AN ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF QUEBEC, AT THE ANIVERSARY PRIZE MEETING, MAY 3D, ADJOURNED FROM APRIL 27TH 1827.

GENTLEMEN,

I regret that the duty now devolving upon me, has not fallen upon a younger, abler, and less occupied member, whose habits and leisure might have enabled him do greater justice to the occasion which now calls us together. As it is, I shall do my endeavour to fulfil the duty assigned to me in such a manner as not to be altogether unprofitable; and I hope I shall receive, as I shall need, that indulgence, which may be considered as due to an attempt that is almost new amongst us. I have chosen as the subject of the present Address, the progress of the Fine Arts, and the means by which that progress may be promoted in this country. It is a subject immediately connected with the best interests, of the country—with the education of all its Inhabitants,—their universal improvement,—their industry—their habits, and the ample means of happiness which their situation embraces.

GENTLEMEN,

In all the stages of its improvement in various ages, knowledge has almost invariably been attended by the cultivation of the Fine Arts. If there is any difference in the causes upon which the progress of both is dependent, it is probable, that the former is chiefly brought about by peace and leisure, the latter by abundance of the necessaries and conveniences of life. Intellectual cultivation more particularly requires quietness and repose. The gratification of a taste for the Fine Arts, is accompanied with more expense, and looks to a society considerably advanced in opulence.

Knowledge, as is well known, is recommended by two distinct causes; the immediate pleasure by which it is accompanied, and the immense advantages which it procures to individuals and to society.

A taste for the Fine Arts, in the same manner, is likewise recommended by the pleasure which these Arts afford, and by the advantages which they bring to individuals, and to societies.

First, and primarily, they are recommended by the pleasure which they afford, by the gratification which they yield to the perceptions of taste, to our love of beauty, and to our admiration of grandeur, by the agreeable impressions which we are capable of receiving from grace, novelty, melody and proportion. These pleasures possess a strong similarity to that which we derive from the gratification of curiosity, namely, that which the understanding receives, when something unknown is discovered, something uncertain is ascertained, or some new province of nature is laid open to our conceptions. The most marked difference appears to be, that the desire of knowledge, like the appetites of sense, excites a feeling of uneasiness when no gratification is afforded: while the pleasures of taste and imagination give rise to no pain by their absence.

The most important advantages arising from the cultivation of the Fine Arts, are those which relate to the moral nature of man; to his liberation from debasing passions, and his advancement in the practice of the duties of his station, and in the cultivation of aimiable dispositions, and honorable habits. They consist in the power which these Arts possess to humanize the minds of men, to diffuse among them a taste for innocent and elegant entertainment, and to withdraw their attention from the grosser pleasures of sense, from the gratification of tumultuous passions, from the wrathful and destructive contentions which have been too incident to the race in every period of its history. It is for these reasons, that every wise and good government, and above all, every constitutional government, ought to bestow upon these arts its patronage, support and co-operation.

But though these important advantages form most just and legitimate reasons for the public legislative encouragement of the Arts in question, they are scarcely to be considered as the reasons why any individual cultivates a taste for them. They are to be considered collateral advantages. They are not sought for by the individual who cultivates the arts; for moral culture depends chiefly upon other causes. He pursues and cultivates the arts in question for the pleasure which they bestow. But the moral advantages and happiness to which they lead, do again strikingly remind us how invariably our felicity is promoted by the habits of mind which the beneficent Author of nature prompts us by other methods to follow, while we have no such object in view. These advantages are indirectly obtained by the man of taste, obtained when he does not seek for them, at least when he is in pursuit of other objects, and are thus lavished upon him by the Author of all good, in addition

to all the happiness of which he so bountifully participates through other means.

It was thus decreed, that they who devoted themselves to calm pleasures, should by this very means, and without thinking of it, prepare themselves for higher moral culture, and a greater adaptation to virtuous dispositions. If this effect does not always follow, being thwarted by more wayward principles, and less propitious circumstances; these exceptions form no sound objection to the rule, that the provisions of nature, in this as in all other instances, are wholesome and beneficent.

