

accomplished, must give it the claim to a very important position as an educational establishment. The evening classes, whose winter session the public meeting held last night inaugurated, are adapted to meet the special necessities of a very large body of the community; and when more fully developed and capable of embracing a still larger and higher range of subjects, will entitle the Institute to rank as a people's college. The character of our civilization, in which both special and general education is becoming more and more a leading and all-controlling power, the application of the 'knowledges,' as Lord Bacon aptly termed them, to every condition of human life—of science and art, to mechanical trades, and to every form of human industry, and of philosophy and political economy, and literature, to the progress and elevation of the common people, is fast destroying the idea of *class* education—one kind for the rich, and another very much inferior and very limited in extent for the poor, and leading to the conviction that the highest kind of knowledge or 'knowledges' necessary to complete mental culture, is the best kind of knowledge for every man. Class education was a very excusable thing when the work of government and the guidance of public opinion were supposed to be the privilege of a class; but the inevitable tendency of social and political power to the masses, the confusion and intermixture of ranks, in which the 'privileged few' are being pushed aside, and the bold and resolute of every rank take precedence, warns us that if we would preserve the State in its integrity, we must as liberally and as fast as we can educate to the highest point every member of the State. On the other hand, a deeper wisdom than that of self-preservation will suggest how, in every position of life, the peasant, the mechanic, and the statesman will have their usefulness, their power to increase the general happiness, by the appliances of knowledge enlarged in proportion to the amount of intellectual culture they receive.

The best educational arrangements we have now fail in accomplishing those ends. In the very best common school arrangement of any country not more than one-fourth of the pupils pass through the 'curriculum,' and that curriculum for want of means—because the public always grumble more against the cost of education than of crime, of prevention than of cure—is wretchedly inadequate to satisfy the great object in view. Besides all this, the best school knowledge can only be elementary and superficial. There is a special knowledge the mechanic and the man of business require, as much as the professional man, and there is a general culture, which can only begin when the boy leaves the school for the world, and which he can only then appreciate. It is with these views that we regard with deep interest the efforts of a Mechanics' Institute to raise itself to the usefulness and dignity of a public college. The Toronto Institute has, we believe, secured a staff of teachers fully qualified for their duties, and its curriculum of studies embraces many very important and practical subjects especially adapted to the wants of the class for whom they are designed. But because that class is not sufficiently sensible of its intellectual deficiencies, and because the Institute is destitute of those liberal endowments which wealthy

men so freely give to churches and universities, its usefulness in this regard is narrowed and impaired. With proper means, such as many other institutions with no higher claims to public support enjoy, the evening classes might embrace many other subjects of instruction bearing upon the interests of the industrial classes. Physical science, chemistry, physiology, political economy, social science, history and ethics, are of equal importance in one point of view with book-keeping or penmanship, and a thorough people's college would not only give instruction in these, and be amply supplied with its special libraries and apparatus, but would be able to give the instruction at a price within the reach of all.

In the meantime, the Institute classes, may justly claim the aid of "moral suasion." Upon employers it has special claims. The educated mechanic at the bench, or the clerk in the store, has his commercial value. But a taste for study, the pursuit of any branch of useful knowledge, has a deep, moral force on character fully as important to the employer as business qualifications or mechanical skill. The monotony of work leads to its neglect, and is most felt by those who have no mental resources or enjoyments, and if employers suffer from the indifference or profligate habits of their employés, their recourse lies in pressing on their attention the advantages which such studies as evening classes provide for them, and urging them to become members. We fear that the prejudice still prevails with too many that a love for literary or scientific pursuits may distract the attention of young men from the duties of business, a prejudice that would argue that all young men who ignore study to devote themselves to business, are remarkable if not for their intelligence at least for their steady and regular habits, and never patronize saloons and 'gin-cock-tails.' We remember an example of this feeling in the life of Richard Cobden. When quite a young man, occupied in a London business house, he drew attention by his eagerness to acquire a position and the variety of his reading. His master, one of the old school, and steeped in this prejudice against study, warned him against so much reading, telling him he would be certain, if he persisted in the indulgence to spoil his prospects for life. We would not say how this prediction was falsified. The master lived to fail in business, and to see the youth whom the love of study was leading to ruin at the head of a prosperous and money-making firm, and a leader in the councils of the nation.

In addition to the development of adult education the Institute is also enlarging and exalting the character of its public entertainments. The celebrated Jullion began his famous entertainments with the most simple, and popular music. When however he had gained an influence on the public mind he gradually exalted the character of the music, introducing from time to time a higher order of productions, until finally he made the works of the great masters as intelligible and popular as the sentimental songs and ballads of the hour had previously been. This was the education of the public taste by simply bringing in comparison the works of genius and high art with those of mediocrity. There is an instinctive tendency to excellence and perfection in the human mind. The