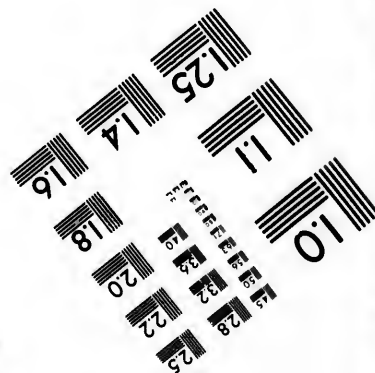
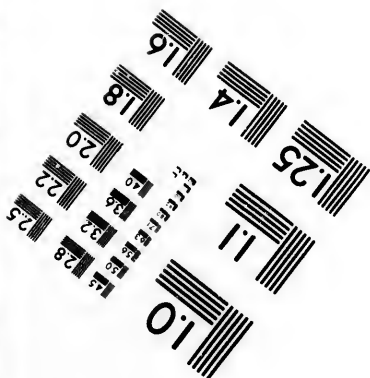
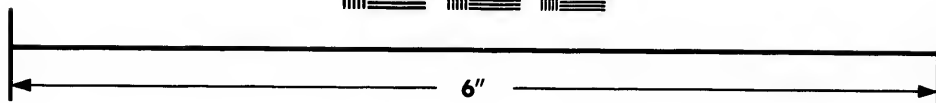
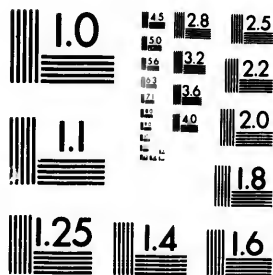


**IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)**



**Photographic
Sciences
Corporation**

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503

**CIHM/ICMH
Microfiche
Series.**

**CIHM/ICMH
Collection de
microfiches.**



Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions / Institut canadien de microreproductions historiques

© 1983

Technical and Bibliographic Notes/Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

- Coloured covers/
Couverture de couleur
- Covers damaged/
Couverture endommagée
- Covers restored and/or laminated/
Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- Cover title missing/
Le titre de la couverture manque
- Coloured maps/
Cartes géographiques en couleur
- Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/
Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- Coloured plates and/or illustrations/
Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- Bound with other material/
Relié avec d'autres documents
- Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion along interior margin/
La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la distorsion le long de la marge intérieure
- Blank leaves added during restoration may appear within the text. Whenever possible, these have been omitted from filming/
Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas été filmées.
- Additional comments:/
Commentaires supplémentaires:
- Coloured pages/
Pages de couleur
- Pages damaged/
Pages endommagées
- Pages restored and/or laminated/
Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/
Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- Pages detached/
Pages détachées
- Showthrough/
Transparence
- Quality of print varies/
Qualité inégale de l'impression
- Includes supplementary material/
Comprend du matériel supplémentaire
- Only edition available/
Seule édition disponible
- Pages wholly or partially obscured by errata slips, tissues, etc., have been refilmed to ensure the best possible image/
Les pages totalement ou partiellement obscurcies par un feuillet d'errata, une pelure, etc., ont été filmées à nouveau de façon à obtenir la meilleure image possible.

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below/
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

10X	12X	14X	16X	18X	20X	22X	24X	26X	28X	30X	32X
					✓						

The copy filmed here has been reproduced thanks to the generosity of:

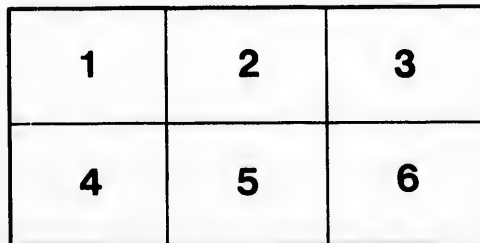
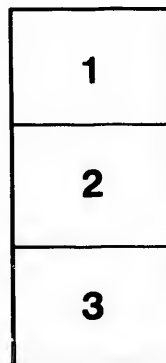
Library of the Public
Archives of Canada

The images appearing here are the best quality possible considering the condition and legibility of the original copy and in keeping with the filming contract specifications.

Original copies in printed paper covers are filmed beginning with the front cover and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression, or the back cover when appropriate. All other original copies are filmed beginning on the first page with a printed or illustrated impression, and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression.

