

of the Institute in Toronto; and as the information there given may be interesting to other similar bodies, we insert the letter and comments thereon, as published in the *Hamilton Evening Times* of the 12th ultimo.

"We have great pleasure in drawing the attention of our readers to the following letter. There are two very strong reasons why the suggestions thrown out in it should meet with serious attention. It is worthy of attention and support as a scheme devised to free the Mechanics' Institute here from its financial embarrassments, and aid in freeing it from the debt which now clogs its energies and impairs its usefulness. Secondly, it is worthy of attention on account of its own intrinsic merit. In Toronto, where we believe these Re-Unions were first got up, they immediately became popular. Not merely were full houses secured, but on many occasions hundreds had to be refused admittance on account of want of room, and that in a hall quite as large if not larger than our own. We understand that the matter will be at once taken up by the Board of Directors here, and that there is every probability that the first of a series of Re-Unions will be announced for an early day. All that is needed is that those competent to render assistance should do so promptly and willingly. If they do the Re-Unions must be successful, if there is a particle of literary or musical taste in Hamilton. The following is the letter referred to:—

TORONTO, March 9, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have just received a copy of your annual report, and regret to notice that your Institute, like many others, is labouring under financial difficulties; I also notice the canvass you propose to make amongst your members and others for special subscriptions toward meeting your liabilities. Why I now address you is to suggest another mode, auxiliary to the canvass if you please, as available for raising funds; that is by holding a series of Re-Unions similar to those now being held by our Institute. You have an admirable Hall for the purpose, a Military Band is stationed in your city, which no doubt might be had occasionally if considered desirable, and you have sufficient available musical and literary talent in your community to render them successful.

When our Re-Unions were first organized, it was with a view of bringing the members of the Institute together to spend a pleasant evening in literary, musical and social intercourse; they have now become a source of profit to the Institute, and of cheap and popular entertainment for the public, of an elevating character.

Our charge for admission is ten cents each person, and we have usually from 900 to 1000 in attendance. For the first series of ten, member's season tickets were issued, admitting a gentleman and two ladies for one dollar; and although this charge was too low, yet, after crediting to the *rent account* the sum of \$15 for

each of the ten entertainments, a net profit of \$170 was realised. Four special Re-Unions have since been held, no season tickets being issued, and the profits realized, after charging against the proceeds the usual amount for rent of Hall, has averaged \$30 per night. We pay a moderate remuneration to a musical conductor, who attends to rehearsals and plays accompaniments when necessary. We occasionally engage some professional talent, which is also given to the Institute at a moderate remuneration. Amateur assistance is generally given gratuitous.

On four occasions the band of Her Majesty's 16th regiment has been secured, and with very satisfactory results—their performances being always popular.

I think it is now demonstrated that, by judicious management, these Re-Unions may be rendered not only subservient to the healthful and elevating recreation of the people, but to the relief of many of the Mechanic's Institutes from their financial embarrassments. Several Institutes have already made a commencement, of which I notice those of Whitby, Cobourg, Newmarket, Bradford and St. Catherines. and I believe with considerable success. I beg to direct your attention to a letter from Mr. Longman, our very efficient Secretary, to one of the Directors of the St. Catherines Institute, which you will find in the January No. of the Journal of the Board of Arts and Manufactures, for further details of management of the Re-Unions.

I am, Sir, yours very truly,

W. EDWARDS.

President Toronto Mechanics' Institute.

Alexander Rutherford, Esq., Superintendent  
Hamilton and Gore Mechanics' Institute.

#### NOTATION.

The following letter and comment refers to an article in the January number of this Journal, originally copied from the *New York Post*. Neither the writer of the letter, or the editor of the *Reporter*, appears to be aware of the fact that by the French system of notation—now in general use in the United States and Canada—the *billion* is not equal to a *million* of millions, but to a *thousand* millions; a *trillion* to a *thousand* billions; a *quadrillion* to a *thousand* trillions, &c. With this explanation, the writers will see that the amount "eighteen septillions" is properly expressed by 24 ciphers after 18.

*Sangsters's Arithmetic*, the authorised text book of the Council of Public Instruction for Upper Canada, on systems of notation says: "For a certain distance, the English and French methods of division agree; the English billion is, however, a *thousand* times greater than the French, &c. &c. We shall prefer the French method."

To the Editor of the *Sanitary Reporter*.

SIR,—In the article on "The Wonderful Properties of Figures," which you have inserted in yester-