Among the causes which have led to the cultivation of the Fine Arts, we must not forget to state, for the enumeration would otherwise be incomplete, the splendor and magnificence which they are capable of bestowing upon opulence and power. It was for the purpose of augmenting the show of power that surrounded them, for fixing the attentions and securing the undivided sympathy, and consequently the support of the giddy multitude, that Eastern Despots erected the enormous structures that have braved the storms of numerous centuries; and for the same purpose they erected the graceful columns, and the varied architectural ornaments, which are still so much admired in the ruins of Balbec and Palmyna, and other wrecks of antiquity. The appearance of supreme felicity that was conceived to be the lot of the inmates of these lofty dwellings, or of those who could command them to rise, was one of the refined arts by which the ancient masters of mankind, secured and perpetuated their dominion. However real and undeniable the sympathy which men bestow upon the unfortunate, the readiness which they indulge congratulation with the rich, the powerful and the happy, is far more conspicuous, far more instantaneous in those who bestow their admiration, and far more available to those who have the benefit of it.* Hence the principles of taste which serve so much to polish and improve the race of men, were also employed, and eminently contributed to fix the chains of slavery, and to preserve these chains unresisted and unloosened through many succeeding ages.

The pleasures of taste, however, being the principal and most efficient cause of promoting the Fine Arts, more especially demand our attention. And among the agreeable impressions made upon our senses by external objects, there is one remarkable distinction. Some are pleasing, while the want of them is accompanied with pain; others are also pleasing, whhile their absence is a matter of indifference.

* Theory of Moral Sentiments.

The objects which are necessary to our existence, yield us pleasure by their presence during a certain interval: the want of them beyond another interval, involves us in pain. Food and warmth in certain proportions, yield us satisfaction. The want of them is followed by pain; that pain increases as the privation continues; at last it produces excruciating torment, and ends in the deprivation of life.

But the pleasures of taste are of a different nature. Their absence whether long or short, is accompanied with no painful feeling. It is followed by no danger, nor by any inconvenience to our subsistence. They form a pleasurable, but as far as the existence and continuance of our race is concerned, an unnecessary addition of happiness, which the beneficent Author of existence, has superinduced upon our nature. We could have existed without them, and could have continued to perform all the duties of life and of human society, though they had never existed, or never been enjoyed.

How unreasonable must we then deem, the assertion made by some authors, that pleasure consists only in the removal of pain. So far is this from being the case, that one half of our intercourse with external nature, consists of a series of delights which are no way connected with pain, nor require its pre-existence at all to produce them, which fill the mind with satisfaction while they are felt, and retire in their season without leaving the shadow of a sting behind them. They leave only their remembrance, which is delightful.

To afford us these satisfactions nature lavishes all her charms, and displays all her resources. On all sides of us, we meet with beautiful colours, interesting forms, melodious sounds, picturesque scenery, majestic elevations; clouds and skies, and streams, and fields, and flowers, and the "human face divine!" With such accompaniments as these, has the bountiful Author of existence covered the face of nature, and he has endowed all his rational offspring with faculties fitted to taste and enjoy them.

Still further to augment and extend these pleasurable feelings, the skill, penetration and industry of man, have through the same beneficent arrangement, invented and improved the Fine Arts. To scatter among us still more abundantly, the pleasures which are unconnected with any mixture of pain or distress, the arts of painting, of design, sculpture, music and architecture, lend their aid. Probably, horticulture and some others might be added to the catalogue. As the industry of man becomes appropriated to new and particular channels, the

arts, like the sciences, become subdivided, and claim to themselves new designations.

The progress of the Fine Arts, has most commonly kept pace with the advancement of knowledge. But the union has not been invariable. That this should not be the case, may be sufficiently explained from the circumstance, that the progress of the two does not depend on the same causes. That the union should most generally prevail, may arise from two circumstances; first, that the progress of general knowledge serves to diffuse an acquaintance with the means of improving the arts; and secondly, that the same event serves to extend more widely the reputation of the artists themselves, as well as the fame of their productions. The usual coincidence of progress in the Fine Arts, with that of intellectual improvement in general, will be evident from a slight review of the history of both.

