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(The Mechanics' Institute, Liverpool.)

Public Improvements.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, LIVERPOOL.

AMONG the healthful indications of social improvements in the provinces, none are fuller of promise, or worthier of record, than Mechanics' Institutes, which have for their object the advancement of the interests of the useful classes. The Institute at Liverpool, situated on the south side of Mount-street, is a handsome specimen. The first stone of this building was laid by Lord Brougham, on July 20, 1835. "The edifice, including the courtyards, &c., occupies about 260 feet frontage by 30 feet depth; the main building is about 120 feet square, and the principal front namely, that towards Mount-street, is faced with stone, and has an Ionic portico in its centre, and wings in antis. This façade has only a single range of windows, above which is a series of panels, to be filled with *bassi-relievi*, to be executed by members and pupils of the Institute; in addition to which it is proposed to crown the pediment of the portico with a group of figures. Internally, there is a vestibule, opening through a screen, formed by two columns in *antis*, into a corridor, 60 feet in extent by 12 in width, conducting to a staircase at each extremity of it, that will afford access to the galleries of the lecture room, and to the upper part of the building. The lecture-room, measuring 60 feet by 52 feet, forms a semi-circle in one part of its plan, prolonged by the walls at right angles to that parallel with the chord of its diameter. There are also a library, reading-room, committee-room, chemical class-room, and laboratory, a museum and model-room, together with numerous other accommodations required in an establishment on so large a scale; including several class-rooms, and various workshops, the latter in the basement floor."

With such aids to the diffusion of useful knowledge as Mechanics' Institutes must prove, it is hoped that the condition of mechanics in this country will speedily reach that of the same class of persons on the other side of the Atlantic; which is thus represented by a recent traveller, Mr. Grund:

"On entering the house of a respectable mechanic in any of the large cities of the United States, one cannot but be astonished at the apparent neatness and comfort of the apartments, the large and airy parlours, the nice carpets, and mahogany furniture, and the tolerable good library, showing the inmates' acquaintance with the standard works of English literature. These are advantages which but few individuals of the same class possess, by way of distinction, in Europe; but which, in America, are within the reasonable hopes and expectations of almost all the inferior classes. What a powerful stimulus is not this to industry? What a premium for sobriety and unexceptionable conduct? A certain degree of respectability is, in all countries, attached to property, and is, perhaps, one of the principal reasons why riches are coveted. A poor man has certainly more temptations, and requires more virtue to withstand them, than one who is in tolerable circumstances. The motives of the rich are hardly ever questioned, when the poor are but too often but objects of distrust and suspicion. *Pauper ubique jacet*. The labouring classes in America are really less removed from the wealthy merchants and professional men than they are in any part of Europe; and then the "mob," with which the lower classes in England are honoured, does not apply to any portion of the American community. With greater ease and comfort in his domestic arrangements, the labouring American acquires also the necessary leisure and disposition for reading; his circle of ideas becomes enlarged, and he is rendered more capable of appreciating the advantages of the political institutions of his country."

* Comparison to the Almanac, for 1836.