhat remarkable that he went through the whole four years' course and delivered his address and received his diploma on commencement day, without disturbing, in any way, the life of the college, or attracting any unfavorable public comment. For all this much credit is due the man, and we cannot but honor the brave institution that has in such an unpretending way dared to open its doors to one of a class so widely proscribed. There is a guiding star in the heavens for the colored people of America, if they, like the wise men of the East, will but follow where it leads.

Concerning the young man of whom we have above written, we are permitted to print the following paragraphs from a private letter of Dr. Loomis, President of the University, to a friend:

There are not many facts in my possession about the colored man who graduated from the University in June last.

His name is Edward McKnight Brawley. He was born in Charleston, S. C., and was a slave till he ceased to be so by the great proclamation. He studied in Washington, D. C., but was admitted to our Freshman class in A. D. 1871. He sustained a fair examination for admission and maintained a position for scholarship above the average grade. There was no department in which he did not show himself able to master all difficulties.

I ought perhaps to state that some persons, on whom his support depended, were doubtful whether he would be well received among the students. But instead of being repulsed by them, he was put exactly where his character and scholarship and general bearing would put him. I am not aware that he suffered any inconvenience from being colored. He maintained so correct a balance between demanding too much and accepting too little that his position scarcely had any tinge of his color.

His profession of religion, which was made before coming here, was maintained in a thoroughly consistent manner through his whole course. He was subsequently to his graduation ordained to the work of the gospel ministry, and is now engaged in behalf of Sunday schools among his people in South Carolina.