When the states of Greece began to breathe after the fierce, and protracted struggle which they had maintained with the colossal power of Persia, a high degree of intellectual improvement ensued, and every department of knowledge which could then be supposed to exist, was cultivated by men of the most splendid genius. The arts now under consideration received similar attention, and underwent a similar polish; and many of the productions of the age of Pericles, have served as models in the same departments to all succeeding ages. When power passsed from Macedon to Rome, and knowledge ceaseing to be confined to Greece and Grecian colonies, took up her abode in Latium; the Fine Arts also passed over into Italy, and took possession of the various provinces of the Roman Empire, but especially of the metropolis. The description of the vestiges which they left behind them in these various stations, has served to fill many a modern volume, and to give interest to many a traveller's Journal.

The state of the Arts among the Saracens, after the rise of their power, appears to be the most remarkable exception to the union which has generally been observed. Though that people were eminently skilled in several of the sciences, and founded many colleges, from which the European Univesities were probably first modelled; few traces are to be found of their progress in the Fine Arts: a circumstance sufficiently deserving to be investigated. When, in consequence of the invention of printing, and other causes, the revival of learning took place in Italy during the 15th and 16th centuries, the same union of intellect and taste took place as in the ancient periods. Painting, sculpture, music and architecture received that hold on

the attention of men of letters, which they still keep, and will no doubt continue to do. When learning and science moved northward into France and England, into the Netherlands and Sweden, in the 17th century, they were followed by the same pleasing companions as before. And so well is this union now established, that, in the present extension of knowledge over a great part of the globe, we could never consider a country enlightened, which should be found destitute of works of art.

However unfavourable to the advance of knowledge, the present circumstances of this country may be, and they are indeed extremely unfavourable to it; we must, notwithstanding, esteem it no slight symptom in favour of at least some taste for knowledge, that painting appears to have struck its roots among us. Already several Artists have, notwithstanding extraordinary disadvantages, and amidst the almost total want of encouragement, made distinguished progress in this elegant department.

What may we not, then, expect when the public shall awake to a sense of the merit of such productions, and shall feel disposed to bestow upon them that admiration to which eminence in so difficult an art is justly entitled? When so much eminence has been attained in so withering a climate; what may we not expect when the climate of public opinion shall have become mild, genial and protective? Two of these Artists are members of this Society; and as such ought reasonably to look for such encouragement as its countenance and aid can bestow.

If we esteem it desirable that the Fine Arts should flourish among us, and I know not what can be urged against entertaining such a desire, it then becomes natural to ask, by what means we can advance their progress;—by what means can we promote them? It was formerly a favorite theory to account for the diversities of talent, and the prevalence of genius at different times, from the influence of climate. If that theory had been well founded, it must have proved fatal to our expectations of eminent genius in this country, as the climate is beyond all question unpropitious. But the theory has, furtunately for us, been found erroneous, and the Arts in question, may flourish in any climate, if other circumstances be favorabie.—The banks of the Neva are probably colder than those of the St. Lawrence; but they have been found not inconsistent with superiority in works of art.

At other times it has been expected, that the patronage of the great, would always be sufficient to elicit genius. In the reign of Lewis XIV., an age remarkable for improvements of almost every kind, it was of course considered a matter

of primary importance to promote the elegant arts. The politicians of that period, therefore, expected to obtain fine paintings, admired statues and exquisite poems, by bestowing upon the authors of such works, pensions and honors. Many great authors, accordingly, and artists arose; but, in the end, the politicians who reasoned thus, were disappointed. "No rivals," says Professor Arthur, "arose to dispute the palm with those "painters and poets who had at first been encouraged to excite "the emulation of others. All the patronage of the noblesse, "the pensions and academies of Louis the Great, and the hopes "of applause from an enlightened people, could raise up no "more Corneilles, Racines and Molieres,—no more Poussins, "Le Sueurs and Lebruns."*

If we take a view of the countries in which the elegant arts that have flourished, and now flourish, we shall find, it is by the patronage of the public, they have done so. Give them that encouragement here, and in time they will flourish here, as they have done elsewhere.

It has long been a subject of loud and clamorous complaint among many, who, perhaps, may not be the very best judges; that this country has hitherto produced nothing; that it has brought into view neither genius nor talent. It would be fair to ask those who reiterate this complaint, what they have done to elicit genius and talent. When either of these admired qualities were discoverable in the shade, have the complainants, as in duty bound, advanced half way to meet them, and to offer them suitable encouragement?

