

THE difficulties attending the study of every branch of Natural History in Canada, are greatly aggravated by the want of books fitted to afford to the student, in a convenient and scientific form, such assistance as the present state of our knowledge renders practicable. A lover of Nature, who applies himself to any special department in his own locality, may collect specimens, but they will afford him very little satisfaction unless named and arranged; to which end he must have a good system, and must have characters of the received genera and known species, so that he can ascertain the history of the object he finds, if known; and if he is so fortunate as to meet with anything new, may have the means of knowing it to be so, that he may communicate his observations upon it without fear of merely repeating what others have done, and perhaps creating useless names, which encumber the science he wishes to advance. To a beginner in the study of Nature, nothing can be more discouraging than to have to search out every object in the most extensive general works (provided he is so fortunate as to have access to them) because there is as yet no attempt at a list of the productions of his country, where the limited number would facilitate his investigations.

Those who contribute local catalogues in any department of Natural History, render important assistance: but something more is required. It has occurred to me that the publication in this Journal of fragmentary portions of a *provisional* Fauna Canadensis might contribute not a little both to assist the cultivators of Zoological Science and to accumulate useful materials for future labourers who may be enabled to attempt what would now be premature,—a general systematic work on Canadian Zoology. By a provisional Fauna, we mean a systematic arrangement with the essential characters of all such genera and species as have either, to our knowledge, actually been found in Canada, or are deemed very likely to be found there—being known as inhabitants either of the more northern or the immediately southern regions. In this way, without pretending to be yet in a condition to offer any reliable account of all the living creatures inhabiting our country, we may afford useful assistance to those who are disposed to examine them, and by their labours thus assisted our conjectural list will gradually change into an authenticated record of observed facts. Many, who without such aid could do nothing, or would remain insulated collectors, unable to determine whether what they obtained was known or unknown, scarce or familiar, would be at once enabled, with a great increase to their own enjoyment from the