

I would rather say, which the successive societies established in Toronto have made, from objects chiefly fanciful to objects essentially real, who traces the principle of association through the original Shakespeare Society, the Literary and Historical Society, the Athenæum, to the Canadian Institute, will doubt that in this practical element lies our best hope of a more permanent and active existence than rewarded the establishment of the societies which have preceded us.

It has been boldly said by Tennyson, that

We are the ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.

Assuredly these words are no where more true than here. All which time alone can bring to maturity may be wanting around us, but ought we not to find in its place the buoyancy, the life, and the aspirations of youth? Measured on the gigantic scale of centuries of science, our results may, perhaps, for a time appear diminutive enough; let them not fail, however, to receive at least from ourselves something of that grateful acknowledgement which made heroes, and sages, and demi-gods, in times of old, of the authors of sufficiently simple discoveries. It will be well, however, if the same state of things do not betray us into a danger not unknown to similar associations: that of substituting reciprocal compliment for a well-founded estimate of our real status, and indolently lowering the standard by which the world will judge us, to that scale upon which it may be most agreeable to judge ourselves. One of the most distinguished of the men of true science in the neighbouring States has recently drawn a lively picture,—for the truth of which, however, he appealed to all his hearers,—of the degree to which, in the generation immediately succeeding the War of Independence, a species of charlatanism, deriving its countenance and support from the general ignorance of the community, intruded into the place of science, and outvoted it in every division of forces. "Our real danger," said he, in words applicable to every country in which an elevated standard of acquirement is wanting "lies now from a mollified charlatanism, which makes merit in one subject an excuse for asking authority in others, or in all; and because it has made real progress in one branch of science, claims to be an arbiter in others. Sometimes this authority is thrust on men who, not having the force to enlighten those who press them as to their real claims, injure the cause which they would fain promote, by being too impressible. Merit thus moulded assumes the form of the impressing body. Whether the authority be seized or accepted it is unlawful." Thorough knowledge of subjects of science other than those by which, in a young country, men may earn their bread, is not ordinarily reconcileable with that indispensable prerequisite; but happily it is pretence, not ignorance, makes the charlatan. Avoiding exaggeration of language, and sustaining always, by the aid of a well-selected library, and ready access to contemporary scientific literature, a just and temperate view of the value, as regards the world, of those efforts which to ourselves alone are of high importance, we cannot fail to pass safely over that epoch of danger, which, in the case referred to, preceded the maturity of the national growth. I see no reason why, in a few years, a Canadian society should not rank with those of highest character

on this continent. Already have our great public works created a demand for the highest science of the engineer. Railroads, with their long train of applied arts and sciences; processes of manufacture, which science first divulged, and science alone can direct, are obeying the attraction of profit, and naturalizing themselves on this new soil. With these practical sources of support, and with five or six universities or colleges, including a very numerous professorial body, and one which counts among its members many names of distinguished academical rank, it is surely something beyond a provincial standing to which a society in Upper Canada may ultimately aspire. But, gratifying as we must feel the support given to us to be, we cannot say that this Institute as yet by a *vis* means unites the strength of these bodies; some of them, I believe, are not represented among us at all, and it must be a work of time to gain the confidence and interest of all. Among the endless examples furnished by the life of that illustrious man,—of whom it has been so truly said that he left no duty incomplete, as he left no honour unacquired,—there is one so appropriate to our present subject that I may be pardoned for alluding to it. Late in life did the great Duke of Wellington remember that he had still to testify his respect for those other fields of human rivalry and labour, in which the elder Herschell, Davy, Wollaston, Young,—while he was waging the battles of liberty,—were winning equally imperishable fame, and adding other conquests to the dominion, not of their country, but of their race. In his seventy-eighth year he became a Fellow of the Royal Society. A similar view of duty taken by all those to whom it equally applies would add not a little to our strength and our resources. A command of funds is much more essential to a society like the Canadian Institute than may at first sight appear. The liberal assistance granted to us by the government, to be amply justified, I trust, by our use of it, has for the present relieved us from embarrassment; but with our present very low rate of annual subscription, a considerable portion of which also returns to the member in the form of a monthly publication, a numerous list of members is almost indispensable. It has been already stated by the Council in the annual report, that we do not aim at present at forming a general library or a general museum; but we desire that at the earliest possible period, students in any ordinary subject of science, shall find here the most recent standard works on that subject, and collections illustrating it. Of the former, a selection has already been ordered; our progress with the latter rests very much with ourselves. It is much to be wished that members should bear in mind the great acceptability at the outset of almost any thing belonging to the departments of geology and natural history, and make such individual contributions as may be in their power. By separate exertions, in different quarters,—the quadrupeds and the birds,—the fishes, the insects,—the land and fresh-water shells, as well as the flora of the country, might undoubtedly be pretty completely collected in a year or two, and a great impetus, as well as a great assistance, given to future researches. It is a pleasure here to refer to the success which has attended the exertions of our sister societies at Quebec and Montreal in this respect, as calculated to give us much encouragement.

I have alluded to the Canadian Journal, and trust I may be