

of the mission and objects of the Society, and consequently a preference has been shown for those more costly productions which few can afford to purchase, but which many feel bound to read ; while the lighter and more graceful forms of literature have not been systematically excluded. A roomy fire-proof chamber has recently been constructed in the basement of this building, for the custody of old and rare works which could not be replaced in the event of loss ; and to make security doubly sure, the chamber has been provided with an iron chest, in which historical manuscripts, memoirs, and other documents which constitute the archives of the Society are deposited.

Since I last had the pleasure of meeting you, this society has published its transactions for 1876-7, and also a small volume of historical documents relating to the war of 1812, selected from those rare old pages in our possession, of the "Quebec Gazette." Among the documents which we have just published, will be found particulars of the engagement between the British man-of-war "Leopard," Captain Humphreys, and the American frigate "Chesapeake," Commodore Barron, one of the events, if not the very event, which brought on the war of 1812. I shall read a portion of a paper which I have just received from a friend relating to that affair. "In the early part of June, 1807, the fifty-gun ship "Leopard," Capt. Salasbury Pryce Humphreys, sailed from Halifax with an order addressed to the captains and commanders under the vice-Admiral's command, directing that in case of meeting the American frigate "Chesapeake" at sea, and without the limit of the United States, they were to show her Captain that order, and require to search for deserters from His Majesty's ships "Belleisle," "Bellona," "Triumph," "Melampus," "Chicester," "Halifax" and "Zenobia," and were to proceed and search for the same." "The 'Leopard' having weighed and made sail, arrived off Cape Henry within hail of the 'Chesapeake,'"