

temperament, but hints of the mood or frame of mind at the date and moment of composition—evidences as to whether these were calm and collected, or agitated by some dominant passion or feeling. Men whose names, after the lapse of a generation or two, had become simply abstract terms as it were, or mere shadows, thus live again in our imaginations by means of signs traced with their own hands when here in the flesh. No production of theirs coming under our eye in print could affect us in the same lively way.—Sometimes the character of one long defunct may be shrewdly divined from his effigy, his counterfeit presentment, on a well-preserved ancient coin or medal; but a surer idea of him would be gained by the study of an autograph fragment, were it possible to have access to such a waif from the past.—And what is now said of the manuscript relics of eminent men is true also, though perhaps not so strikingly, of books which exhibit their autographs and other evidences of former ownership. Here, we say to ourselves, as we are turning over the leaves of the volume—here are pages which their eyes have carefully scanned: here is matter which has engaged their special attention. Here and there perhaps we discern their underscorings: here and there we have their marginal annotations. To the cursory review then of the MS. collection which I propose to make, I may conveniently add brief notices of some volumes distinguished in the manner now spoken of, which are in my possession.

My first paper will consist of specimens of Canadian historical autographs. I trust that its effect will be to foster an interest amongst us in early Canadian history. To this paper I subjoin a few examples of autographs connected with the history of the adjoining United States. My second paper will be a review of a number of specimens which will, in their way, illustrate Old World history, civil and literary and in their way also, stimulate the study of Old World history amongst us. And in my third paper I shall treat of some MS. relics in my collection which specially relate to personages formerly or at present eminent in the universities of Cambridge and Oxford.

My matter, I must premise, will be of a very miscellaneous character—a mosaic made up of irregular pieces. The autograph collector cannot always possess himself of what he would desire. He must be content with what chance throws in his way. The fragments selected for my purpose in these papers will be, as far as practicable, charac-