

its meetings for some years was held within its walls. On more than one occasion also, has the University welcomed the British Association for the advancement of science, so that we may surely infer, that she is ever ready when called upon, to do homage to the cause of science, and give to it all due and suitable encouragement. But this you may feel inclined to acknowledge as natural, thinking that the Universities, and Colleges of the olden countries, are the appropriate nurseries of science, its very guardians and keepers. Have we however, you may still ask, any field for such pursuits—does our land, in its present state, offer scope and opportunity for anything of the kind proposed? To this our reply is, others think so. It was only the summer before last, that some passed through the Settlement and proceeded northward—not lured by prospect of gain—not attracted by any dazzling commercial speculation—yet fired, as was obvious to all who met them, with as ardent an enthusiasm, and eager to overcome every obstacle with this one object at heart. They wished, as you will recollect, to gain a spot from which, as they had calculated, they might obtain the best view of a marvellous phenomenon in the heavens.* Though ultimately somewhat disappointed in their expectations, theirs was surely a praiseworthy ambition, and you saw in them, that science has her devoted followers, ready to encounter on her behalf any difficulties. The very same summer, I found on my arrival at Moose, that a traveller had preceded me,† and gone along the shores of the East Main, sent chiefly as an Oologist or collector of the eggs of wild birds, by the well known Smithsonian Institution. And we have yet another‡ in our territory on the Mackenzie River, the Youcan, or the shores of the Arctic Sea, who has spent two or three winters in those solitary regions, gathering specimens of the insects of the land for the same scientific body. Besides these, there have been the two fully organised exploratory expeditions—that of the British Government under Capts. Palliser and Blakiston, with its Naturalist, Geologist and Astronomer, and that of the Canadian Government under Mr. Dawson and Professor Hind, with its reports carefully drawn up and digested, and the detailed results submitted to the observation of the public. Such is apparently the judgment of others: they survey the land and look into its treasures and find something to reward their labors.

Shall we however think only of strangers—have we no spirit of research among ourselves? There is one present on my right,|| who in the midst of a laborious life, has often stolen hours from rest, looking with curious eye into the minuter secrets of the mysteries of nature, scrutinizing the beautiful texture of the insect's wing, or analyzing and examining the wild flower of the Prairie or the Bay. Another too there is holding the same rank in the Hon. Company's service, whose best energies have been given to the cause for many a long year, who has pursued it unintermittingly whether at Martin's Falls, at Nor-

way House, or as I last saw him, full of the one topic, on the shores of Lake Superior. His name, for I allude to Mr. Barnston, is not unknown in Britain as that of a scientific collector, and his contribution of insects from this country may be seen by any in the Entomological department of the British Museum. And we have one more recently come among us, who, accustomed to Societies of this description in Canada, has not ceased to press the subject upon us here. It is to the persevering and indefatigable efforts of Dr. Schultz that we are indebted for the present meeting, and I only hope that our zeal may correspond with his warmest anticipations. Let these be sufficient proofs to us that in the busiest life moments may be seized for high and elevated studies—studies which in the solitude of the wilderness carry with them their own recompense.

But may we not gain by combination, and find that union is strength may we not by contagion catch something of this ardour, may we not stimulate others by pointing out to what has already been achieved? Such would be something of our design in laying the foundation of a Scientific Institute. Our object would be threefold: to encourage study—to communicate and diffuse information—and to collect results. To enlarge upon these objects would be unnecessary, and an unwarrantable encroachment upon your time. The casual walk, the tedious journey over land, or the monotonous trip by canoe, might be clothed with interest, if the eye were occupied like the bee, in gathering treasure "from every opening flower," and if each rock overhanging the Lake or lying in the bed of the Rapid, were made to tell its tale. It would be something to learn to use the eye to become the feeder of the mind. The knowledge so acquired in the summer ramble would be the store to be digested, to be shared and diffused abroad during the winter. There would be matter enough for the Lecture to occupy its long evenings, and the desire for information would grow, as the supply become more plentiful and of a better quality. And definite progress would be marked by the accumulation of specimens: and when strangers visited us, we should be able to exhibit to them, in something of shape and order, the vast variety of fowl to be found on our lakes and rivers, and of insects which flutter in the air, as well as some of those minerals (of which we now hear more) to be dug out of the bosom of the earth. In all of these departments too a system of interchange would soon become established: we should act on the principle of giving and taking, and, while sending off some of the products of our own land, we should receive in return some gifts from abroad. My own wish would be to make the basis of our Institute as broad as possible. What a large number of societies effect elsewhere, a single society must, for a time at least, do here. We must, therefore, embrace an extended range of subjects. Natural History would of course occupy a leading place with its almost undefined limits: Botany and Geology would follow, which have now obtained for themselves an independent position,*

* Messrs. Ferrill, Newcome, Scudder, of Cambridge University, Massachusetts, went to a spot near Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan, to take observations of the total eclipse of the sun, July 18th, 1860.

† Mr. Dressler.

‡ Mr. Kennicott.

|| W. McTavish, Esq., Governor of Assiniboia, whose valuable collections of Natural History received the thanks and acknowledgements of the Smithsonian Institution in 1861.

* For some curious remarks on the connection and distinction between Natural History, Botany and Geology, as taught in the Universities of England and Scotland, see an introductory lecture by the Professor of Natural History, Edinburgh, 1855.