

to half a million volumes. The largest library in the world is that at Paris, which contains about two and a quarter million of books and 160,000 manuscripts, and France possesses in addition five hundred public libraries, containing four and three-quarter million of books. Germany has no less than ninety-seven large libraries, averaging 100,000 volumes each, the Royal Library at Munich, having something over 900,000 volumes, and the Royal library at Berlin over 700,000. We are not accustomed to think of libraries in connection with Austria-Hungary, but it stands first among all the countries of Europe for numbers, having no less than five hundred and seventy-seven public libraries, containing about 6,000,000 volumes, a number which is equal to about twenty-six books per head for the entire population. Russia, so comparatively recent in its civilization, has one library very nearly as large as the British Museum, and seven over 100,000 volumes. Even the smaller countries, like Switzerland and Denmark, have respectively eighteen libraries, ranging from 40,000 to 100,000 volumes, and four libraries containing 725,000 volumes. I might continue the list of countries, which all tell the same story, but will only mention one other,—the little Island of Iceland, poor in men and means, but exhibiting to us its love of learning, has one scientific library of 30,000 volumes in addition to several libraries of general literature. I have purposely refrained from mentioning the American libraries, because so many of them are familiar to us, and because most of us are astonished at the wealth which has been expended upon them, the rapidity of their growth and the energy with which they are conducted. But it may well be said that these are general libraries, which by the assistance of the State, or by private generosity are enabled to make immense collections for the benefit of readers of all classes. As general libraries they strive to cover the whole field of human knowledge, and do so more or less superficially. Even in the case of the British Museum, we were recently told by a very high authority, that "it did not contain more than one-half, or at least three-fifths, of the books in English which have been printed." It is not too much to say that the best library of the English speaking people, is more or less, of a makeshift. Mr. Bullen, the late keeper of the printed books in that library recognized this, when he testified before the Society of Arts, "that on few or no subjects to be investigated, could the British Museum afford the scholar half the necessary books." Let us now turn to the consideration of societies like our own and see what they have done to supply the demands of their readers. In Great Britain the Royal Society has 75,000 volumes, the Royal Institution has 50,000, the Royal Irish Academy 80,000, the Newcastle Literary Philosophical Institute 60,000, and many others with corresponding numbers of books in their libraries. But these while confining them to Science generally, evidently do not meet the wants of students in special subjects, for we find a Geological Society's library of 17,500 volumes and another of 30,000, a Geographical of 25,000, a Statistical of 27,000, and an Electrical Engineers of 100,000 volumes, and so on through every branch of the Arts and Sciences. Now think of these and then of our collection of two hundred and ninety volumes in Geology, or in Geography of four hundred, or Statistics of one hundred volumes.

The fact is, that when a student enters upon a special branch of study, he finds so little to help either in our own library or in other libraries in this city, that he is compelled to look elsewhere for the literature of his subject. Let him be engaged upon, say, botanical research, he would find that our apparently large collection contains perhaps one hundred and fifty volumes devoted to this subject, and so with every other branch of Science. The closer the student specializes, the more difficult it is for him to arrive at what is known, as a basis upon which to carry on his researches. It is evident that our library, however complacently we may admire it, is as yet, but in its infancy. We must not cease to enlarge and develop it, every opportunity must be taken to increase the number and preserve the high character of its books. The council has done wisely in fixing the limits within which it ought to grow. Other institutions in this city have their own place to fill, and should be stimulated by our example, to increase their usefulness within their own limits. We must do more to meet the wants of our own students, gaining from them such a knowledge of our shortcomings, as will aid us in building up our collection