

powerful Microscopes on the table which attracted numbers of the fair visitors, and many of the gentlemen. The refreshments were prepared in the Library by Mr. Alexander, of Notre Dame Street. After an adjournment of about three quarters of an hour, business was again proceeded with in the Lecture Room.

The President (Mr. Principal Dawson) took the Chair and said :—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It is not my intention to deliver a formal address, but merely to bring before you, perhaps in a somewhat desultory manner, a few thoughts that have occurred to me as suitable to a social meeting of this kind ; and at the same time, having some bearing on the functions and policy of this Society. And in the first place, I would remind you that Science does not always appear, as on the present occasion, in holiday attire ; nor does it confine itself to the lecture room or the library ; but that it often toils severely and imposes on itself hard fare and self-sacrifice. It scales every mountain, gropes in every mine, toils through every wilderness, boils its camp kettle by all streams, pores over the minutest objects, anatomises the least agreeable creatures, stifles itself in laboratory fumes, breaks stones like a road maker, and carries loads like a porter. In short, when you see the scientific man in his working garb, you may well be pardoned for supposing, as a kind old lady once remarked of a Scottish geologist, that he looks like one “ who has seen better days.”

The true naturalist, animated by that enthusiasm which alone can furnish an adequate incentive to the work, delights in such labours, and combines them with the eager search for great general principles and natural laws. Such men must form the basis of a society like this. Without them there may be meetings and agreeable small talk, but no progress in original investigation. To such men, on the other hand, a scientific association offers great benefits. It gives them that encouragement which they often require ; it gives them means of investigation which, individually, they could not command ; it gives them influence by their union with one another, and with men who value science, though they may not themselves labour in its advancement as original enquirers. Above all, it gives opportunities for friendly discussion. Isolated enquirers, especially in a new country, where few can devote themselves wholly to scientific pursuits, are very liable to be satisfied with half truths, which are near akin to error, or to enter on unprofitable paths of enquiry. But if they bring their results before a society like this, they are subjected to the criticism of others who may have had superior opportunities of investigation, or who, from the same facts, may have reached conclusions in some respects different. Free discussion of this kind is the life of science : and however hardly the author of a paper may be dealt with, if he is a true lover of truth, he feels satisfied that to have all defects and errors thoroughly exposed is best, not only for the interests of science, but for his own ultimate reputation.

To such free and fearless criticism every paper, however high the the reputation of its author, must be subjected in a scientific society ; because the object is not to uphold any preconceived views, but to arrive at the pure and simple