

States, where, in many cases liberal and public and private endowments have given a magnitude and stability to the operations of kindred societies, which we have not been able to attain to; and while we have many favors to acknowledge, it is my decided impression that the commercial and professional community of Montreal has not appreciated as it should the efforts of this Society, nor treated it with the liberality which it deserves. In a city such as this scientific workers are necessarily few; and the great majority of the people have little leisure even to give a passing attention to the objects of a society like this. Still those who do give to scientific pursuits either the intervals of leisure snatched from daily work, or the time which they may have earned for themselves or have inherited as a precious gift of fortune, are from their exertions in this way doubly valuable as members of society; and the professing and teaching naturalists whom we can number, are in their place indispensable both to our material and educational welfare. Further it is of great importance that the taste and intellect of all classes of the community should be cultivated by an acquaintance with natural objects; and the existence of a society of this kind is at once one of the sure marks of high taste and culture, to which the city can point with pride, and has a useful function in providing a rational means of employing leisure as a counteraction to low and degrading places of amusement which too often spring up with a vigor and luxuriance of growth disproportionate to that of literary and scientific institutions.

I consider it a matter of no small importance that our Museum represents to some extent the popular study of nature in this community. In the Zoology of Canada it is undoubtedly the most important collection in this country, and in other departments it has much of value and interest. It provides the means of preserving, determining and exhibiting remarkable and interesting specimens which would otherwise be lost. Its doors are ever open to all who wish to know anything of our natural productions, and to strangers who desire to obtain some acquaintance with the aspects of nature in this country. Our Museum has now reached a somewhat critical point in its history. When the Society removed into its present building, we seemed to have ample space for our then comparatively small collections. But the objects in our possession have grown until we are in need of much more room, and our collection is again beginning to be crowded, while