

When the library building was designed, a small hall was set apart for the purpose of meetings of a literary and scientific character, meetings that should be free and open to the public, and at which subjects more or less popular in character should be discussed, for it was considered eminently fitting, that addresses and lectures having "the diffusion of knowledge" in view should be offered to the public, in connection with a library supported by the whole people, and in which every citizen has a personal and direct interest.

The Council of our Society some years ago recognizing the fact that its annual course of lectures should be available for a larger circle than that of its members, abolished the fees for the course and made the lectures absolutely free and open to the public, and this to some degree has been appreciated, although not to the extent desired. It must be admitted that the great mass of the people is not hungering for intellectual development, but is rather in search of amusement, entertainment, such forms of diversion as involve little or no mental exertion and stimulate only the more primitive faculties of the mind. The wheels of progress of the world are, it cannot be denied, kept in motion by the few. And so it is that all public meetings and addresses that have an educational object are patronized by a very much smaller number than is to be found at a football match.

The rooms of the Society being somewhat limited for public meetings, it was decided to avail ourselves of the hall in the library, which has been kindly placed at our disposal, an accommodation for which I wish at this first opportunity to express the thanks of the Society.

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