

hobby horses in the form of insects and plants, and birds and rocks, and bringing occasionally to light facts of more or less utility. Because of the utility of our work we receive a little monetary assistance; but countenance and encouragement and the opportunity of making proselytes, such as attendance at our meetings would provide, are but rarely given us. And that is as much our misfortune as our fault. For the discussion of a scientific paper in general is conducted, and must in many cases be conducted, in a language whose technical terms render it unintelligible to all but the initiated. It would appear therefore, that our ordinary meetings, which must be devoted to the hearing and discussing of new and somewhat recondite things, cannot readily be rendered wholly popular. And accordingly it has been proposed that we should devote some evenings to popular lectures or to conversaziones, or that we should organize excursions of a scientific kind. Doubtless, popular lectures and excursions have their merits and should not be neglected; but we would probably get at the few outsiders who have observational tastes more readily, if we could render the ordinary meeting of the Institute sufficiently attractive to make them regular attendants. And it is in this direction that the Institute has lately been moving. It may not be generally known that we are endeavouring now to make our ordinary monthly meetings more popular than they have hitherto been by the introduction of what may be called popular prefaces to the various scientific papers that may be read and discussed. We invite the readers of papers in fact to prepare introductions which will enable even their non-scientific hearers to understand the work of which the papers are to give an account, and to describe the contents of the papers in as untechnical language as possible. Men differ very much of course in their power of complying with this invitation. But in many cases the result has been quite successful, and audiences which contained but few persons who possessed any previous knowledge of the subject under consideration, have appeared to follow and enjoy the whole discussion. I think that the most of us feel that our efforts in this direction have been sufficiently successful to warrant our continuing them,