

tention of Christianizing the natives. These missionaries were a learned and observant class of men; and their opportunities of becoming acquainted with the natural productions of the country, were greatly facilitated by their close intercourse with the Indians, —following them in their periodical migrations, and sojourning with them in their encampments. They collected a vast amount of information from their native friends about the animals, and especially about the plants, many of which were known to possess healing properties, and to be useful in the few arts that the Indians were acquainted with. The results of these researches were, at a later period, collected and embodied by Charlevoix, in his *History of Canada*. They are well worthy of being consulted. Towards the end of the last century, Canada was visited by André Michaux the elder, coming from the north, through Hudson's Bay, across the country by lakes Mistisins and St. John, down the Saguenay, and up the north shores of the St. Lawrence, disappearing southward at some point unknown to us. It must have been very interesting to him to note the gradual change of the vegetable productions in his progress south,—from the barren grounds of the stunted birch, the vast collections of lichens and mosses which cover the surface of those dreary regions,—to the noble oaks and maples on the shores of the St. Lawrence. Michaux published the result of his observations in a *Flora of America*; but it is very meagre, compared with later works on that subject. Michaux the younger never visited Canada that I am aware of, but derived his information respecting our trees from his father. Francis Masson, that celebrated collector for the Royal Gardens at Kew, who introduced so many of the floral beauties of the Cape of Good Hope, visited Canada about the beginning of the present century. He passed a good portion of his time in Montreal; and oh, how I did yearn for the benefit of his acquaintance, with a view to information on plants of the country; but all my sighing and yearning were doomed to end in disappointment. He died here about the year 1804, at the house of Mr. John Gray, at Côte St. Catherine, a benevolent and much respected merchant. The mention of John Gray reminds me that he kindly fostered the Rev. James Somerville while in a state of mental aberration. With Mr. Somerville I was much acquainted; he was devoted to the study of natural history. It will be recollected that this gentleman was a patron and benefactor of this society. We now come to the name of Frederick Pursh, the celebrated botanist, who made his appearance in Canada in 1815. I became acquainted with him, and derived much valuable information from him about plants. He visited Anticosti in 1817, and brought back a large collection of living plants—rare in other parts of the country—some of which I cultivated in my garden; but the greater portion of them perished in the packages in which they were brought up. Among those which survived were *Ligusticum Scoticum*, a beautiful *Thalictrum*, which he named *T. purpurascens*, and an *Atikum*, indentified with *A. schenoprasum*. Pursh's *Flora of North America* is a carefully got-up book, and was the standard text-book till Gray's appeared. Pursh died here about 1821, at the house of Robert Cleghorn, Blink Bonny, a nurseryman and a good botanist,—a contemporary of Loudon. Poor Pursh was thriftless; in his declining years living mainly on the hospitality of his friends. Colonel Hamilton Smith, the learned historian of the *Natural History of Man*, visited Canada in 1817, seeking information in science generally. I became acquainted with him, but his sojourn here was very short.

Now, ladies, allow me to say a word of encouragement for you. What will you not succeed on attaining when you set your hearts on its accomplishment, as the example of the Countess Dalhousie will show! This lady became an accomplished botanist, and was an indefatigable collector of plants. She presented to this society a large herbarium of Canadian plants, beautifully preserved. She collected many living plants, and sent them home to ornament the gardens and grounds of Dalhousie Castle; and she succeeded in imbuing her lady friends with a love of botany,—some of whom made marked advances in this branch of natural history—particularly one, who subsequently sent many specimens of Canadian plants to Sir Jackson Hooker, to assist him in the compilation of his great work, "*The Plants of British North America*," in which her name is duly recorded as a contributor. The example of Lady Dalhousie is well worthy of imitation by those having leisure for study.

