

THE MUSEUM

THE ART, HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

FOREWORD

THE value of a museum to any community is now so generally recognized that it seems almost superfluous to allude to all the advantages to be derived from a well-organized institution such as a museum should be. Its value as an educational factor is frequently overlooked because it does its work silently. Several thousand people pass quietly through the museum each month, somewhere about fifty thousand during the year. Many are students of various branches of natural history. The geological and mineral collections are examined again and again by miners and prospectors. A large proportion of the visitors are young people who come to look at the "curios," others are tourists and travellers. A museum is a quiet place, doing its work quietly but none the less efficiently, and from the very nature of the thing unable to make its voice heard in the general clamor for public support.

The growth of the museum has been necessarily slow, its development being principally dependent upon individual generosity. Whereas most cities of any magnitude possess museums consisting of collections of the various groups of phenomena which constitute natural history, arranged and displayed in a building designed for the purpose and preserved and developed under the direction of a trained curator,—this museum owes its existence not to the broadminded initiative and support of the civic authorities, but primarily to the Art, Historical and Scientific Association, which was instituted as long ago as 1894, with the intention of forming a collection of pictures and other objects of art. This Association widened its scope to include history and science and proceeded on those lines until 1903, by which year the collections had become so extensive and of such value that the Association handed it over to the city for the use of the public upon certain conditions, the most important stipulation being that the collection should be adequately housed and preserved, the Association reserving to itself the direction and management.

Since 1903 the collection has extended until it has completely outgrown its present quarters in the Carnegie Library Building.