

be able to give even that proof of the interest, which I feel in its welfare. Whilst I was still doubting on this point, I had the opportunity of ascertaining the views of some of our members, who have taken a most active part in promoting the welfare of the Institute, and they assured me that such uniformity of attendance, as I believed to be necessary for the satisfactory discharge of the duties, was not indispensable. Influenced by these assurances, and confiding in the aid of my able colleagues, the Vice-Presidents, I accepted the office with which you have honored me, with the determination to discharge the duties to the best of my ability, and with the persuasion, that any necessary shortcomings would receive considerate indulgence at your hands.

The commencement of a new year suggests to Societies, as well as to individuals, the expediency of taking a retrospect of that which has just passed away, and of considering what they, and what others, in a like position, or engaged in similar pursuits, have done during the past twelve months. Following out this suggestion, I purpose submitting a brief review of the progress which has been made, during the year 1862, in those departments of human knowledge, which it is the object of this Institute to cultivate. In attempting this summary, it is scarcely necessary for me to premise that it must necessarily be very imperfect. The brief fortnight which has elapsed since I was unexpectedly called upon to prepare an Inaugural Address—the shortness of time, suitable for observations, on such an occasion as the present, which imposes cramping restraint in treating so extensive a subject—the vast number of particulars which solicit attention—and my own inability to handle all the branches, of which I must necessarily treat, with the skill, or ease, or confidence, that almost nothing but special attention to each can bestow,—all these compel me to give but the merest outline, and to select from the mass of materials, only those which, as it were, crop out on the surface.

The construction of star charts, those invaluable aids to the practical astronomer, is still in progress by Argelander of the Bonn Observatory and Chacornac of the Paris Observatory. In the volumes, which have been recently published by the former distinguished astronomer, the approximate places are given of 216,000 stars between the parallels of 2° South Declination, and 41° North Declination. This magnificent work is intended to be an Atlas of the stars of the Northern Heavens within 92° of polar distance. An impor-