

wonderful phenomena of alternate generations; and, if we would not remain behind in the generous race now running in science, we must take good care, while we investigate our Fauna and describe our new species, to combine the investigation with all those considerations which give true dignity to science, and raise it above the play of the mere collector.

I must beg my European readers to remember, that this work is written in America, and more especially for America; and that the community to which it is particularly addressed has very different wants from those of the reading public in Europe. There is not a class of learned men here, distinct from the other cultivated members of the community. On the contrary, so general is the desire for knowledge, that I expect to see my book read by operatives, by fishermen, by farmers, quite as extensively as by the students in our colleges, or by the learned professions; and it is but proper that I should endeavor to make myself understood by all.

Lieber, — whose testimony cannot be questioned, as, like myself, he did not first see the light of day in America, — justly remarks, what is particularly true of the United States, “that one of the characteristic features of the nineteenth century in the great history of the western Caucasian race, is a yearning for knowledge and culture far more general than has ever existed at any previous period on the one hand, and on the other a readiness and corresponding desire in the votaries of knowledge to diffuse it, — to make the many millions share in its treasures and benefits.”¹

It must not be overlooked also, that, while our scientific libraries are still very defective, there is a class of elementary works upon Natural History widely circulated in Europe, and accompanied with numerous illustrations, which are still entirely unknown in this country. In most of our public libraries there are no copies of such works as Swammerdam, Roesel, Reaumur, Lyonet, etc., nor any thing, within the reach of the young, like those innumerable popular publications, such as Sturm's Fauna, the Insect Almanachs, Bertuch's Bilderbuch, and the neatly illustrated school-books published in Esslingen, or like the series of valuable treatises illustrating the Natural History of England, and the popular sea-side books, which, in the Old World, are to be found in the hands of every child. The only good book upon Insects in general, yet printed in America, is “Harris's Treatise on the Insects injurious to Vegetation in Massachusetts”; and that book does not contain even a single wood-cut. There has not yet been published a single text-book embracing the whole animal kingdom. This may explain the necessity I have felt of introducing frequently in my illustrations, details which, to a professional naturalist, might seem entirely out of place.

I have a few words more to say respecting the first two volumes, now ready for publication. Considering the uncertainty of human life, I have wished to bring out at once

¹ Columbia Athenæum Lecture, by Francis Lieber, Columbia, S. C., 1856, p. 7.