

valuable pursuits, which would call them for a few hours from home. But do they sufficiently consider that if they have enjoyed the privilege of a liberal education, the keeping up and extending their knowledge is really necessary to make all they have already done available for their advantage in life, and that the pleasures derivable from the pursuit of knowledge and the cultivation of the mental powers, are incomparably higher and more durable than those afforded by the ordinary amusements of the world? If on the other hand they are engaging in the various pursuits of life requiring active intelligence, without having been able to secure the advantage of the higher education, I would ask them how they could dispose of the same amount of time more profitably than in connection with this Society? It is when our youth are lovers and seekers of knowledge that our country is sure to flourish, whilst to the individual the pursuit is rewarded by the constant and varied gratifications it affords—gratifications which are inexhaustible, and independent of the changes of life, consequently above all price in the world which for a short time we occupy.

It is especially to be desired for a Society of lovers and promoters of knowledge, that it should interest, attach and encourage those who are coming forward in life, to whom we look to fill the places of those who must soon withdraw from the scene; and in seeking means of extended influence, nothing deserves more consideration than what will be beneficial to them both by enriching their minds and calling forth their talents.

I now proceed to a few words respecting the extent of subjects which various Societies, having in view the same general purpose as ours, include in their plans. Our Society has chosen its name in reference to the French National Institute, which it is well known has a remarkably wide range of subjects, including nearly all the departments of knowledge, but yet, being divided into classes and sections, is really in its working a collection of separate societies for all the different branches. We have placed no limits to our subjects, and have assumed the expediency of the cultivators of all the different branches of knowledge, uniting their efforts in one body. If we are right in this, as we think it will appear that we are, it must be from circumstances in the condition of the country, which give such a plan the advantage on the whole, though many would prefer narrower associations, which undoubtedly have their own recommendations. The Royal Society, in its earlier stages, had no well-defined limits to its subjects, often intruding on what