The last recorded frame on each microfiche shall contain the symbol \rightarrow (meaning "CONTINUED"), or the symbol ∇ (meaning "END"), whichever applies.

Maps, plates, charts, etc., may be filmed at different reduction ratios. Those too large to be entirely included in one exposure are filmed beginning in the upper left hand corner, left to right and top to bottom, as many frames as required. The following diagrams illustrate the method:



L'exemplaire filmé fut reproduit grâce à la générosité de:

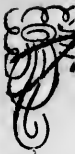
La bibliothèque des Archives
publiques du Canada

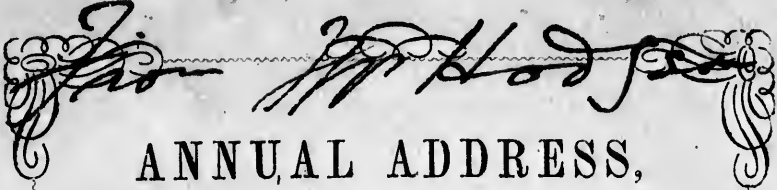
Les images suivantes ont été reproduites avec le plus grand soin, compte tenu de la condition et de la netteté de l'exemplaire filmé, et en conformité avec les conditions du contrat de filmage.

Les exemplaires originaux dont la couverture en papier est imprimée sont filmés en commençant par le premier plat et en terminant soit par la dernière page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration, soit par le second plat, selon le cas. Tous les autres exemplaires originaux sont filmés en commençant par la première page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration et en terminant par la dernière page qui comporte une telle empreinte.

Un des symboles suivants apparaîtra sur la dernière image de chaque microfiche, selon le cas: le symbole \rightarrow signifie "A SUIVRE", le symbole ∇ signifie "FIN".

Les cartes, planches, tableaux, etc., peuvent être filmés à des taux de réduction différents. Lorsque le document est trop grand pour être reproduit en un seul cliché, il est filmé à partir de l'angle supérieur gauche, de gauche à droite, et de haut en bas, en prenant le nombre d'images nécessaire. Les diagrammes suivants illustrent la méthode.





ANNUAL ADDRESS,

Oct. 2 - 1854

DELIVERED BY

MR. JUSTICE CARTER,

PRESIDENT,

BEFORE THE

FREDERICTON ATHENÆUM,

15th February, 1850.

PRINTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

SAINT JOHN:

