

to the fact that he is a member of this body of earnest workers in the cause of science generally.

Concerning the work of the summer just past, I can or need say but little. The several excursions were very successful, well attended, and enjoyable, and many facts new to members were obtained. The study of Nature in the field is, after all, the only true method in which we can obtain a correct knowledge of her mysteries. Many a geologist can, in his office and at his leisure, write learned dissertations on the geological structure of a country about which but little is known, which may, indeed, read very well and seem perfectly plausible, but which, upon actual test in the field, in some way do not appear to meet all the requirements. It is, in all scientific work, only by "thought and dint of hammering," as one of our members so happily puts it, that the fundamental truths can at length be reached. Ornithology, botany, entomology, in fact all the branches of natural science acquire a tenfold interest when their study is taken up in direct connection with the objects studied, but when, by this study in the field, we have obtained all the facts possible bearing on the subject, then comes the perfecting process by their careful and minute study indoors. It is this feature in the working of this Club, as originally contemplated, which, though possibly at times lost sight of, renders this Society so valuable, since it carries on, or at least endeavors to carry on, its work exactly in this way, and it is precisely for this purpose that the evening soirees were at first inaugurated, that members who have spent the months of summer in collecting facts, may have an opportunity of presenting these before the membership of the Club, and may receive needed information or light upon any point that may appear to them puzzling or obscure. The accounts of the several excursions, and the results attained, will be found embodied in the several numbers of the Club publications for the past summer, and it is, therefore, needless for me to further refer to them here, since we infer that every member has long ere this carefully read the contents of each number as it appeared.

It may not be out of place here to refer to one aspect of scientific work, the consideration of which has a very important bearing on the question generally. Many persons have asked me, as they have doubtless asked every student of Nature in her many forms: What is the