And now permit me, by desire, to endeavour to throw some light on the origin and progress of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, the elder sister of the society. Strange to say, its formation was brought about indirectly, by a political movement, in this wise. It is no doubt known to many of you that the late John Neilson was the owner of the *Quebec Gazette*, established in 1764, now in its hundredth year. In virtue of an act of parliament, it possessed the privilege of publishing all official documents as they occurred. Neilson was a great politician, and was opposed to Lord Dalhousie in some points of government. This opposition Lord

Dalhousie could not tolerate, and he came to the determination of establishing a paper which he could control, calling it the "*Quebec Gazette by Authority*," and he caused Dr. Fisher, a co-editor of the *New York Albion*, to come and take charge of it. Dr. Fisher had been a member of the Literary and Historical Society of New York; he persuaded Lord Dalhousie to get up a society with similar title and objects in Quebec. This was done, Chief Justice Sewell becoming the first President, and W. Green, a native of this city, the secretary. The Society was in the first instance composed of high officials and courtiers, and the fee was fixed at a high rate, for some end which can only be guessed at. Papers were read before the Society. The President gave his "*Dark Days of Canada*"; Captains Bayfield and Baddely read valuable papers on the Geology of Canada, and Mr. Green presented his papers on Textile Plants, and on the plants used in dyeing by the Indians. Shortly after the formation of that Society, some of the younger inhabitants of Quebec, perhaps thinking that they had been slighted, formed themselves into a society under the name of the "*Society for the Promotion of Arts and Science in Canada*." Lord Dalhousie refused his countenance to this new institution. Several papers were read, and a successful progress became manifest. After a while, a disposition on the part of the Literary and Historical Society to conciliate the new one, and even to advocate a fusion of the two, became apparent. This was ultimately effected, retaining the original title. The union of the two societies was productive of good, the working members becoming more numerous. Some of their labors appear in the transactions of the Society. On the accession of Sir James Kemp to the government of the Province, he very liberally bestowed to the Society a copy of that splendid work of art, Claude's *Liber Veritatis*; also a transit instrument, and an excellent telescope. Here it may be mentioned that M. Chasseur, a naturalist of Quebec, had formed a museum as a matter of speculation, principally composed of birds; but finding that it did not answer his expectation in point of revenue, he persuaded the Legislature to purchase the collection; and it was placed under the care of the Literary and Historical Society, in addition to their own museum, which had assumed a respectable condition. When in 1838 Lord Durham was sent out to conciliate the people, and restore Canada to a state of peace, he did at least one good thing. Led by the title of the Society to suppose that literature and history were its sole aim, he brought out a large and select collection of the ancient Greek and Latin historians, and presented it to the Society, for which he is entitled to praise. This valuable addition to the library was received thankfully, and it furnished the means for several reviews and criticisms by that very learned and esteemed member of the Society, Dr. Wilkie. At later periods that Society has been very unfortunate, having been no less than three times burnt out; losing much of its accumulation of objects of natural history, books, and apparatus, thus receiving a severe check in scientific pursuits; but it is now gradually recovering from its losses, and again rising into a state of activity. Before concluding, a word of commendation must be said on the Geological Survey of the Province, now for so many years so well and so efficiently conducted by its learned and amiable head, assisted by an active and scientific staff. Their joint labors have been eminently successful, as is abundantly shown by the very complete Geological Museum in this city; by their periodical reports of work done, now consolidated into one large volume, which, of course, will be studied by all scientific devotees, a monument of the industry of the Commission of Survey, and an evidence to the civilized world of the varied labors and scientific capabilities of the surveyors, well meriting the applause and gratitude of the Province, to which they are fully entitled. Shall I say a word on the subject of this Society? If permitted, it must be but a word, for you are all better acquainted with its formation and operations than I can pretend to be. The Society was formed shortly after that of the L. and H. Society; at the instance, I believe, of the late Dr. Holmes and some congenial spirits. In the first few years of its existence its progress was not very rapid, all up-hill work, as the Doctor informed me, the work resting on a few of the members; but if so, that languor has been successfully shaken off; its progress and prosperity have been of the most satisfactory nature. As a contrast to the difficulties for the acquirement of scientific information met with at a remote former period, already alluded to, allow me to state some of the great facilities which are now offered to the student of Natural History. In many parts of the Province there have been established Colleges for the education of youth, in which the Natural Sciences are taught by learned professors, with the advantage of extensive museums. I will only mention some of them, without entering into particulars. Beginning in the lower part of the province and proceeding upwards, we have Laval, McGill, Lennoxville, Queen's, Toronto, and others. As regards this city, let me mention with commendation McGill College. Here for the professed student every facility exists: regular lectures are delivered