PRINTED BY HENRY CHUBB AND C

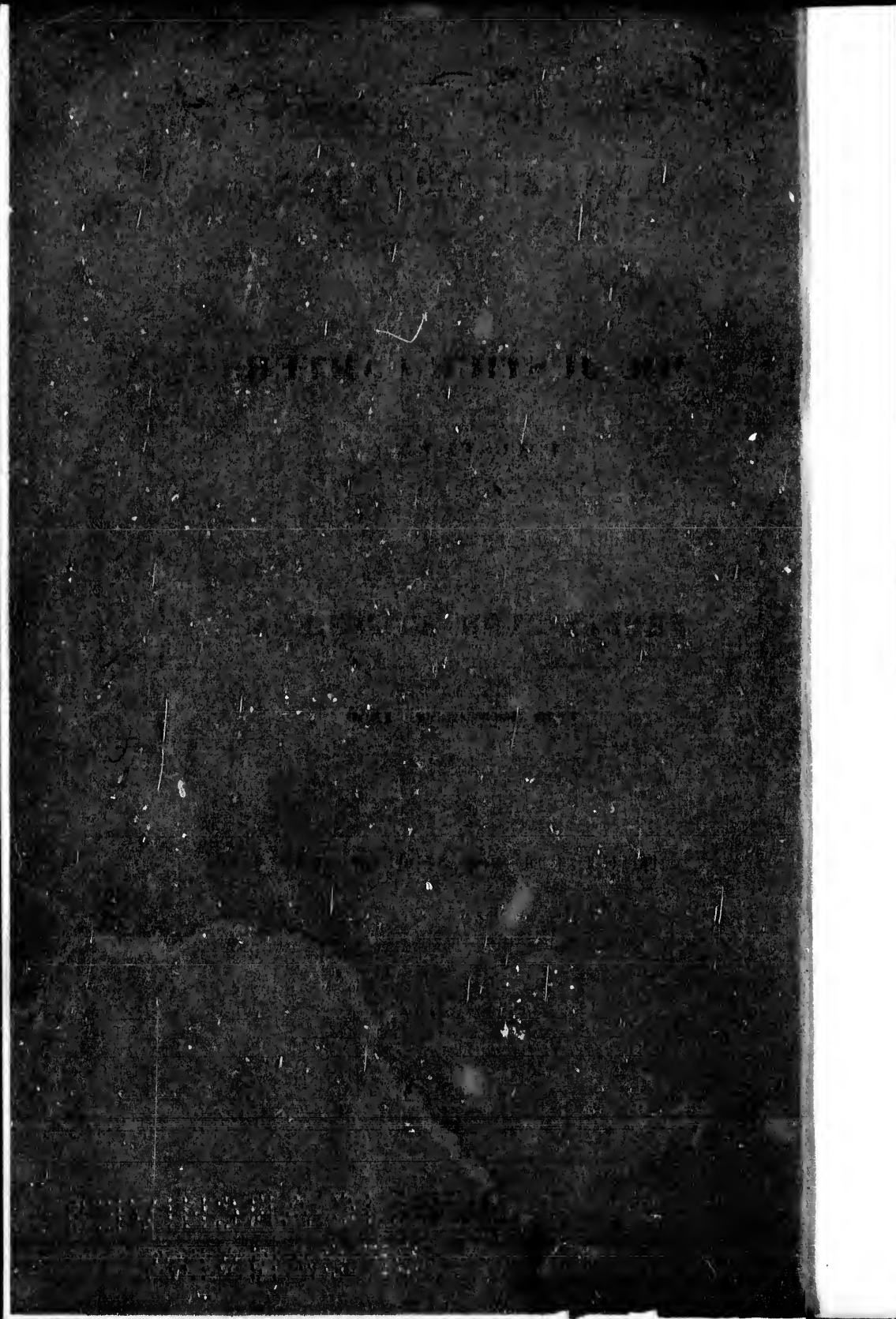
PRINCE WILLIAM-STREET

1850.



Acc. No. 34290.

ST. JOHN'S ARCHIVES
OF CANADA



ANNUAL ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BY

MR. JUSTICE CARTER,

PRESIDENT,

BEFORE THE

FREDERICTON ATHENÆUM,

18th FEBRUARY, 1850.

PRINTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

SAINT JOHN :

PRINTED BY HENRY CHUBB & COMPANY,
PRINCE WILLIAM STREET.

1850.

1850
(5)

34290

GEN

IN
durin
the w
an ex
whic
his r
the
objec
and
whic
whic
the fi
said
belie
spiri
think
—by

Ev
that
· TH
one
admi
all, t
ner i
of th
comp
comm
I kn
my t
other
conv
preci
geolo

ADDRESS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,—

IN giving you a summary of the proceedings of this Society during the past year, I would premise that I do not bring to the work the inclinations of a severe critic, or the powers of an experienced reviewer. I take it, the object of the Address which it is the duty of your President to deliver at the close of his reign, is to refresh your memories as to the proceedings of the past year, to see what progress has been made in the objects of the Society, and, as much as he can, to keep alive and active that feeling of interest in those objects, without which little progress can be expected. There is one thing in which I most truly rejoice, as regards our proceedings from the first. In all that has been written, and in all that has been said on different subjects, no difference of opinion has, I believe, given rise to offence: all has been conducted in the spirit of free and fair and friendly discussion. We have, I think, one and all been actuated by a desire of mutual benefit,—by a feeling of self-respect, and respect for each other.

Every man may teach another something; and, to bring out that something, is one great object of a Society of this kind. The first paper read before the Society in the past year, was one by our valuable SECRETARY on the Art of Pottery. It was admitted that the subject so chosen was one of interest to all, though, perhaps, from the ordinary and unobserved manner in which we constantly avail ourselves of the productions of this art, we might have thought but little of the means—the complicated and ingenious contrivances by which such common comforts are produced. For myself, I must confess I knew little more than this, that the cup from which I take my tea, the plate from which I eat my dinner, and various other articles which contribute to my daily comfort and convenience, were made from certain kinds of earth; but the precise mode in which the discoveries of mechanics and geology and chemistry have been brought to bear in simplify-

ing and adorning, in contributing to the comfort of all, to the humble necessities of the poor, to the luxuries and tastes of the wealthy, was probably new to many of us ; and I think I may speak for others, as well as myself, in terms of grateful acknowledgment for instruction so pleasantly afforded.

