

THE GYPSUM OF NOVA SCOTIA.

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THE writer ventures to lay before the Institute the following remarks on the gypsum found in the Maritime Provinces of Canada, gathered from his own notes as well as from the experience of others.

The beds of this mineral attain in these provinces, the Acadia of the early writers, dimensions which arrest the attention of the geologist and traveller. It contributes an important item to the little list of mineral exports, and with its associated limestones and marls, gives to large districts of Nova Scotia a fertility seldom surpassed in the northern part of the temperate zone.

Rising in cliffs from fifty to one hundred and fifty feet in height, it looks down on the mud-laden tides of the Bay of Fundy, and the blue waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or forms a striking feature on the beautiful Bras d'Or Lake, a little inland sea, "running away into lovely bays and lagoons, leaving slender tongues of land and picturesque islands, and bringing into the recesses of the land the flavour of salt and the fishes and molluscs of the briny sea."

The traveller meets it surrounded by dense growths of spruce and hemlock shadowing some quiet pond in the woods, or standing like some ruined castle of marble on the side of a fertile river valley.

AGE OF THE GYPSUM.

So far as the writer is aware, the gypsum deposits of Nova Scotia are the largest and most extensive in the world, and the only ones occurring in measures of the Carboniferous age.

Dr. Dawson in his classical work on "Acadian Geology" has separated the Carboniferous of the Maritime Provinces into five divisions:—

- 1.—The upper, or Permo-Carboniferous Coal-Measures, not holding beds of workable coal.
- 2.—The true or productive Coal-Measures.
- 3.—The Millstone Grit.
- 4.—The marine limestone or gypsiferous formation.
- 5.—The lower, or false Coal-Measures, holding many characteristic coal fossils, but destitute of workable beds.