

ANNUAL SOIREE OF THE MIRFIELD CHURCH INSTITUTE.—The annual soirée of this institution was held last night, in the Mirfield Town Hall, under the presidency of the Rev. T. Nevin, vicar of the parish. The Rev. B. Wilson, of Battyeford, read the annual report of the committee, which stated that the total number of members connected with the institute was 144, being an increase of 12 upon 1869. Forty-nine volumes had been added to the library, which now numbered 642 volumes, and the issue of books had been large. The news-room had been well attended, and the financial position of the institute was good. The want of larger premises was much felt, but it was hoped that when the other important work now being done in the parish was accomplished that want would be supplied.—Mr. Fairless Barber, of Brighouse, spoke upon the history of the Church, and shewed how the attempt made in times gone by to make men religious by rule and the exercise of authority had failed, and contended that, if the Church of England was ever to become really the Church of the people, it must be by the laity being allowed to take their proper position in conducting services, &c.—His remarks were met with marks of approval both on the platform and in the body of the hall.—The Rev. A. D. Wilkins, vicar of Dewsbury and rural dean, who was the next speaker, endorsed what Mr. Barber had said respecting the necessity of having the aid of the laity, and said they might think him extreme perhaps, but under certain restrictions he saw no reason why laymen should not occupy the pulpit as preachers. Such had been the practice of the primitive Church, and he saw no reason why we should not return to it. In the course of his remarks he spoke of the attacks which were being made on the Church of England, and urged that institutes like the one whose anniversary they were celebrating should be used as rallying places, not for purposes of aggression, but in order to repel attacks. The other speakers were Mr. G. F. H. Rowe, editor of the *Carmarthen Journal*, the Rev. W. Whitehead, vicar of Ravensthorpe.—Mr. Benj. Wilson also addressed the meeting, which was brought to a conclusion by the singing of the National Anthem.