There are particularly two modes of encouragement, which the artist naturally and very justly expects, in return for the great pains and study he has bestowed to qualify himself for giving us pleasure. He looks, in the first place, for our applause, or at least for our approbation of that which has cost him so much time and attention, so much exercise of judgment, and so much discrimination to execute. And, in the second place, he looks for a fair and liberal price for his productions, from those who are able to afford it.

Without either of these two species of encouragement, the elegant arts must, in any country, wither, and at length expire. The enthusiasm of an individual may support that individual in his ardent devotion to an unprofitable, that is, an unlucrative art. But the progress of such an art, and its advancement in any country, depend upon a multitude of practitioners; and it is contrary to all reason, to all experience, and to all philosophy, to

* Arthur's Discourses. Lit. Dis. c. ix.

expect the effectual co-operation of such numbers, without the ordinary incentives to human exertion.

The country which desires to possess the ornaments which the fine arts bestow, must be disposed to honor them, and willing to grant remuneration for them.

The productions of the painter, though apparently less durable than those of the sculptor and the poet, may yet, in favorable circumstances, be preserved through indefinite periods of time.

Many of the paintings on the walls of the houses in the ruins of Pompeii, are said to have their colours as fresh as the day they were laid on. And as it is not probable that the works of art, throughout the civilized world, will be again universally destroyed by the prevalence of barbarians, the artists of the late and present ages, may indulge the anticipation, that their works will be known and admired for centuries to come. And let it not be forgotten, that while they immortalize themselves, they confer a similar honor, though perhaps in a less degree, on their patrons, and on the age, and country in which they live.

Another means of promoting the fine arts in Canada, would be a supply of works of art from the hands of eminent masters, which might afford subjects for imitation to our young artists, stimulate them to suitable exertions, and provide lessons for their guidance in practice.

One other desirable object in this view, would be, the estab'ishment of a gallery of paintings. This has been several times attempted, and it may be seen, by the report of the class of fine arts, presented at the last annual meeting, that an expectation is still entertained of accomplishing this important object.

This brings me to the last means I propose to speak of, for promoting the fine arts in Canada; namely, their connexion with the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, and the motives for the establishment of literary and scientific associations in general. I shall treat this part of the subject in the widest view that can be taken of it, as contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the country, and the dissemination of a taste for obtaining it. Perhaps no means are more likely to promote a desire for education, than the opportunity which it gives of rising to eminence of contending for superiority in some elegant accomplishment. However small may be the number of those who can expect to rise to such eminence, the possibility of such a felicity, is an advantage of which, naturally, no man would wish to deprive himself.

Associations formed for the promotion of literature, science and art, necessarily originate in the great instruments of human

improvement, the power of speech. Had each individual been limited to his own personal discoveries, every one of us, must long ago have arrived at the *ne plus ultra*, at the very utmost extent of knowledge, which it was possible for him to reach.

It is from the mutual interchange of ideas and discoveries that we can alone hope to keep alive a zeal for improvement, and pursue our inquiries with success.

Societies formed for the purpose of mental improvement, existed from the earliest times. They existed among the Hebrews, as appears from the mention that is made of the sons of the prophets, and their living together in a body. In Greece, it is well known, that each sect of philosophers had its particular place for associating, and for the more public discussions of philosophical questions. The name of one of these places, Academus, or a grove to which persons were accustomed to resort for the purpose of holding this sort of intercourse, has descended to us, and is in familiar use at this very day. Another sect was called the Stoics, from the members of it being accustomed to frequent a certain porch or *stoa*. A third, and more numerous body, was called the Peripatetics, from the circumstance that the founder of it was in the habit of walking backwards and forwards while he delivered his instructions.

But none of these associations possessed so permanent a nature, as those which have been formed in modern times, with fixed laws to govern them, with officers voluntarily elected for the more regular conduct of their deliberations, and many of them under the special patronage of the governments under which they exist. They thus become part of the established institutions of the country in which they are situated, and as far as human things can indulge such expectations, may look for a perpetuity of existence. At all events, they may well expect to subsist till something better can be substituted in their place. And no one can doubt that such substitution can only be some improved condition of the same social form. They must be as permanent as the governments under which they subsist. And even when governments, as sometimes unfortunately happens, are revolutionized, the associations now alluded to, generally rise, like another Phœnix, from their own ashes, and assume some new, or some better form.

