

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HALIFAX MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

MAY 6, 1840.

The termination of the eighth session of the Institute calls the office bearers and committee before their brother members, to resign the trust which was committed to them at last annual meeting, to make a report of the year's proceedings, and such suggestions as their experience may dictate.

The attendance on the lectures of the Institute, has been equal to that of any previous session,—and perhaps in none have the meetings been so large towards the close, as in that just passed. This, your Committee trusts, proves that an increased interest is felt in this means of recreation and instruction, and, as a consequence, that increased respect for the Institute, and resolution to maintain its efficiency, exists. The large attendance of ladies is a feature of the session which deserves some remark. Such an attendance, though much desired in an earlier period of the Institute, was long wanting. Its attainment is cause of congratulation, and the Committee hope that it will be continued, and that the mothers and sisters of the young men of the community, will powerfully enforce, by their example, the importance and delights of intellectual pursuits. The order of the session has been, generally, good,—but an injudicious habit, among the younger part of audiences, of making numerous expressions of applause, requires some check. Excepting in this particular, unbroken harmony has marked the weekly meetings of the year.

The number of members—who have signed the rules, and are considered permanently attached to the Institute—is 103. Your Committee have to remark, as former Committees had, that they believe many persons consider themselves members of the Institute, and feel a warm interest in its behalf, who have not qualified themselves as members, according to the rules. The number of holders of session tickets, not members, is 48; holders of ladies' tickets 45; youths' 53. Total, authorized to attend the session of 1839 and 1840, besides honorary members, strangers, and lecturer's visitors, 240.

The amount of funds to be accounted for, during the year, as exhibited by the Treasurer's account, is £107 1s. 5d.; expenditure, £104 16s. 4d.;—balance in Treasurer's hands, £2 5s. 1d., this, and the undrawn legislative grant of £30,—and a sum of £11 6s. in the President's hands and due for tickets, make a total balance in favour of the Institute, of £43 11s. 1d. Debts due by the Institute, about £25.

The lecture table has been well and regularly supplied by gratuitous lecturers, during the session,—but your Committee had to meet some exigencies, caused by parties not fulfilling the expectations which your Committee had reason to entertain. Subjoined are the names of the gentlemen to whom the thanks of the Institute are due, in this department, and also of the subjects on which they lectured:

Mr. Joseph Howe, one lecture, Introductory Discourse,—Doctor Grigor, four,—Phrenology, (3), Fine Arts, (1). Doctor Teulon, three, Saline Substances, (1), General Knowledge, (1), Domestic Economy, (1). Mr. P. Lynch, junr., one, Ancient Art. Mr. A. McKenzie, two, Economy of Nature, (1) Gas Light, (1). Mr. A. McKinlay, six, Heat, (4), Electricity, (2.) Mr. George R. Young, two, Public Speaking, (1), Agriculture, (1). Mr. R. Young, one, Laws of Nature. Mr. McDonald, one, History. Rev. Mr. O'Brien, one, Enquiry. Rev. Mr. McIntosh, two, Pneumatics. Mr. John Chamberlain, one, Geology. Total, Lecturers 12,—Lectures 25. One of the arranged lecture evenings was that of Christmas Day,—but it was thought proper to adjourn over that festival, and the course thus became one lecture shorter than it otherwise would be.

The Curator's List will exhibit some additions to the property in the Museum, made during the year. Among these are, a Case of Ornithological Specimens,—a Cabinet of Entomology,—a Collection of Paintings of the Wild Flowers of the Province,—Chemical Apparatus and glass cases. All except the paintings were purchased by the Institute,—the paintings cost the Institute £10, but a contribution made up the remainder of the price, amounting in all to £40. The articles just enumerated cost the Institute about £80. The Museum has been cleaned and arranged, during the year, chiefly by the agency of one of the Vice Presidents, Doctor Creed. Among the improvements in this department may be mentioned, that a table was lighted up an hour before lectures on lecture evenings, and supplied with a variety of useful and entertaining publications.

Your Committee have much pleasure in recording the continued liberality of the Legislature. The usual grant of £30 to the Institute, and £20 to the Mechanics' Library, passed without opposition, during the last legislative session.

The Governors of Dalhousie College have also continued their patronage, as they gave the Institute reason to expect. Two commodious rooms are still occupied in the College building, by the Institute,—and all transactions of the Governors with the Institute, have been marked with kindness and courtesy.

