

THE ACADIAN SCIENCE CLUB.

This society is designed to subserve no private interests. It is purely an educational movement inaugurated by a number of persons identified with the educational affairs of our land, and its sole aims are to awaken a deeper popular interest in scientific subjects and to aid in the dissemination of scientific knowledge. The gentlemen who act as directors of this institution willingly devote their time and attention to the work, in as far as their professional duties will allow, and bespeak the co-operation of all who are in any way interested in the cause of popular education.

It is the controlling motive of the Acadian Science Club to encourage young men and young women who are not at present able, from whatever cause, to enjoy the advantages of an Academic or Collegiate training, to undertake and continue a systematic course of study at home. Very many such are naturally of literary tastes and devote more or less time to reading and study of a desultory kind, and in an unmethodical manner. Such will see the obvious advantage of having a course of study arranged for them and the benefits that must result from their union with a large society of which all the members are engaged in similar work for the same ends. We expect our membership to consist largely of this class.

But we wish that we could reach, and help out of their folly another and larger class,—we mean the novel readers—those whose chief intellectual pabulum is the distorted, pernicious literature of a sensational character which is abroad in so many forms that few escape having the beautiful development of their God-given powers of mind retarded thereby. If we could reach this class, could persuade them to fling aside the vile trash that is poisoning their minds and turn to the great book of Nature, which Longfellow so beautifully terms the "Manuscript of God," could lead them to see that there is more of interest and romance in Nature's works than in the sickly sentimentalities of the latest

novel, but of a kind that ministers only to intellectual growth, not mental dissipation, we should feel that our labor had indeed not been in vain, but that we had accomplished a noble work.

"Want of time," is an objection frequently presented by many, chiefly from those engaged in manual labor, but who could not, by exercising a systematic economy in respect to that which is of such priceless value, secure to the improvement of their minds the small amount of time required each day for the accomplishing of the work of the A. S. C.? The habit of study once formed, the hour devoted to it after the day's labor in the workshop, on the farm, or behind the counter, would be looked upon as a pleasing recreation, while the fact of having some definite subject with which to employ the mind during the hours of toil, would lighten labor and add a new interest to life. We could name individuals who, in addition to arduous physical labor, still find time for study and even original work, in one or more departments of natural history.

It is hoped that the Acadian Science Club may become a large fraternity of such as may wish to engage in the delightful study of Nature. Brought into sympathy with each other by their union in a common cause, the members will be of mutual assistance, and by their combined and individual influence will, we trust, lead others to see a little more of beauty and wisdom in the fair creations of God as they exist around us in the natural world.

As for harmless amusement and still more for the free exercise of the fancy and imagination, I know few studies to compare with Natural History, with the search for most beautiful and curious productions of nature, amid her loveliest scenery and in her freshest atmosphere.—*Kingley.*

The class of '84 who took geology last year may substitute mineralogy for that subject in the present year.

Minerals for naming should be sent to Mr. Hibbings, the Director of that department.

A SUBTERRANEAN PALACE.

THE SCENE OF ENCHANTMENT THAT CONFRONTED A PARTY OF NEW MEXICAN MINERS.

A party of New Mexican Miners, while prospecting near Mesilla, on a spur of the mountains, discovered a passage which led into the rock at a downward angle of about forty-five degrees. Impelled by curiosity, three of the party, steadied by a lariat held by the others, started down the tunnel of the mountain. The passage was rough and uneven, and about four feet high. By the light of a candle they found twenty feet further a large hall completely filled with long delicate columns, reaching from the floor upward out of sight. They were stalactites, hanging from the walls in endless variety, while from the floor rose rich stalagmites, meeting them and forming figures of all conceivable shapes. Unfortunately the candle was extinguished and nothing could be done but follow the lariat back. As their eyes became accustomed to the gloom a curious phenomenon appeared, in various parts of the cave luminous spots of light were seen. Some near them gave out bluish flashes of flame, while others seemed like moons, glowing with a peculiar pale yellow light; others again were of irregular shape, that made the scene more apparent. Every move revealed new wonders. Oval balls of light glared from behind the columns, lighting them at every step, while as they could see, gleaming and the mysterious light appeared in the cavern a realization of the old tale of enchantment.

THE POPULAR SCIENCE MONTHLY, for November, gives an illustrated account of a phenomenon which has never before been observed—that of a snake having crawled in between the bark and wood of a tree and died there, becoming lignified, or changed into wood, in the same manner as animals become fossilized, i. e., the cells and fibres of the wood have actually taken the place of the organic parts of the reptile and left it perfect in shape, size, and all other details, even to the eye cavities, scales, etc.