Indeed, our acknowledgments to our SECRETARY must not be confined to this. We must all feel how materially, from our commencement, his management has contributed to whatever success has attended us, not only as regards the main objects of the Society, but by precision and accuracy in the smaller matters of detail, which are most essential, and form a very important ingredient in the constitution of a good Secretary. Ready, on a desperate emergency, to take the labour of an original paper, and, on all occasions, bringing to the discussion of all subjects, varied information, unostentatiously put forth and clearly and intelligibly expressed, I feel I am quite clear of the bounds of flattery—which would be equally distasteful to him as to me — when I say we have good reason to be grateful for his services, and proud to number him among our members.

The next paper in order was by the MASTER OF THE ROLLS, on the law of Primogeniture. As a very able history of that law, and the leading effects of it, especially in England, the opinion of its merit seemed unanimous : in which opinion I most heartily concur. It had, moreover, the merit of admitting of a difference of opinion on some of the doctrines contained in it, which led to a discussion as to the advantages which might arise from the existence of such a law in this Province. The question presents itself to me in this way : Would it have been desirable for a colony like this, at its first establishment, to have adopted this law as that by which real estate, not disposed of by will, should descend ? My own opinion certainly is, that it would not : though I fully admit the result of such law in England has been beneficial. The effect there has been the vesting of large properties in individuals, who, by their position and rank, are precluded from accumulating wealth by many of those pursuits by which others, unburdened by rank, are enabled to attain that object. The peerage of England could hardly exist, or, at all events, their existence would have but little weight, without this law ; and the nicely-adjusted equilibrium of the British constitution would be destroyed.

But the circumstances of the time when this law began to operate in England, and the mode in which it has operated there, seem to me entirely different from the circumstances under which it would have been introduced here, and the effect which would have been the natural result of such circumstances. In the early ages of English history, land was the principal, if not the only certain and permanent investment of wealth. There were then no opportunities of making fortunes by professional talent or commercial industry, nor were there safe government securities or trading companies, which, in later times, have offered the means of gaining wealth, and of making it secure and profitable when gained. Moreover, in England the original tenure of land under the feudal system, by gradual changes and modifications, terminated in that, which seems to me the only mode in which a large landholder can become a man of great wealth and influence, viz., the system of landlord and tenant. At the first settlement of England—if I may be allowed so to call the result of the Norman Conquest—land was more valuable and available than any other property. The law of primogeniture and the law of entail retained that property in individual possessors from generation to generation, and, as by advancement in science and art and education and knowledge, other sources of wealth were opened to mankind, the value of land was often materially increased, or, at all events, preserved its comparative value, and hence a race of wealthy and influential landholders, founded in olden times, are spread over all parts of the country, partaking in their character of the stability of that which has made them what they are, and forming the ballast of the state. Now, that the colonial vessel might sail more steadily, were she provided with some such secure ballast, may be admitted; but, in my opinion, it must be looked for from some other source than in land entailed on eldest sons. The circumstances existing at the first establishment of this Province seem to me to be the very reverse of those of England, when this arrangement became her law. At the first settlement of a colony, land is the least valuable description of property; all but worthless, at the first; and, except in particular and very limited situations, not likely to increase in value very rapidly; whereas, trade, commerce, professional and mechanical skill, hold out at once a ready path to comparative wealth and

influence. The colonial merchant, with a capital of £5000, can trade with the same advantages as his English brother. Guided by the same commercial principles, by the same rules of arithmetic, equal skill and prudence will produce equal results. But the same equality cannot exist between the owner of five thousand acres of our land and the English landholders of the same extent. The former may, by his own labour, provide for all his wants, and bring up his family in respectability and comfort; but the latter, without any labour of his own, receives probably a rental of as many pounds, and may, in another sphere, employ his talents for his own benefit or the benefit of others. In England, the race between the landholders and holders of other descriptions of property, has been substantially in favor of the former: in a recently-settled colony, like this, it must be against them.

