

PROCEEDINGS.

The annual meeting of this Society was held at its rooms on the evening of May 18th, the President, Principal Dawson, LL.D., F.R.S., &c., in the chair. Mr. J. F. Whiteaves, the Recording Secretary, read the minutes of the last annual meeting; after which the usual annual address of the President was delivered. An abstract only is given here, the entire address will be found in Vol. 4, pages 121 to 138 of the New Series of the Canadian Naturalist.

The President commenced by saying:—

The sphere of this Society, as a modest preserver and collector of local facts in Natural History, does not preclude its glancing at the more difficult and abstruse questions which agitate Naturalists elsewhere; and perhaps no place is more fitting for this than the annual address of the President. I propose, therefore, on the present occasion, to direct your attention to the present state of those exciting questions agitated in our day by Geologists, Zoologists and Botanists, as to the origin of Species and Genera, and the law of their creation.

He then proceeded to an elaborate discussion of the various theories of Derivation, more especially those promulgated by Lamarck, Darwin, Owen and Cope; and concluded as follows:

What that law will ultimately prove to be, and to what extent it may include processes of derivation, it is impossible now to say. At present we must recognize in the prevailing theories on the subject merely the natural tendency of the human mind to grasp the whole mass of the unknown under some grand general hypothesis, which, though perhaps little else than a figure of speech, satisfies for the moment. We are dealing with the origin of species precisely as the Alchemists did with Chemistry, and as the Diluvialists and Neptunists did with Geology; but the