

## CHAPTER I.

A FEW AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS—PROPOSAL THAT  
I SHOULD COME TO CANADA—THE VOYAGE—FIRST  
IMPRESSIONS OF THE LAND OF THE MAPLE—A MATRI-  
MONIAL JOKE—MY INTRODUCTION TO THE ROCKS.

**M**Y first memories are of Birmingham, Eng-  
land, the "toy shop of Europe," the  
birth-place of Watt's steam engine, the source  
of "Brummagem" jewellery and Radicalism. In  
this town of various manufactures—it was not  
a city then—I was born in October, 1832. My  
father was a self-taught natural philosopher in  
a modest way, who was enthusiastic in learning  
about science, such as it was in those days. He  
was particularly fond of optics, and constructed  
both magic lanterns and microscopes for his own  
use. His versatility and cleverness in handicraft  
led him ultimately into the manufacture of  
fancy ornaments such as women delight in. Part  
of his business consisted in dealing in and  
cutting precious stones. He also prepared micro-  
scopic sections of stones and minerals. It was  
this work that earned him the title of "scientific  
lapidary," and it was in this line of duties that  
I spent ten years of my early life. Amid the  
various ups and downs of a busy commercial  
life my father still pursued his scientific investi-