I have treated this subject in a political point of view; but, were it the proper occasion, I should be prepared to contend that in other views, social and moral, such an arrangement is not adapted to the circumstances of a colony like this. I make but one more observation: I doubt if such a system would be palatable to the people of this country. There is nothing in our law to prevent any one from leaving the whole of his land to his eldest son, in exclusion of his other children; and yet how rarely, if ever, do we find an instance of such a disposition by will. In perhaps the majority of cases, we find landowners dying intestate, and leaving the disposition of their land to the Provincial law of inheritance, from which the inference is fairly deducible, that such disposition is to them, at least, satisfactory. The law of primogeniture is, in itself, a departure from natural and parental justice, warranted only where public benefit is likely to be produced; but not warranted in a country like this, where, in my opinion, no good, public or private, would be the result.

I now come to the paper read by Mr. TAYLOR, entitled, "On the effect of credulity in retarding the progress of knowledge." This paper opened a new field of thought and discussion. It was the first subject which led us into the region of metaphysical science—one which, though, perhaps, not to be esteemed so all-important as it was years ago, when practical physical science was cultivated with comparatively little energy—must ever be considered of much value though its

adv
aris
I an
trea
port
satis
of a
crec
A h
frou
cred
and
infl
But
men
fully
whi
feel
wish
hon
gen
opin
tion
in t
cess
can
each
How
som
ord
of c
selc
is a
own
wit
not
all
by
rity
sou
ion

advantages may not be so immediate or apparent as those arising from the gigantic offspring of steam and electricity. I am inclined to view this paper as an ingenious and able treatise on the science of credulity—one in which it is as important as difficult to arrive at results which will afford safe satisfactory practical rules for our guidance. The formation of an opinion on any subject, by any man, is an exercise of credulity—is a judgment of the mind founded on testimony. A hasty opinion is one formed from testimony, not taken from the best sources, not entitled to the highest degree of credit, or not sufficiently examined or weighed as to its natural and probable result. Such an opinion, when put forward to influence the minds of others, should have but little force. But an opinion formed by a man of cool and deliberate judgment, who is known to have had good opportunities of carefully and honestly investigating the facts and premises on which the subject depends—whose character is such that we feel satisfied his object is truth, that he has no motive or wish to mislead, and that the opinion he pronounces is the honest conviction of his own mind—such an opinion would generally be a tolerably safe guide, or at all events, such an opinion so formed would become a material fact in the formation, by others, of an opinion on the same subject. To confide in the opinions of others, if not an instinct in man, is a necessity imposed on him by his imperfection. What single mind can fully grasp the bare results of the labours of many minds, each concentrating its entire vigour on some particular point. How much less can any one mind traverse the long and tedious paths which have led to those results. In a variety of the ordinary affairs of life, we unhesitatingly act on the opinions of others, the only exercise of our own judgment being in the selection of the guide we shall follow. To think for oneself is an undoubted right possessed by us all, and to act on our own honest convictions is a duty no less than a right; but with those who take the trouble so to think, it is, in most cases, nothing but a comparison of the opinions of others, and an adherence to that which, to their own mind, appears supported by the best reasons, and therefore to possess the highest authority. It has often happened, and may often happen again, that some individual may, on some particular subject, form opinions differing from those generally entertained by those most

conversant therewith; and from such newly formed opinions many improvements and advantages have arisen. But such conclusions should not be hazarded without carefully considering all pre-existing opinions on the same subject, and building up a structure of reasoning, which, at all events, to the mind of the individual satisfactorily proves the conclusion to be correct.—Such an opinion so tested by the former of it will at first be opposed by credulity, which has, before, given its trust to opposite doctrines; but the new doctrine, when tested by other minds, will, in time, if it be worthy of trust, itself become the subject of credulity, and take its place among the generally accredited opinions, by which the bulk of mankind are necessarily and properly guided. Such has been the history of opinion in matters of science, morals, legislation, government, and religion, and such will it probably continue to be. To lay down positive rules to guide in the formation of opinions may be easy, but to carry them out may require the powers of minds which would probably go right without such rules to guide them. The matter has been well summed up by a writer of great antiquity, and I doubt if modern philosophy can go much farther. “That man,” says Hesiod, “is the most excellent who can always think for himself. He, too, is a good man who will take sound advice from others. But he who can neither think for himself, nor will listen to the sound advice of others, is a worthless man.”

