

unquestionable authority. In support of your views on the subject, which are also those of many other zealous and influential laymen, as a member of the working class I most respectfully, yet earnestly, solicit the attention of the Clergy to the matter. From the want of Catholic literary institutions many hopeful and generous spirits have erred from the right path, and have become aliens from their true home. Having imbibed their knowledge from polluted streams or broken cisterns their energies have been misdirected and their minds have wandered from the pursuit of true glory. This too, at a time when, from the peculiar situation of the Church in this country, the loss of even one of the least of her members is a matter of the deepest regret; for every individual, however humble, his position in society may be, if possessed with a desire to do his best for the promotion of God's glory, may be of some service in aiding the glorious work now so favorably progressing towards the reconversion of our beloved father-land to its ancient faith.

It is true that several Catholic literary societies have been founded in the metropolis, as well as in some of the provincial towns. But where there is more than one in existence, as in London, would not greater advantage be derived from them if, instead of being divided into separate societies or branches in different districts, their efforts were combined, and one large and effective institute established in a central locality? Is it not too much to expect in our present condition that any particular congregation of themselves, could sustain an institution of this kind on a large scale? By an united effort (and the paramount importance of unity in secular affairs is at last beginning to be appreciated amongst us) a Catholic mechanics' institute might be successfully attempted; one on a plan which would provide day schools for the children of the middle class of Catholics, shopkeepers, tradesmen, and the upper rank of artisans: evening schools for the children of working men and adults whose education in early life had been neglected; lectures on history, science, literature, and other matters of a still more edifying and interesting nature to Catholics: a good library that shall number its volumes by thousands instead of hundreds; and a reading room, supplied especially with Catholic newspapers and periodicals, not only of Great Britain and Ireland, but from Australia and America.—To carry out such a plan, a considerable expense would have to be incurred, in order to provide a sufficient staff of qualified teachers, lecturers, and other officers, as well as in providing furniture for the class rooms, books, paper, &c., for the library and reading room, and other necessary requirements. But there is no doubt the thing could be accomplished by a little exertion, and with the approbation and encouragement of those whose counte-

nance, if not support, is in such an undertaking of the utmost value, and without which it were useless to attempt it. A school-fee of two or three guineas per annum for each pupil, payable quarterly, would suffice to keep the day-school in operation; and a subscription of one guinea per annum payable quarterly or yearly at the option of the subscriber, would be found sufficient for the evening classes; while a sum of ten shillings per annum for those who wished to confine themselves to the reading room, library and lectures, would cover the expenses incurred in those departments. These rates have been found sufficient to keep in healthy operation similar institutions in provincial towns, and it will surely not be considered visionary to expect the requisite support from such a numerous and wealthy body as the Catholics of London. In addition to the above named sources of income funds would be derived from benefactions and subscriptions of honorary members, many of whom, I am fully persuaded, might be readily obtained. As some of the provincial institutes, with all their objections, are actively supported by the Catholics, it is to be hoped that they would be found as willing to assist an institution framed upon Catholic principles, and sanctioned by the Priesthood, as they now are to promote those of a more questionable character.

If we might hope to obtain the approbation of the distinguished prelate who now governs the London district, his all-powerful patronage would place any doubt of the success of the project out of the question. I trust this anticipation will not be considered presumptuous, when we behold in our noble universities and the other innumerable educational foundations of the middle ages, evidences of the pastoral care and solicitude with which the saintly prelates of old provided for the education of their flocks; and by whose bounty a single university numbered its thousands of poor students receiving a gratuitous education. The world-wide literary reputation of Bishop Wiseman affords every ground for a favourable recognition of any well-digested and practical scheme for promoting sound knowledge amongst the Catholics in this country. And the example of the admirable and zealous Bishop Gillis, who has already brought to a successful maturity a similar undertaking in connection with the Edinburgh Guild, and whose labours have met with the warm encouragement and marked approval of our Holy Father, Pius IX.—emphatically the benefactor of the human race and Father of the Faithful—will not be without its effect.

Should you consider the foregoing crude remarks calculated to further the object in view, or likely to be useful by drawing increased attention to the subject from those who are able to do justice to it, I beg you will find a place for them in your invaluable paper, and oblige yours, with sincere gratitude.

A WORKING MAN.