

## SIR WILLIAM LOGAN.



Is it not to be regretted that Canadians, who hold the great men of other countries in high esteem, should be so forgetful of their own illustrious countrymen?

For when we mention the name of Logan, how few there are who could give us the history of his labors for his native country, and could tell us what benefits Canada is now deriving from them! When we consider that largely through his exertions the mineral wealth of the country was made known, not only to Canadians but also, to the whole world, we have greater regard for him, and we feel more deeply interested in the story of his life.

Logan was born in the city of Montreal on the 20th of April, 1798. His father, William Logan, had come to this country from Sterling, Scotland, and had prospered in business while in Canada. His third son, William Edmond, the future geologist, made a reputation for himself as a boxer at his school in Montreal; but as this was not the kind of progress his father most favored, William was sent to a then famous High School at Edinburgh. Two years later, in 1816, he entered the University of Edinburgh, where he led his class in mathematics. He was also proficient in classics and modern languages; and it was here he first displayed that untiring energy in the pursuit of an object, which characterized him in after life. For such was his devotion to learning that he often spent most of his night at study.

Under these circumstances it is strange that he decided to follow a mercantile life. In 1817, however, he went to London to conduct his uncle's business, and he remained there for ten years. The life was not that for which he was most fitted, and although he did not entirely give up study, the time hung heavy on his hands. Part of his time was spent in social entertainments, and as he was of a genial disposition, with a ready fund of anecdote, he was a most agreeable companion. At length, however, his active, searching mind began to tire of this mode of life, and he gladly accepted his uncle's offer for him to

take charge of a mining company's operations in Wales. This was in 1831.

While there he attended to the working of copper and coal, and as he had lately taken much interest in geology, the occupation was agreeable to him. He was constantly employed, either looking after the business of the firm, or surveying the surrounding country with regard to its geology. In Wales he first noticed that under every bed of coal there is a layer of clay, crossed by numerous rootlets of a plant called stigmara. Afterwards, in Pennsylvania and Nova Scotia, he observed the same phenomenon, and on the constancy of the fact he founded an important theory.

The manner of his living at that time is best told in his own words: "Here I am," he says, "out of the world altogether, and attending to nothing else but the making of coal and the digging of copper." His diligence was not wasted, for it was by his work in Wales that he laid the foundation of his practical geological knowledge, and that he befitted himself in mind and body for the task he was afterwards to undertake. Logan's reputation as a geologist spread through England when his map of the surrounding district was incorporated with that of the government survey.

Writing to his brother in Canada at one time, he remarked, "If I ever return to Canada again I shall geologize there;" and it was not long before he had an opportunity of carrying out his wish, for in 1838, on the death of his uncle, he resigned his position and came to this country.

The subject of a geological survey had been for a long time agitated in Canada, and at length, in 1841, the Provincial Government voted \$1,500 for the purpose.

On the recommendation of such eminent geologists as Henry de la Beche, Murchison and Sedgwick, the position was offered to Logan, and he willingly accepted it. The work which was undertaken by him was described by Sedgwick as a Herculean task. The country to be travelled and examined was in most cases wild and rugged; the roads, where there were any, were bad, and generally the only way to proceed was on foot or in canoes.