These associations, under the names either of academies, or societies, with various additional designations, have, of late years, extended themselves in one shape or other over every part of the civilized world. Some of them, indeed, appear to have existed as far back as the time of Charlemagne. But whatever

they were, and however formed, they could not survive the barbarism and disorders of the ages that followed. Some of them sprung up in Italy, on the revival of learning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. And from that time to the present, they have continued to increase both in numbers and importance.

The most important associations that have existed of this kind, whether we consider the length of time they have continued to flourish, or the great services they have rendered to science and to mankind, are the Royal Society of London, and the Academy of Sciences at Paris. Besides the vast contributions which they have themselves made to human knowledge, they have given rise to numerous societies formed for similar purposes in both countries, and their example has been extensively followed in other parts of the world. There is no country in Europe, except Turkey, where similar associations have not been formed. They exist, though but in small numbers, on the continent of Asia; and North America possesses its share. The enumeration of such bodies, is now an indispensable item in the geographical description of every civilized country.

The British association for the advancement of science, ambulatory in its position, and co-extensive with the limits of the United Kingdom has exemplified a new form of such societies, and given new facilities to the diffusion of scientific discoveries, to the communication and comparison of scientific theories.

It was, therefore, high time that Canada should possess her associations for literary and scientific purposes. A population of eight hundred thousand souls, with a great influx of strangers, and the temporary residence of numerous officers in his Majesty's service, with an indefinite or rather boundless extent of unexplored natural productions, surely afforded scope for the formation of one or more associations for literary or philosophical purposes. The existence of civilized society in the country, has been of nearly two centuries and a half's continuance; for so far does the field of historical research extend backward, while the history and character of the Aborigines form an extensive field of investigation.

The colonies of New Holland and Van Dieman's Land, which comparatively speaking, are but of yesterday, and not composed, one would imagine, of the most favorable subjects, have already their various societies for literature and art. How is it that so many persons pretend to assure us, that this country is as yet too young to contain and support institutions of the kind in question? If Canada be still too young, to engage in a literary

course, it may fairly be asked when she will be of age. She is already the mother of a numerous, flourishing and rapidly increasing family. It is time she should look to their intellectual improvement.

But when do those who raise these objections, when do they admit that we shall be fit to have literary establishments among us? Perhaps when we shall have a greater number of literary characters. And when, it may be asked, will that happen, if every one hold himself back as much as possible, and refuse all assistance towards the general improvement, and readily sustain every apology that indolence can lay hold of, or dissipation invent, or a complete immersion in business can supply, for withholding his contributions to the public good? When can our literature flourish, if all these excuses, or any of them, are to be held valid? Then only can the country flourish in arts, in science, and in literary occupations, when every one strives to do his utmost according to his ability, according to the department of learning which he cultivates, and according to the leisure he enjoys.

In considering the means by which knowledge in general, and the fine arts particularly, may be promoted, it would be unpardonable to pass over, on the present occasion, the exertions which this society has made for eliciting the intellectual resources of the country by the number of prizes for performances of eminent merit in the several departments of science and art. You have heard declared, Gentlemen, what has been offered by these exertions during the past year. Though the fruit may yet have been small, it affords a hope that a larger harvest may yet follow on some future occasion.

You have observed, no doubt, that the success of our efforts, has been, in no small degree, owing to the liberality of the Right Honorable Sir Charles Grey. It is to be hoped, that the attention now directed to subject of our prizes, *slender as it may seem*, may produce a salutary effect in time to come; may contribute to that developement of hidden talents, and that advancement of intellectual energies, for the sake of which they have been offered, and will, it is hoped, continue to be offered. Many of the societies of which I have slightly, but generally spoken, have it as one of their objects, and others as their only object, to hold out similar rewards with those which the society offers. And many individnals, highly to their honor, have succeeded, as Sir Charles Grey has endeavoured to do, in conferring signal benefits on science and knowiedge by means of the

rewards that they offered for useful discoveries and inventions, for profound investigations, or elegant performances.

