

you might publish in the succeeding number of your Journal, and I have no doubt but that in the course of a few months a sufficient number of Institutes would have reponed, to justify the calling of delegates to form the association.

I do hope, Mr. Editor, that the active working officers and members of the Mechanics' Institutes of this Province, will renew their endeavours to teach the hard working and industrious sons of toil, that *knowledge is power*, and learn themselves that *union is strength*.

Another Member,

T. M. I.

[We are pleased to see commenced in the Journal a correspondence relating to the position and objects of the Mechanics' Institutes of the Province, and hope to see the subject well discussed in these pages, so that the views and experiences of those who have taken an active part in the management of these institutions may be imparted to others.

For the information of the writer of the above communication, we would mention that one of the purposes for which the Boards of Arts and Manufactures have been established is the promotion of the interests of the several Mechanics' Institutes in Canada; and that being composed principally of Delegates from these Institutions, with the Presidents of all Incorporated Institutes as *ex-officio* members of the Board, furnishes at once just such an organization as our correspondent suggests.

In August 1858, the executive committee of this Board, in a circular addressed to the Presidents and Delegates of the several Institutes, communicated the following resolution:—

*Resolved:—*“That the Secretary do request the delegates from the several Mechanics' Institutes to be prepared, at the next Quarterly Meeting of the Board, to discuss the question,—‘*What can be done by the Board to promote the efficiency of the Mechanics' Institutes in Upper Canada?*’ and also to suggest that meetings of the respective Institutes be held to discuss the question, some time prior to the attending of their Delegates at the meeting of the Board to be held on the 5th of October next.”

We regret to say that, notwithstanding the above invitation, no representatives from the Institutes came to the meeting prepared to discuss the question suggested, or to give any information relating thereto. We trust however that it will again be taken up at an early meeting of the Board, and that members will then be prepared to discuss any matters bearing on the interests of these institutions.—ED. JOURNAL.]

*To the Editor of the Journal of the Board of Arts and Manufactures.*

SIR,—I have read with much interest the Reports of Mechanics' Institutes published in your Journal. They bear evidence of progress and effort in the right direction. The establishment of reading rooms and libraries within the reach of the laboring classes, forms an important step in adult education; and the delivery of popu-

lar lectures, however general and unsystematic in their order, must give a beneficial impulse to these efforts. The great purpose, however, of these Institutes still remains neglected—the establishment of classes for adult education. This is the most important, as it is no doubt the most difficult work to be accomplished. The news room and library are not used for educational purposes. The library is used for amusement, and works of solid information are very rarely demanded; whilst the patrons of the news room seek its resources for political or general information, or the pastime of a leisure hour. No doubt these branches of a Mechanics' Institute have an important influence on the character of its members; but no Mechanics' Institute is worthy of its name, or the patronage of the friends of progress, which does not offer the advantage of *class instruction* to the working classes. The countless opportunities for making discoveries, inventions and improvements, which lie around them in their daily avocations, are lost, because, notwithstanding all our educational efforts, the great body of the people in every department of labour are ignorant of the principles of physical science. Were our farmers familiar with the elements of agricultural chemistry, our artizans with those of mechanical philosophy, our miners with those of geology, and were these educated to that degree of intelligence which would enable them to communicate to others the suggestions inspired by their avocations, it is impossible to overestimate the advantages that would follow. Instead of inventions and discoveries being isolated and confined to the theorist and the philosopher, they would spring from their natural sources, the field of labour, and be as extensive as the number of experimenters.

Now, the Mechanics' Institute is the college of the people. What an efficient common school system commences, they would continue; and no national system of instruction is complete without this adult college of the people. The common school, under the best conditions, can only supply a general elementary education. The special instruction needed by adults in their different pursuits is acquired best as it is needed, and in the evening classes of a Mechanics' Institute that instruction could be best obtained. Much may be done in this regard by the members forming themselves into mutual instruction classes. But the best amateur teaching is limited and of little value. It is too often unmethodical, uncertain, spasmodical and defective. Thorough instruction must come from the qualified and professional teacher, and we have no right to expect such instruction unless we pay the just value for it. Hence it should be the chief object of the directors of these institutes to encourage and aid the formation of classes, under efficient teachers. The fees should be such as would enable the poorest member to become students; and as it is not probable that these fees would remunerate the teacher, a portion of the funds of the institute, and of all other available resources, whether of benevolent subscriptions or Government aids, should be devoted to this all-important object