

abound. It was hard work, as the wind one day was stormy, and we had to look sharp lest the rocking of living trees just ready to fall from the top of the undermined cliff should cause some of the old fossil ones to come down upon us by the run. But I never enjoyed the reading of a marvellous chapter of the big volume more. We missed a botanical aide-de-camp much when we came to the top and bottoms of calamites and all sorts of strange pranks which some of the compressed trees played."

In 1853 he was invited by Sir Edmund Head, then Governor-General of Canada, to be a member of a commission to report upon the reorganization of the University of New Brunswick.

In 1854 Forbes, who was professor of geology and zoology in the University of Edinburgh, died, and Lyell wrote to Sir William, advising him to apply for the chair, promising him his support and that of a number of his influential friends, while Sir William's "Acadian Geology," which had just been published in Edinburgh, testified to his abundant fitness for the position. He was about to set sail for Scotland to prosecute his candidature for the chair, when he received word that the place had been filled sooner than had been anticipated, by the appointment of a zoologist who had been strongly supported by the medical school of the university, but, by a strange coincidence, he received, almost on the very day that he was to sail for Scotland, a letter offering him the principalship of McGill University.

This institution, founded by royal charter in 1821, had made but slow progress in its earlier years, and was at this time, through litigation and other causes, almost in a state of collapse. Sir William, then Mr. Dawson, was pointed out to the governors of the college by Sir Edmund Head, who had formed a high opinion of his ability, as a man who if his services could be secured, was eminently fitted to undertake the task of reconstructing it. The services of Mr. Dawson were accordingly enlisted, and in 1855 he assumed the principalship of McGill University, stipulating at the same time that the chair of natural history should be assigned to him. In his Inaugural Discourse, delivered in November of this year, he said:—"Believing that in connection with this Institution and in this the chief city of British North America, I should have the best opportunities of promoting the study of the subjects to which I have devoted myself and at the same time of advancing the cause of education, I determined without hesitation to cast in my lot with yours; and I humbly trust that with the blessing of God on diligent effort I may be able to carry out the objects of my appointment. At a time when literary and scientific pursuits are so widely ramified, everyone who aims to do anything well must