

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,

READ OCTOBER 13TH.

It is with peculiar feelings of gratitude and pleasure that we meet the evening of the day selected for our annual meeting, it being also the anniversary of the victory at Queenston Heights eighty-four years ago. How different our surroundings and circumstances from those of that night of grief and triumph, following a day of bitter contest with alternations of gloom and exultation. Around were the dead, the dying, burning buildings, prisoners, but the chief thought of all, that the beloved commander was no more.

It is much to be regretted that an Historical Society had not been formed here a score of years ago, when pioneers and veterans were alive, who could have told us so much that we have now no means of obtaining.

Our thoughts to-night must be both retrospective and prospective. We speak of what has been done and what we hope to do. In 1892 a small society was formed, chiefly with the view of giving assistance in the Centenary proceedings on July 16th. It is believed only two meetings were held, and one open meeting, at which a paper was read, "Niagara One Hundred Years Ago," which was printed by the Lundy's Lane Historical Society. The officers were, President, Wm. Kirby; Secretary, Dan. Servos; Treasurer, D. McDougall. In November, 1895, a meeting was called by all interested, as it was felt strongly by a few that in this historic spot such a society should exist. I had thought of a very suitable President to propose, but found to my astonishment and dismay that I was selected for the position. It was with feelings of great diffidence that I engaged in the task, for we had been assured that it was useless to try to break down the cold, dead wall of apathy and indifference that we everywhere encountered and as to collecting relics, everything valuable had disappeared, was either destroyed or given away; or that if any remained it would not be given to us. But all these dark prognostications proved false. What have we done? Briefly this: We have a list of over fifty members, have adopted a constitution and bylaws, a motto too, "The Love of Country Guides." We have had interesting meetings, three of them being open to the public at which papers were read. One by Capt. Cruikshank has been printed in pamphlet form with an old engraving. We have had a successful anniversary on the platform representatives of five Historical Societies; indeed the Presidents of four. A poem was read, dedicated to our Society, by Mrs. Curzon. A paper was read by Canon Bull and addresses were made by Miss Fitzgibbon, Capt. Cruikshank, Rev. J. C. Garrett, Rev. P. Spencer, Col. Currie, Major Hiscott. You heard the satisfactory reports of the Secretary and Treasurer, showing a balance in the treasury.

A remarkable and valuable exhibit, for which we were indebted chiefly to the zeal of Mr. John D. Servos, of documents, weapons, old silver flags, Indian relics which was universally commended. We also followed the example of the L. L. Society, in decorating the graves of those who died to save their country, the four to whom a table is placed in St. Mark's church on May 27th, the grand daughter of one of them, Capt. McClelland is among us.