

afterwards the government of this province employed Mr. Dawson on a geological survey of the coal fields. In this capacity he did good work. Recognizing his abilities and character the Executive Council deemed it expedient to appoint him to the office of Superintendent of Education; and from 1850 to 1855 Mr. Dawson gave his undivided attention to the supervision of the schools and to the study of elementary education. The schools of the province were considerably improved under his supervision, though the time had not arrived for the establishment of a free school system. His next promotion was made in the year eighteen hundred fifty-five, when he received the appointment to the principalship and vice-chancellorship of McGill University, Montreal, which position he filled for thirty-eight years, resigning the office a little over a year ago. During this period, he raised McGill from a very low position to an eminent position among the Universities of this continent. It is much more difficult to maintain a University in Canada than in the neighboring Republic. There, the large endowments made by the wealthy place their colleges on firm ground. But such were the financial difficulties during the first years of Mr. Dawson's presidency of McGill that he was obliged to undertake several laborious professorships; and many years elapsed before the university funds enabled him to confine his attention to the supervision of the university alone. Still, during these years he managed to snatch time to compose a number of works on educational and scientific subjects. In the year 1884, as a recognition of the merits of his labors, it pleased her Majesty to confer on Mr. Dawson the honor of knighthood. These are the main facts in connection with the life of Sir William Dawson.

His fame rests chiefly on his scientific labors. Sir William has been almost as industrious a man as the late John Tyndall. Like Tyndall he has used every spare moment of his time in making original research. What Tyndall was in the realm of physics Dawson is in the realm of natural history. He has made original research in geology and mineralogy and has devoted a considerable portion of his time to the observation of the properties of chemicals and to the use of the microscope. He has published a number of works on these various subjects, most conspicuous among which are his *ACADIAN GEOLOGY*, *GEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF PLANTS*, *AIR BREATHERS OF THE COAL PERIOD*, and his recently issued work on the *CANADIAN ICE AGE*.

For a number of years he has been an active member of the British Association for the advancement of Science. On