

JOURNAL OF

Upper



EDUCATION,

Canada.

VOL. VI.

TORONTO: APRIL, 1853.

No. 4.

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A MECHANICS' INSTITUTE—THE MECHANICS' COLLEGE.

A number of gentlemen in Bytown have just issued an address, preliminary to the establishment of a Mechanics' Institute in that place. In deploring the absence of so effective an agency in diffusing general intelligence, they remark:—"The want of some association of an intellectual character deprives the adult members of the community of all those pure mental enjoyments that flow from the cultivation of the mind, either by reading or listening to discourses upon literature, science, or art, is, when viewed with reference to its influence upon the youth of the town, productive of consequences of a much more painful and disastrous nature. The young and thoughtless, instead of being furnished by their parents, guardians, employers, and others interested in their temporal welfare, with every opportunity of storing their minds with useful information, have no other means of spending their leisure hours than in frivolous and unconstructive amusements, or in pursuits of a character that generally end in the contracting of bad habits that never can be entirely eradicated. The valuable time in the beginning of life, when the intellect is yet unclouded and best adapted to receive and retain impressions, must be thus worse than thrown away,

and many a father whose hope it is to see his son grow up a well-informed man and a respectable member of society, will perhaps live to see him an illiterate, profligate and despised character, a burden to himself and a disgrace to his friends. Where there is no public library from which well selected books, upon the different branches of science can be procured, and where there is no provision whatever made for the delivery of instructive lectures, it is difficult to perceive how a young man can obtain knowledge, either by reading it for himself, or by having it imparted to him by others. Having no other resource for the employment of the spare hours of our long winter evenings, he must continue to patronize those haunts of frivolity and vice where the sensual appetites are alone ministered to, and where the growth of all that is pure and good in the nature of man is prevented. If our youth should thus be permitted to grow up in ignorance, vice, and depravity, and be inferior in their intellectual acquirements to those of the other towns of the Province, their excuse must be that their superiors, whose duty it is to supply them lavishly with the means of mental cultivation, have chosen rather to leave them to the tender mercies of the ball-alley, gambling-room, and places of a still worse character. Between the time of leaving the common school and that period of life when the full age of discretion is arrived at, there are from five to ten years, during which the character of the future man is formed, and during which the greater part of the knowledge that is to serve through life must be acquired. If a store of general information is not laid up in this period, the individual must pass through existence without it. When the cares of business and the struggle for subsistence commence, the time for education is past, and he who has not obtained it before, will most likely never possess it. The wealthy can afford to send their sons, immediately after they leave the common schools, to higher institutions of learning, but the great expense places the system of filling up the blank between fifteen and twenty-five beyond the reach of the great mass of the people. Some other means must, therefore, be provided, that will be readily within the limits to which the funds of men, in ordinary circumstances, can be extended. Much that is taught at colleges may be imparted by other institutions, open to all at a trifling cost. Whatever may be the nature of the educational establishment that is to succeed the common school, and stand as a substitute for the academy, college, or university—where these cannot be had access to, it must be permanently founded—its object must be the diffusion of sound knowledge, and it must be cheap. It should not be looked upon as a place of amusement only, but an institution of learning, of vast utility,