

at Pictou in 1820, and enjoyed the advantage of attending the High School there when it was under the management of Dr. McCulloch. From boyhood he had that love of collecting and classifying which he retained to the end of his life, and while at school he began to study the natural history of Nova Scotia. From Pictou College he entered the University of Edinburgh, without, however, completing the full course. After a winter in Scotland he returned to Nova Scotia, and took up field work in geology as a serious study. No doubt Sir Charles Lyell still further quickened his enthusiasm when, in 1842, they worked together at Acadian geology. Dawson's earliest papers on the carboniferous rocks of Nova Scotia date from the period which lies between this tour with Lyell and his return to Edinburgh in 1846. During his second trip abroad he devoted himself chiefly to practical chemistry and other subjects, which he constantly touched upon in geological research.

But Dawson had been fitted for his task at McGill by a wider training than could be derived from the study of a single branch of natural science. Indeed, it was not chiefly as a geologist that he first attracted the notice of Sir Edmund Head. Without dropping his favorite subject, he accepted a position under the Province of Nova Scotia, and from 1850-53, as Superintendent of Education, he both learned the workings of educational machinery and helped to reconstruct the system of provincial schools. He devoted much care to the preparation of his reports, and by means of these his influence soon extended itself beyond the province. For instance, he was offered, and accepted, a seat on the commission which examined the state of the University of New Brunswick. The governors of Mc-

Gill appointed Dawson on the recommendation of Sir Edmund Head, who in turn met him through Sir Charles Lyell in 1852. Head, the Governor of New Brunswick, nominated both Dawson and Ryerson to the University Commission which has just been mentioned, and there formed a high opinion of Dawson's capacity. The sequel of their association at St. John has already been told, 1855, which is marked in Dawson's scientific life by the publication of "Acadian Geology," saw him installed in the principalship of McGill.

The best that can be said regarding educational matters in Montreal at this time is that a good disposition prevailed among many of the progressive citizens, and that the existence of the McGill legacy furnished a nucleus. Nothing really systematic had hitherto been done. If the new principal could inspire confidence all might yet be well, but at best he had a trying and delicate task before him.

Perhaps the most important document, historically, which exists among the records of McGill is the Annual Lecture which Dawson himself delivered in the session of 1893-4. Failing health had just caused him to become Emeritus, and he delivered his valedictory in the form of a sketch, partly autobiographical and wholly reminiscent, which he called "Thirty-eight Years of McGill." One cannot criticize here that temperate and modest epitome of a great achievement, but a picturesque passage from it must be quoted to emphasize the lack of appliances which met the new comer on his arrival. "When I accepted the Principalship of McGill I had not been in Montreal, and knew the College and men connected with it only by reputation. I first saw it in October, 1855. Materially it was