

that this energy will reap the reward which nature always bestows upon those who seek her acquaintance from unselfish motives. In one way it might appear that little was to be learned from a meeting like that of the present week—each astronomer may know by publications pertaining to the science what all the others are doing. But knowledge, obtained in this way, has a sort of abstractness about it a little like our knowledge of the progress of civilization in Japan, or of the great extent of the Australian continent. It was, therefore, a most happy thought on the part of your authorities to bring together the largest possible number of visiting astronomers from Europe as well as America, in order that each might see, through the attrition of personal contact, what progress the others were making in their researches. To the visitors at least I am sure that the result of this meeting has been extremely gratifying. They earnestly hope, one and all, that the callers of the conference will not themselves be more disappointed in its results; that however little they may have actually to learn of methods and results, they will feel stimulated to well directed efforts and find themselves inspired by thoughts which, however familiar, will now be more easily worked out.

We may pass from the aspects of the case as seen by the strictly professional class to those general aspects fitted to excite the attention of the great public. From the point of view of the latter it may well appear that the most striking feature of the celebration is the great amount of effort which it shows to be devoted to the cultivation of a field quite outside the ordinary range of human interests.

A little more than two centuries ago Huyghens prefaced an account of his discoveries on the planet Saturn with the remark that many, even among the learned, might think he had been devoting to things too distant to interest mankind an amount of study which would better have been devoted to subjects of more immediate concern. It must be admitted that this fear has not deterred succeeding astronomers from pursuing their studies. The enthusiastic students whom we see around