Your Committee did not perceive that the advantages which were expected, accrued from the offer of Prizes,—and they have not continued that part of the plan of the Institute, as introduced by former Committees. They do not deary that mode of eliciting talent, but, on the contrary, think that it ought to prove highly be-

neficial;—they found, however, that competition was not as great as might be expected, that Prize articles did not always answer anticipations,—and that satisfaction did not result, in some instances, from the best intentioned endeavours:—they therefore thought that a temporary cessation from that part of the usual routine, might be wise.

The subject of Initiatory Schools, which was introduced to the notice of your Committee, by the preceding Committee, has not been taken up during the year. Your Committee did not see sufficient evidence, that any step taken, up to the present time, would not run the risk of being premature, and less effective than all should wish such an experiment to be.

The use of the lecture room was given, during the year, with the concurrence of the Governors of the building, to Mr. David, lecturer on Botany, and to Mr. Rogers, lecturer on India. Your Committee, however, felt, that for the future it would be wise to refrain, in every case, from acting in such matters, except merely to direct applicants to the Governors of the College. Subsequently, Dr. Morris lectured in the room, on Chemistry.

In resigning their trust, your Committee think that duty calls on them to follow the example of former Committees, by making some suggestions for the future, as dictated by the experience which a year's superintendence has given them in the affairs of the Institute.

The offer of Prizes might be re-commenced, under careful regulations, and very explicit advertisements.

The Initiatory Schools might be borne in mind, and, perhaps, some plan concocted, which would, at an early period, ensure efficiency and satisfaction, without taking too much from the funds of the Institute. Your Committee believe, however, that mathematical drawing, and some of the fundamental exact sciences, should form the basis of any school system in connection with the Institute, rather than the more general branches of Philosophy.

Respecting lectures, it might be well to provide against any failure of lecturers, by preparing, at an early period, a list of lecturers and subjects, by urging punctuality on lecturers, and by publishing the list. It would be well, also, for the Committee always to hold in readiness two or more supernumerary lectures,—for the purpose of filling up vacancies that may occur, in the easiest and best manner. Care might also be taken, that Science should form the chief material of the course, without excluding miscellaneous subjects. Lectures on Geography, Astronomy, the Fine Arts, and other subjects not heretofore much before the Institute, would, your Committee think, be very desirable, and they would urge the matter on members generally, and others friendly to popular instruction.

Some additional provision might be made for the preservation of order at lectures. The great majority of the meetings observe perfect decorum, but some of the younger portions annoy and disturb, by noises which are uncalled for and unbecoming. A very slight effort, your committee hope, will remedy this, for the future.

The Institute should bear in mind, that the room occupied as a lecture room, although very desirable, in many respects, and although its occupation calls for the grateful acknowledgment of every member, is frequently too small for the audience which wishes to attend. If a larger room were at the disposal of the Institute, single tickets might occasionally be issued, with pecuniary profit to the Institute, or for the purpose of forming a fund for the payment of lecturers, under circumstances in which gratuitous services could not be expected. Such an issue, at about a quarter of a dollar for each ticket, your Committee would advise, only that, as at present situated, it would be impossible to accommodate many visitors, without excluding the holders of session tickets. An appeal to the public, at a proper period, would, your Committee believe, be, proportionably, as successful in Halifax, as such appeals have been elsewhere,—and would give the command of funds which might enable the Institute to meet the difficulty stated.

Apart from the object last alluded to, an Address from the Committee of the Institute, to their fellow citizens, previous to the opening of the session, might cause considerable additions to subscriptions, and to the Museum,—and this means might be recommended, although the Institute is so well known now, that many may think such a step should not be necessary.

In conclusion, your Committee would congratulate their fellow members, on the wholesome progress of the Institute, on what may be anticipated for the future, and on the very cheering spread, generally, of intelligence and enquiry, in British America, as well as in older and more favoured countries. They confidently trust, that the Halifax Mechanics' Institute will continue that course of peace and propriety which has hitherto marked its history,—and they ardently wish for that degree of efficiency which its pursuits deserve,—and which may be confidently expected, although the exercise of perseverance and patience may be requisite for the full accomplishment of all that is desired.

(Signed) J. S. THOMPSON, Sec'y.

## THE ALBION MINES RAIL ROAD—AND THE FIRST LOCOMOTIVES IN BRITISH AMERICA.

Last Thursday morning, intelligence reached town that the new line of Rail Road, from the Albion Mines to South Pictou, was completed, and that the Locomotives, with their trains of cars, would on that day travel through the whole length of the road.

