

PROCEEDINGS AT THE ANNUAL MEETING,

Held May 18th, 1874.

The minutes of the last annual meeting having been read by the Recording Secretary, the following address was delivered by the President, Principal Dawson, LL.D., F.R.S.

ANNUAL ADDRESS.

The scientific work of this Society in the year which closes to-night, is not so remarkable for its variety as for the interest and importance of the subjects to which it relates. The number of papers read is nine, but I shall confine myself principally to two subjects embraced in their scope. One is the bearing of the dredging operations of our colleague, Mr. Whiteaves, on the Post-pliocene Geology of Canada, in connection with other oceanic and geological researches. The second is the growth of our information as to the geological structure of those great plains of the West, whose profitable occupancy is now so important a problem for our statesmen.

Mr. Whiteaves in the past summer was chiefly occupied with the exploration of the great southern Bay of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, a basin of shallow water nearly semicircular in form, and in which is set the beautiful Island of Prince Edward. It is protected to some extent by the encompassing land, by its limited depth, and by the islands and shoals stretching across its mouth, from the influence of those cold northern currents which pervade all the middle and northern parts of the Gulf, and give to its fauna an almost Arctic character: it thus forms a peculiar and exceptional zoological province. The marine animals of Northumberland Strait were those with which I was myself most familiar in early youth, and I still possess many drawings of the more minute forms, made under the microscope for my amusement, before I had received any scientific training in natural history. In my cabinet there has been for the last thirty years a nearly complete representation of its mollusks, and I was even then aware from the observations of Gould and others in New England, of the specially southern character of this group of animals, though at that time I had no means of publishing my observations, and the importance of these peculiarities of distribution had scarcely dawned upon the minds of