

# LIFE OF WALTER H. SMITH,

## Astronomer and Meteorologist.

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BY J. H. OXLEY.

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THE writer became acquainted with the late Mr. Smith in the year 1874, in the office of the *Montreal Daily Witness*. Having just left school, and being in that transition state between boyhood and manhood, I have always considered myself peculiarly fortunate in finding such a companion at that period; and the acquaintance thus formed speedily ripened into warm friendship, owing to a similarity of literary tastes.

From his earliest youth Mr. Smith had been delicate, with a sensitive, retiring disposition, but endowed with an energy and capacity for diverse mental studies which astonished his more intimate friends. His evenings were spent in company with the writer for many years, and were characterised by a greater amount of application and a higher range of study than the majority of young men indulge in. At this period my friend enjoyed fairly good health, and having a mind well-stored with information, and with good conversational powers, he proved a delightful companion. He was one of those who, like Bryant, loved to "enter the wild wood and view the haunts of nature," and in the early spring mornings would wend his way to Mount Royal while its spring dress was yet in embryo. It was during these rambles that the writer learned to love his companion, and to note the general bias of his mind. The subtle charm of poesy seems to have pervaded him, and this spell of fancy and feeling, of imagination and truth, was brought to the surface by trifles. He would be enthusiastic over the discovery of a violet "half-hidden in a mossy dell," and search for them among the decayed leaves and *debris* of the winter as eagerly