

I.—*Presidential Address: Some Points in which American Geological Science is indebted to Canada.* By SIR J. WILLIAM DAWSON, C.M.G., LL.D., F.R.S.

(Read May 26, 1886.)

The position of Canada relatively to original work in Geological Science, is somewhat peculiar. Its territory embraces the whole series of geological formations, and is second to no other in the interest of its rocks and minerals, and the extent and excellence of its exposures. It is thus rich in the raw material of geological discovery. But its skilled and trained workers have heretofore been few. It is deficient in great libraries and in the apparatus of original research. It possesses no wealthy institutions able to render substantial aid, either to research or publication. Its Government has been unable to devote large sums to geological explorations, and such aid as it has given has been too much restricted to merely economic explorations.

With all this, it lies beside a much greater and more wealthy country, into which all its rock formations extend, and which excels it tenfold in number of workers, in means of publication, and in government aids to science. It would be too much to expect that this powerful neighbour and those who enjoy for the time its advantages, should always be generous, forbearing, or even just, or that they should fail to use to the utmost their superior vantage in the race for distinction. Practically, while Canada has had much reason to be grateful for the friendly and generous sympathy of the naturalists of the United States, it has had occasion, in some happily exceptional cases, to smart under their vigorous competition, and in some instances to deprecate a spirit of detraction or of unfair rivalry.

It is interesting in these circumstances to enquire what Canada has done in promoting the advance of Geological Science, and how far she has been able to keep pace with or anticipate discovery abroad. In directing your attention to a few facts bearing on this question, I shall not hesitate to include with our own native workers, those who have come to us from the mother countries of our population, just as in the United States it is customary to regard the great men who have been imported from abroad as Americans.

Perhaps the simplest way will be to begin with the older formations, and to notice Canadian discovery as it applies to the different successive periods of geological time, as represented in our country.

Canada has magnificent exposures of the oldest rocks. Our vast Laurentian and Huronian territory is unsurpassed in extent and importance. In this, therefore, we should have some claims to honourable distinction. That we have such is evidenced by the fact that the names "Laurentian" and "Huronian" are of world wide currency, and the discussions as to the origin and character of these old rocks, and their possible evidence of primitive forms of life, have centred around Canadian localities and specimens.

In this field, Canada has had some eminent workers. The ground was broken in 1823