

These Classes have again resumed their operations; and, considering the benefits they confer, and for the purpose of enlarging their usefulness, your Sub-Committee, at the beginning of the present session, expended a sum of \$100 in the purchase of such models and blocks as were required to fully carry out the objects of the classes, and these are now among the assets of the Board.

The long expected Dublin Exhibition Medals were received during the past summer, and those awarded to Montreal Exhibitors were distributed by the Hon. the Minister of Agriculture, at a meeting of the Board, held on the 18th September.

During the year now closed a new element—delegates from the Art Association of Montreal—was introduced into the composition of the Board, under the provisions of the amendments of 1864 to the Act incorporating this Board, thereby proving that the operations of this Board have not been wholly deprived of public interest; and your Sub-Committee sincerely trusts that every succeeding year will exhibit not only an increasing interest, but largely increasing means of carrying out the great and noble objects for which this Board was organized.

The Treasurer's statement for the year is herewith submitted, from which it will be seen that the funds of the Board have been carefully husbanded, awaiting the fulfilment of the many promises on the part of the members of the Government for the amelioration of the condition of the Board.

The whole, nevertheless, respectfully submitted.

(Signed) DUNBAR BROWNE,
Secretary.

Selected Articles.

KNOWLEDGE BY THE FIRESIDE.

In our last volume, we published a very interesting series of papers from that excellent journal the *Maine Farmer*, entitled "Chemistry by the Fireside." Below we commence to publish, from the same journal, a series on "Knowledge by the Fireside," which we trust will not fail to be as interesting to the non-scientific reader as the previous articles. We copy into our pages any thing instructive to the practical man, giving credit to the author or publication copied, whenever known.

No. 1.—Ancient Coins.

Money consists of whatever is used in exchange for something else. As soon as mankind increased in numbers, they commenced to exchange one article for another in trade. This was done first by using some substance of great value and small in bulk. At a very early period metallic exchanges were made by weight—the giver of the money weighing out so many pieces of gold or silver. At a later period actual coins having a certain weight and guaranteed by government with the stamp or seal of State was made the medium of exchange. At what period silver and gold were used is not known. Nearly 2000 years before the Christian era, Abraham returned from Egypt very rich in

cattle, silver and gold. The shape of silver and gold among the Egyptians appears to be that of a ring, with an opening on one side to form a chain when necessary. This sort of money passed by weight. Thus Abraham weighed four hundred shekels of money to the merchant. The Jews never had any other mode of using coin than by weight so long as they were an independent nation. Furthermore it may be a new idea to many that they never used gold as a coin. Silver and copper were their sole medium. You never hear them talking about shekels of gold in any of their writings.

Among the Egyptians and Assyrians the coin was frequently in the shape of a sheep or a lamb, possibly of the value of these animals. It has been supposed that the change from weight to a coin representing a given value was first made by the Romans. The pound weight was stamped with the image of an ox. Hence our word *pecuniary* is derived from the Latin word *pecunia*, signifying money, which in turn was derived from the word *pecu* signifying cattle. Thus an immense stride was made in civilization when a real value was given to a coin guaranteed by the seal of State, so as to avoid the necessity of weighing it every time a transaction was made. The earliest coins were exceedingly rude in character. They were not perfectly round as you now see them. A die was formed, over which the coin was placed, and then it was struck with a punch which stamped the coin on one side, and left a rude dent on the other. After a while, a die was made on the end of the punch so that both sides were stamped.

Alexander I. King of Macedonia, is the first who had his name stamped on a coin. The Athenians made the owl their type. This gave rise to the anecdote of the Athenian miser, the roof of whose house was said to be infested with a vast number of owls, in allusion to money of the well-known Athenian type being concealed there.

The Romans carried on the coining of money to a high degree of perfection. Each State and sometimes a single city was authorized to issue its own coins. Every coin was a brief history of the age in which it was struck. The skill of the artisan, the composition of the coin, the history of the people, and the name of the ruling monarch were frequently told on the same coin. It is probable that almost the only portraits we have of the ancients are what may be seen on ancient coins that have come down to us. It is very singular that when they could stamp on copper, silver and gold the names of kings, that the art of printing was not known till within less than five hundred years. An immense number of ancient coins are preserved in museums in Europe. They are valuable records of past history. They are in fact printed books, on whose surfaces are stamped the records of a past age. It is said that ancient Roman coins are still in circulation in Spain. They have become worn smooth and thin by time.

No. 2.—Evaporation.

Many of the operations in nature are invisible to us. If we place a dish of water in the window of a warm room, it will all disappear in a few hours without any visible change whatever. Particle by particle, far too small to be seen with the