The announcement was hailed with joy by the inhabitants of the town; and as the steamboat Albion made two trips to South Pictou, in the early part of the day, many persons availed themselves of the opportunity thus afforded, of witnessing an event in every way so important to the prosperity of Pictou. The Volunteer Artillery Company, in full costume, with their field-pieces, joined the party, to add sound and effect to the general expression of public feeling.

Soon after the parties had landed at the terminus of the Rail Road, the smoke of the two Locomotives was discovered rising over the adjoining forest, presenting the novel appearance of proceeding from a moving body beneath, outstripping the wind in velocity. There was a good breeze blowing at the same time, in the same direction as the trains; but their superior swiftness gave the columns of smoke the singular appearance of proceeding for some distance against the wind. The spectators were ranged on the banks of the Rail Road; and to those who had not before seen such a sight, as well as to those who had, the passing of the trains presented a feature in the history of the British American Colonies, possessing intense interest, and which called forth from the assembled multitudes the most enthusiastic cheers, accompanied by discharges of artillery.

The event was every way an interesting and important one; and we doubt not, many of the boys there will, when their heads are "silver'd o'er with years," talk of the opening of the first Rail Road in British America.

We will take another opportunity of stating the number of chaldrons of coal which the Association will now be able to ship daily; but we may now say, for the information of those who may be interested, that the delay heretofore experienced in loading ships with coal need not now be apprehended, as they will henceforward be delivered from the end of the Rail Road, directly on board of vessels drawing eighteen feet of water and under.

We congratulate the Company on the completion of this undertaking, and sincerely trust that their princely outlays at the Albion Mines, may be productive of as much advantage to themselves, as they have been of prosperity to this place.—*Pictou Mechanic and Farmer.*

## THE PEARL.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 23.

RELICS OF ANTIQUITY.—An elegant quarto pamphlet, of 21 pages, and embellished with two engravings, has been published by C. D. Archibald, Esq., F. R. A. S., M. R. I. A., F. G. S., Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, England. This is another contribution to the world of letters by a Nova Scotian. It consists of a communication made to the Society of Antiquaries, in a letter to Sir H. Ellis, K. H., F. R. S., Secretary, on the subject of ancient pieces of ordnance, recently discovered in the Island of Walney, Lancashire.

We will attempt a kind of brief of the contents of the paper. The Isle of Walney, adjoining that part of Lancaster called Furness, is about twelve miles in length by one in breadth. It was formerly called the "Forest of Walney," but it is now under tillage, and devoid of trees of magnitude. Near the south end of Walney is a small island, called Peel or Pile of Fouldrey, on which stand the remains of a castle built by the Abbots of Furness. The vassals of the abbey were bound to provide for the defence of the castle. A tradition existed in the Island, that in early times a ship of war, or vessel laden with warlike stores, was wrecked at a particular spot. Mr. Archibald traced the story, by tradition, existing in one family, for a period of between two and three hundred years,—and discovered that several pieces of ordnance and other curiosities had been found, and converted to agricultural or other purposes. An opinion prevailed that the vessel remained buried, and Mr. Archibald caused excavations to be made at a spot where favourable indications appeared. Some scattered planks and timbers were found, and several objects of curiosity.

One article described by Mr. Archibald, was found some years ago. It is an iron cannon, ten feet long;—the breech was in the middle, and a touch hole at each side of the breech; it therefore discharged right and left. The piece was of hammered iron. The inner part consisted of three plates of iron, strengthened and held together by hoops, driven on, and over-bound, at the junctures, by iron rings.

A second piece is two feet long, and of two inches calibre. It is formed like the other.

A third and fourth, are of wrought iron, but without hoops. They are supposed to be chambers, or moveable breeches, which were much used in early times. It was the custom to place in them the charge of gunpowder, and fit them into the breech of iron tubes which served to give direction to the balls. Subsequently the chambers were used as independent pieces, and were called Patereros.

Beside these, Mr. Archibald saw, or heard of several others, found at the same place, some of them like musket barrels. He also recovered a dozen balls of stone and iron, two old cutlasses, and a pair of curious brass dividers.

Believing that these articles belong to a remote period, Mr. Archibald refers to the history of ordnance, for the purpose of tracing the application and improvement of such pieces.