

THE
CANADIAN NATURALIST

AND

Quarterly Journal of Science.

THE THEORY OF ATOMS IN THE GENERAL
CONCEPTION OF THE UNIVERSE.

*Opening Address by the President, M. WURZ, at the Meeting of the
French Association.*

Francis Bacon conceived the idea of a society of men devoted to the culture of science. In his "New Atlantis," in which he describes the organisation of this society and its influence upon the destinies of a wisely governed people, he shows it rising to the dignity of a State institution. The progress of civilisation by the search for truth, and truth discovered in the order of nature by experiment and observation—such are the ends proposed and the means made use of. Thus, in an age when the syllogism was still supreme, and which was firmly held beneath the scholastic yoke, the English Chancellor assigned to science at once its true method and its mission in the world.

The plan of Bacon embraced all branches of human knowledge. The land was overrun by a multitude of observers, engaged, some in studying the monuments of the past, the language, the manners, the history of the nations; others in observing the configuration and the productions of the soil, noting the superficial structure of the globe and the traces of its revolutions, collecting all the data concerning nature, the organisation and distribution of plants and animals. Other men, located in various regions, cultivated the exact sciences. Towers were constructed for the observation of stars and meteors; vast edifices, arranged for the study of physical and mechanical laws, contained machines which supplied the deficiency of our forces, and instruments