In the month of June, Mr. ROBINSON gave us his views on the policy of the law of arrest for debt—which law he most unhesitatingly condemned as impolitic as well as unjust;—and in this view of the subject I am quite inclined to agree—at all events as regards the present system. The object to be attained by all laws in relation to debtor and creditor, is the payment of the debt. If the debtor has property, that property should undoubtedly be made available for that object, and affords the most obvious and ready means by which it may be attained. If there is no property, the creditor is allowed to take the body of his debtor and confine him in prison till the debt is paid. Under some of the older modifications of this law, in some countries, the creditor was, I believe, allowed to take the debtor as his servant or slave. Now, revolting as such a system of forced servitude may appear in these days, I cannot but think, if the period of such servitude were limited to such time

as we
kind
of the
in use
has a
can o
which
probab
ment
misd
like o
ment
cogni
that t
inflic
and t
arrest
anom
I can
his g
he ca
avoid
serve
cann
paym
desig
unfor
fraud
as a
vario
has o
vent
priso
case.
to re
limi
adv
that
too
the
mak

as would render the services performed, according to their kind and value, at moderate wages, equivalent to the amount of the debt, it would be more reasonable than the system now in use. By the present system, the imprisonment of the debtor has anything but a tendency to enable him to pay his debt. It can only be considered as a punishment for not doing that which he has no means of doing before he is confined, and less probability of having after his confinement. If the non-payment of a just debt be a crime, it ought to be punished as other misdemeanors are, by the deprivation of liberty; but surely, like other crimes, the guilt should be proved before the punishment is inflicted; and it is hardly consonant with the well recognised principles on which public justice is administered, that the party who is injured, or may think an injury has been inflicted on him, should be at once the complainant, the judge, and the executioner;—yet this is really the case in the law of arrest for debt. The *animus* of guilt forms no criterion in this anomalous crime. If a man commits an injury on my person, I cannot punish him by fine or imprisonment without proving his guilty intent to the satisfaction of a judge and jury; and if he can show the alleged crime to have been the result of unavoidable accident, he meets with no punishment—indeed deserves none. But if that man owes me twenty pounds, and cannot pay me, I can at once imprison him, whether the non-payment arises from unforeseen misfortune, or from a deliberate design to cheat. The same punishment is thus awarded to unfortunate honesty as to reckless speculation or deliberate fraud. It was urged in defence of this system, that it operates as a protection to the creditor; and that in this Province, by various legislative enactments, the really honest debtor, who has done all in his power to pay his debts, and is only prevented by real misfortunes, may be speedily relieved from imprisonment; and, to a certain extent, this is undoubtedly the case. But why, if there is good reason for such investigations to release a debtor from prison, should they not be made preliminary to the imprisonment. It is rather placing the cart in advance of the horse, to let a man out of gaol because he shows that it was wrong to put him in. It surely would not be asking too much, before a creditor is allowed to visit his debtor with the punishment of felony, without its luxuries, that he should make out, by his own affidavit at least, some facts which show

something like a crime deserving of such punishment. All cases might be perhaps reduced to three classes.—1st, where the debtor has property to the amount of the debt, in which case an arrest is unnecessary; 2d, where he has no sufficient property, but has been reduced by unforeseen and unavoidable accident or misfortune, in which case the imprisonment is undeserved by the debtor and useless to the creditor; and, 3dly, where he has no sufficient property, but has been guilty of fraud, in which case he deserves some punishment, but not of the indefinite kind which, by the present system, depends in a great measure, if not altogether, on the tender mercy of his creditor. If it be said that to ascertain these matters would be attended with difficulty—would require new legal machinery, and would involve premature investigations of much intricacy—my answer would be, if this cannot be done, let the whole system be done away with, though at the risk of inconvenience, and even injustice in perhaps one case out of a great number.

If I pass by, with slight notice, the two next papers, viz., that by Professor JACK, on the Telescope, and by Mr. ROBERTS, on the first principles of Motion, I trust neither of those gentlemen will consider that I do not fully appreciate the merits of their respective papers, but attribute my silence to its real cause—my own incompetency to offer suggestions on matters so entirely beside my course of thought and study. On such subjects I am content to take the place of a disciple rather than a commentator, as in the former character I may in some degree correct that which I should only expose in the latter. I would, however, venture one suggestion—whether both these subjects do not present materials for further investigation—whether, after the principles of motion are shown as they exist, by laws which we may discover but cannot alter, the adaptation and combination of these principles, as effected by human ingenuity, would not offer a subject of interest to the writer and his hearers. On the Telescope, I believe we have a pledge for something more from Professor JACK, which I am sure he will redeem.

