

still, therefore, the singular anomaly of a country distinguished by its liberal patronage to science, dependent for its information respecting its native plants on the descriptions of specimens culled by early travellers. What was thirty years ago, and is now, of the highest value, can only in a partial manner meet the wants of the country in these days, when new manufactures and new forms of industry, seeking new products to work upon, are daily springing up around us. We desire to place the science of Botany on a more satisfactory footing in Canada than that which it now holds; we desire to increase the existing stock of knowledge; we desire to diffuse a taste for the study, so as to add to the number of laborers now in the field; and we desire to place on record new observations and discoveries, as they arise. The Botanical Society is designed as a means of carrying out purposes such as these.

Extensive circulation was given some time ago by Canadian newspapers to a report that Sir Wm. Hooker was on his way to Canada with a staff of assistants, to explore the botany of the country. I have the best authority for stating that that report was without foundation. It probably originated in certain proposals that were made to the Colonial office regarding the publication of a series of popular Manuals of Colonial Botany; but no expedition was ever contemplated by Sir Wm. Hooker, or any one else, at the instance of the Government. On the contrary, recent communications from the botanical advisers of the Home Government indicate that Canada must follow the salutary example of other old established British Colonies, and conduct for herself investigations into the nature and distribution of her indigenous productions.

We already possess in Canada several important scientific societies in active operation. While the Canadian Institute is of a comprehensive character, embracing all branches of science, literature and philosophy, the special department of geology is amply cultivated by the Natural History Society of Montreal, which has also, however, made valuable contributions to zoology and botany. In addition to such institutions as these, we have, of still more special character, the Government Geological Survey, which has been instrumental in carrying out investigations of the greatest importance to the country, whether their results be viewed as intellectual achievements or as contributions to material industry.

It is proposed that our Society shall have for its object the advancement of Botanical Science in all its departments—Structural, Physiological, Systematic and Geographical; and the application of Botany to the useful and ornamental arts of life. The means by which this object may be accomplished are various, and will come before us for discussion from time to time. In the meantime, it is proposed that there shall be monthly evening meetings in Kingston during

the winter for the reading of papers, receiving botanical intelligence, examining specimens and discussing matters of scientific interest in relation to the science; also that there shall be field meetings during the summer in distant localities in Canada, as well as in the other British Provinces of North America, and occasionally also in the adjoining States, whereby members may have an opportunity of investigating the botany of districts that have been imperfectly examined. By the above, and similar means, much important information may be brought together. Such facts and results, new to science, as are laid before the Society, from time to time, will afford materials for the publication of "Transactions," whereby our store may be rendered available to the public in Canada, and to botanists in other parts of the world. In addition to such means, the Society may greatly promote its objects by correspondence with botanists in other countries, and especially with those who are located beside the extensive public herbaria, botanical libraries, and gardens in various parts of the United States and Europe. By correspondence with such persons, many doubtful points in nomenclature may be settled, while the existence of information relating to Canadian Botany may be ascertained which might otherwise remain unknown. Botanists distinguished in certain branches of the science may be called upon to furnish reports on special subjects, for which materials may be brought together by the members. Such will be of the greatest value to the Society, and I have therefore gratification in informing that communications have already been received from some of the most active botanists in the United States, England, Scotland and Prussia, promising cordial co-operation. So soon as preliminary operations enable us to proceed to the discussion of scientific business, you will also have an opportunity of ascertaining the results already have observers throughout the length and breadth of Canada, as well as in the other North American Provinces, from the Red River in the far west to the Island of Prince Edward in the East. In common with the botanists of other countries, we must necessarily take advantage of those discoveries in structural and physiological botany which are daily challenging a careful examination. But our position comparatively new country points out to us a special path of research which it will be our duty to follow—that which has for its object the investigation of the species botany of Canada, the geographical and local distribution of the plants. The indigenous plants, whose uses are now used or are capable of being applied to the useful arts, will deserve a share of attention, and no doubt, regard also be had to those that are suited to our climate, but have not yet been introduced. Still around our path in the woods and on the shores of our lakes are many plants capable of yielding food and physic, dyeing, and the