

very much relating to its geology. While some notice was taken of the occurrence of some of the best known minerals, such as iron and coal, no attempt was made in any way to interpret the structure or explain the general geological conditions which prevailed. This can easily be accounted for from the fact that the study of the science at that date was in its earliest stages, and even in England and on the continent of Europe, the discussion of geological problems was attended with but small satisfaction. The formation of the Geological Society of London, in 1807, furnished a starting point for better work and more careful observations, and marks the beginning of the era when the study of the various rock formations may be said to have been undertaken in the right spirit. In Canada itself the conditions of geological study were somewhat peculiar. Prior to Confederation, each province, with the exception of Ontario and Quebec, controlled its own affairs in this direction, and although the present Geological Survey was established nearly fifty years ago, or in 1842-3, its operations were for twenty-five years almost entirely confined to the provinces mentioned. Before this date, however, individual explorers, or rather observers, prominent among whom may be mentioned the names of Bigsby, Bayfield, Bonnycastle, Ingall and Lyell, had, in the course of their wanderings, begun to study in some detail the character of the various rock masses encountered, and their papers, communicated to the Geological Society of London and to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, constitute the first literature on the subject of Canadian geology. Of these, in so far as I can learn, the earliest geological description of any section is contained in a paper read by Dr. Bigsby, in London, in 1823, and published in the Transactions of the Geological Society, in 1826. on the "Geography and Geology of Lake Huron," in which the character of the rocks about the great lakes and at various points along the north side of the St. Lawrence was described. In this paper the rocks are simply divided into the *Primitive*, a term which was held to embrace much or all of what we now regard as Laurentian and Huronian, or at least Archean, and the *Secondary* or stratified portion: the present arrangement of geological systems of nomenclature not having been invented till some years later.