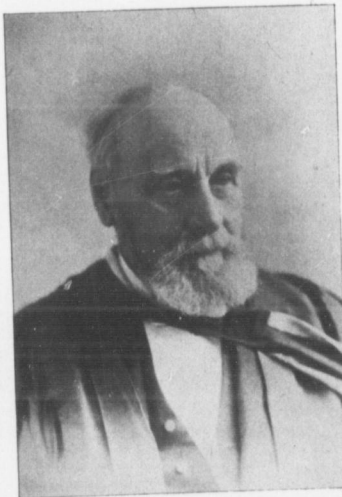


## SIR WILLIAM DAWSON.

No book, having any relation to McGill University, could in any way be considered complete if it did not, as an integral part of itself, refer to the man who, for thirty-eight years, guided the University through difficulties and perplexities. Who assumed the helm when the University was small and poor, struggling for its very existence, and left it when the University was great, its foundations well established, and its prosperity ensured.

Although the student of to-day has not the opportunity of meeting Sir William, for he is no longer actively connected with the University which he assisted so greatly in establishing, yet the student sees all around great works and magnificent piles of buildings with which the name of Sir William Dawson is indelibly connected; so that he is moved to feelings of reverence and gratitude for the great old man who can still be seen, with stooped figure and thoughtful brow, walking through the College grounds. It is the earnest wish of all the friends of McGill University that he may long be spared to inspire by his presence, and incite by his example, the younger workers in the great field in which he was engaged to increased efforts to render McGill pre-eminent.

Sir William Dawson was born of Scotch parents, in Nova Scotia. He received his early education there and completed it at the University of Edinburgh, where he devoted himself largely to Natural History. He afterwards did much geological work under the guidance of the great geologist Sir Charles Lyell. It was after the publication of some of the results of his work in this field that he was employed by the government



of Nova Scotia to make a survey of the coal fields of that province, and later he was appointed Superintendent of Education, which post he held for three years, resigning when he had succeeded in establishing a good system of provincial education.

It was about this time that the Governors of McGill University desired to obtain a new Principal, and they applied to Sir Edmund Head, the Governor-General, for advice in this matter. They expected the Governor to suggest some man who would be able to advance the interests of the University and give it prestige, and were much disappointed when Sir Edmund mentioned Dr. Dawson, a comparatively unknown colonial.

The appointment, however, was made, and a new era dawned for McGill. Fortunate, indeed, was it that Sir Edmund Head had that intimate knowledge of human character which enabled him to suggest such a man at this important juncture.

In 1855 then, Dr. Dawson entered upon his work as Principal of McGill University and Professor of Natural History. Of his labors in this field, I do not need to speak, for McGill as it stands to-day is the result of his occupancy of the Principalship. He resigned his office in 1893, owing to his advanced years, rendering it impossible for him to continue longer the active duties of the Principalship.

Sir William Dawson has been the author of many works, most of which bear upon geology and zoology, the subjects to which he devoted most of his time and of which he is so brilliant an exponent.