

It is needless to repeat here that, but for the small grant made by the Provincial Legislature to assist in this work, we could have done absolutely nothing. The material already in our cabinets is worth many times more than it has cost, and at the present rate of increase in quantity will, in two or three years, require every inch of space in the museum.

Just in proportion as it grows in number, variety and instructiveness, will it become popular, and consequent upon its popularity, we may look for a corresponding increase in the number of donations.

Two of the chief drawbacks to its growth and popularity in the meantime are its situation on a third-story floor, and the impossibility of having it thrown open to the public at reasonable hours. There are probably thousands of people in this city who are totally unaware that there is even a small collection of such objects; but few throughout the province know of its existence, and tourist visitors never hear it mentioned.

I am not aware that any real progress has been made since last report was presented to you towards the satisfactory solution of the problem relating to the purpose or uses of the many different sorts of objects that for convenience sake have hitherto been known as "banner-stones" and "ceremonial" weapons. There are not a few writers on this subject who express themselves glibly as to the application of almost every specimen that comes under their observation, but the truth is that regarding a large number of types we are totally ignorant of the purposes they served in aboriginal economy. Still we have reason to hope that some light will yet be thrown upon at least a few of the obscurities. In the journal of American Folk-Lore for October-December, 1888, there is a brief article by Mr. Franz Boas, on a "Collection of Ethnological Specimens from Alaska," made "by Lieutenant Emmons, during a five years' stay" in that country. These have been purchased by the American Museum of Natural History, in New York, and we are informed that "the collector has taken great pains to ascertain the meaning of the various implements," as well as to "record the traditions referring to them."

Our knowledge of what have been called ceremonial weapons, gorgets or tablets, and various animal forms has always been seriously at fault, but even the scanty extracts given in the article referred to, from the notes of Lieutenant Emmons, seem to be indicative of something like certainty. For example, the holes so almost invariably found in such objects have always proved mysterious to students, but writing of an ornamented and perforated stone Lieutenant Emmons says: "The holes in this amulet are used to put into them what is picked from the teeth, so that witches will not get hold of it to bring destruction to the person." Although this hint may not serve to explain everything relating to the presence of holes in such objects, it will at any rate give us a clue, and it agrees fully with a vague impression I have long entertained that they were in some way connected with luck.

It is unnecessary to go very far back in our history to meet with similar superstitious beliefs. It is not long since diseased persons, especially children, were passed through the dolmens of Cornwall and Brittany, with the hope that a cure might be effected, and this belief was, no doubt, connected with one concerning witch craft or the evil-eye. Keys, rings and beads have always been regarded as particularly ominous. Among many amulets of a similar kind in the National Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, is one (No. 182, Section I) which is "a flat oblong stone, four inches long, by two and three-quarters wide, and less than a quarter of an inch in thickness, notched on the sides, and pierced with two holes one and a half inches apart, formerly used as a charm for the cure of diseases in Islay, Argyshire," and No. 196 in the same section is a "perforated stone which was hung up in a cow-byre in Cumberland, to protect the cattle from being bewitched." It would be easy to multiply instances relating to the past, and not very difficult to adduce many connected with the living generation.

It appears not impossible that the American specimens hitherto (for the want of better names), known as banner-stones, gorgets, and ceremonial weapons, were nothing more than amulets, supposed to have power against this or that kind of evil spirit, in accordance with the form or device of the objects themselves. Perhaps, also, this class of speci-