

*I.—In Memoriam—Sir John William Dawson.*

By FRANK DAWSON ADAMS, M.Sc., Ph.D.

(Read May 21, 1901.)

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Sir William Dawson, which took place at Montreal on the morning of November 18th, 1899, in the eightieth year of his age. In him the Royal Society of Canada loses its first President and one of its most distinguished members, and Canada loses an eminent geologist and naturalist, as well as one who was intimately identified with educational work of all kinds, but more especially with the higher education in the province of Quebec.

Sir John William Dawson was born at Pictou on October 13th, 1820, and was therefore a native of Nova Scotia, a province which has produced more than its share of the Canadians who have risen to eminence in the various walks of life. His father, James Dawson, was from near Aberdeen, Scotland, and came to Nova Scotia to fill a position in a leading business house in Pictou. On the termination of his engagement he began business on his own account, becoming in the course of time one of the chief ship-builders in that part of Nova Scotia. James Dawson had but two children, of whom Sir William was the elder. The younger died at an early age, thus leaving Sir William the sole survivor of the family.

While still at school in Pictou, he developed a love for natural science, inherited from his father, and made large collections of fossil plants from the Nova Scotian coal measures, so well exposed about his native place. He speaks of himself at that time as being a "moderately diligent but not a specially brilliant pupil." On leaving school he studied at the Pictou Academy and subsequently at the University of Edinburgh. While at the former seat of learning, at the age of sixteen, he read before the local Natural History Society his first paper, having the somewhat ambitious title, "On the Structure and History of the Earth."

At Edinburgh he studied under Jamieson, Forbes and Balfour, as well as with Alexander Rose, whom he refers to in some notes and reminiscences as a single-hearted mineralogist and the greatest authority on the mineralogy of Scotland. He records his impression of the University of Edinburgh at that time as being "a very imperfect school of natural science in comparison with our modern institutions," and adds: "Jamieson, who was my principal teacher, devoted a large portion of the earlier lectures of his course to physiography, and the rest to minerals and rocks, but I was surprised to find how little even some