I concludé by expressing my hopes, that the force of this example will not be limited to the occasion before us, but that the remembrance will continue to stimulate our youth to laudable exertions,—that it will lead persons of every age to value more highly the exercises of the mind, and especially that it will eventually lead to more permanent encouragement in favor of mental exertions.

ABSTRACT OF THE METEOROLOGICAL JOURNAL,
KEPT AT CAPE DIAMOND, QUEBEC, IN 1835 AND 1836.

1835.	Temperature.			Winds.			Days on which snow fell.	Days on which Rain fell.	Dry days.	Thunder storms, Lighting, &c.	Aurora Borealis.
	Mean at 9, A. M.	Highest.	Lowest.	Westerly.	Easterly.	Various.					
January,	9.° 95	32.° 5	— 22.°	17	10	4	13	6	18	...	1
February,	5. 04	39	— 30	16	7	5	11	1	16	...	4
March,	19. 00	42	— 16	14	15	2	10	...	21	...	3
April,	32. 43	49	11	13	15	2	7	3	21	..	1
May,	47. 37	74	27	15	12	4	2	13	17	2	1
June,	59. 50	82	38	19	8	3	...	16	14	11	3
July,	63. 77	82	46	22	7	2	...	11	20	7	3
August,	60. 23	88	41	21	8	2	...	11	20	1	4
September,	50. 00	75	32 5	22	7	1	...	13	17	1	6
October,	43. 74	68	24	21	7	3	1	11	20	1	1
November,	24. 15	52	— 14	20	8	2	9	3	18	...	2
December,	5. 48	26	— 25	24	5	2	10	2	19	...	3
	35.° 06	88.°	— 30.°	224	109	32	63	90	221	23	32

1836.	Temperature.			Winds.			Days on which Snow fell.	Days on which Rain fell.	Dry days.	Thunder storms, Lighting, &c.	Aurora Borealis.
	Mean at 9, A. M.	Highest.	Lowest.	Westerly.	Easterly.	Various.					
January,	11.° 48	38.°	— 20.°	15	13	3	10	...	21	...	1
February,	7. 93	39	— 26	19	8	2	8	3	20	...	4
March,	19. 65	44	— 12	18	10	3	11	2	18	...	1
April,	32. 18	56	2	16	7	7	8	3	20	1	3
May,	44. 00	77	26	11	15	5	2	16	15	3	3
June,	61. 37	88	42	12	12	6	...	7	23	5	3
July,	65. 94	92	49	18	8	5	...	13	18	8	7
August,	58. 69	79	40	21	5	5	...	13	18	6	11
September,	49. 05	77	26	17	5	8	2	12	16	2	6
October,	32. 47	52	10	22	7	2	9	10	14	...	2
November,	27. 35	49	10	20	9	1	10	4	17	...	2
December,	10. 79	44	— 26	20	10	1	14	5	16	...	0
	34.° 83	92.°	—26.°	209	109	48	74	88	216	25	43

Mr. Watt has lately published a mean of all his observations at Cape Diamond, from 1829 to 1836. The observations were made six times a day, at 6 and 9, A. M., noon, 3, 6, and 9, P. M. The annual mean temperature derived from all these observations (on correcting a clerical error which had some effect on the published results) is 37°$\frac{1}{3}$. This is somewhat higher than the mean at 9, A. M. of the same years, which is 36° 51. But the annual temperature obtained by Mr. Watt in this way, does not exceed that contained in those tables, more than might be expected, if it was ascertained that 9, A. M., represented the mean of the day correctly. Since observations at midnight, and 3, A. M., which are wanting for the completion of the daily mean, would tend to lower the result of the whole in some degree.

The mean annual temperature hitherto assigned to Quebec (41° or 42°) is probably too high by four or five degrees. It seems to have been obtained from observations made in the town, where a situation, free from a variety of disturbing influences, would be difficult to find. A review of the annual means published in this volume, would appear to shew a gradual increase of temperature from 1825 to 1829 ; a very slight fluctuation between this and 1831 ; and then a gradual diminution for the last five years.

W. Kelly.

Quebec, November, 1837.