

Natural Science, is specially fitted to take a practical view of the scientific part of the Library, and to be of service in the organization of a Museum should this be undertaken.

Such endowments as this of Mr. Peabody give to the United States an enviable eminence among the nations of the earth, in the promotion of popular culture and scientific progress. They constitute an unmistakeable evidence of the wisdom of the early American colonists in making provision for the general diffusion of education, and they show that in the future this great country is destined to be unrivalled in its means, whether in books, apparatus, collections, or teachers, for the development of the greatest of all the resources of nations—mind. Already it is outbidding the old world in the market of teaching labour, and of rare and costly specimens and books; and the growth, side by side, of its wealth and culture, must accelerate this more and more.

More fortunate than the belligerent Southerners, I found means to extend my peaceful raid into the heart of Washington itself; which, in a scientific sense, is the Smithsonian Institution, and in that of hospitality and kindly greeting, nowhere warmer than in Prof. Henry and his family. Washington seems to have grown and thriven on the war, but still presents the old contrast of massive and impressive public buildings with comparatively plain and even mean private residences, a point in which it differs from all the other great cities of America; but the reason readily appears from a consideration of its political circumstances. The Smithsonian Institution is cosmopolitan in its aims—its object being “the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.” This object, as wisely interpreted by Prof. Henry, is not to promote local ends, but those in which the world is interested; not to do that which any one can profitably do, but that which, while important in itself, cannot be done by other means. Thus peculiar in its aims, the Institution has to forego many tempting roads to popularity, yet like other good things it seems to be popular in spite of itself. Practically, as the great current of science on this continent necessarily runs much in the channel of discovery in Geology and Natural History, the work of the Institution lies much in this direction, and no institute in America has rendered more important aids to the prosecution of Natural Science. Its collections, under the skilful superintendence of Prof. Baird, are a marvel of system and careful arrangement; and are open to the inspection and study of naturalists from any part of the world; who are in some cases