At the meeting in December, Captain WEBSTER gave us a very full account of the origin, history, and exploits of the Royal Regiment, of which he is a member. The history of any portion of that arm of British power, which has for centuries maintained our mother country in the foremost rank among the

nations of the world, must, I think, be grateful to those who feel they are part and parcel of that great country, whose soil has borne, whose honours have rewarded the strong heads and stout hearts, by whose skill and bravery her glory has been achieved.

From its great antiquity, the Royal Regiment can trace its valiant deeds over a much wider field than can fall to the lot of more recent regiments in the British army; and I can well understand the pride and satisfaction of serving under colours which bear so many trophies of the past. I believe, too, that the records of most of the regiments in the British service would, in proportion to the time of their existence, and their opportunities of distinction, tell pretty much the same tale;—for what is the general history of the British soldier but steady advance in the path of duty, stern defiance of difficulty and danger, patience under hardship and privation, blind obedience to command, moderation in frequent victory, renewed determination in rare defeat.

None will admit the truth of this general statement more readily than the members of the military profession themselves, who, while they feel a proper and natural satisfaction in the achievements of their own particular corps, will feel at the same time a more general and extended pride in the character of the whole body, of which they form a part.

I observe that, with the modesty which is the characteristic of true valour, the gallant writer of this paper abstained from noticing the later triumphs in which he himself had shared. Since the arrival of the Regiment in this Province, happily there have been no opportunities of gaining such laurels as were won by their predecessors on the fields of Blenheim and Culloden,—still they have been bent on conquest, and, as usual, their efforts have been crowned with success. Fortresses sometimes hard to win, have speedily surrendered on honorable terms of capitulation—victories have succeeded one another in quick succession—and vanquished captives have been converted into firm allies. I trust I may be allowed to express my sincere hope, that these latter victories and their consequent alliances, though they may add no emblems to the crowded colours of the Regiment, may add many a peaceful hour of happiness to the lives of those by whom they have been gained.

I now come to the last paper delivered by Mr. BROOKE, on Language. In the commencement of his paper, the Rev. gentleman expressed his regret that the subject he had chosen was one which did not admit of any auxiliary interest by appeal to the senses, in the way of experiment and illustration. To this I must withhold my assent, for the whole of his most interesting paper seemed to me a most happy and pleasing illustration of the capabilities and powers of that gift, of whose origin and progress he was treating, which made us feel, that if we could not, like the Abyssinian traveller to whom he alluded, reach the small beginning of the mighty current, we could be well pleased to enjoy the beauties of the broader stream under so agreeable and able a pilot. The subject of this paper is one which has often engaged the attention of clever and ingenious writers, who have, from time to time, indulged in speculations on the origin of language very interesting and instructive in the detail of facts and coincidences which they have brought in support of their theories, but many of them not perhaps based on any very safe or satisfactory foundation. If we seek to account for the origin of language by the process of human reasoning, we must look for the data on which to found that reasoning in the ages before the flood. Now, the only record we have of those days is contained in the first six chapters of the book of Genesis; and they, I fear, will offer but scanty materials for forming a human theory on this subject, which can stand the test of human logic. It may be easy to conjecture how men first began to express their sensations and ideas in articulate sounds; but when we are asked for a satisfactory reason for such conjecture, we must conjecture a reason as much as a theory. The only fact we find on this subject in the Mosaic account is the very fact which is sought to be established, viz., the origin of language. We find in that account a being created by the will of the Almighty, who, without passing through the stages of childhood and youth, comes into existence—a man—endowed with the matured powers, bodily and mental, of complete manhood. We find this being, so created, using language. This was inferred by Mr. BROOKE, from the circumstance, that God brought every beast of the field and every fowl of the air unto Adam to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. There is much in

this argument, though if it stood alone, it might be consistent with scriptural phraseology to suppose the meaning of giving names to the animals was, that he took them under his dominion. But the argument is much strengthened if we go a step further in the sacred history, and find when the use of language became more necessary than when the man was without an helpmate—its use is most unequivocally mentioned. We find Adam, when the woman was brought to him, expressing his grateful feelings in language. We have records of language used by both Adam and Eve, before, and by their immediate descendants, after they had yielded to the tempter. We are, moreover, distinctly told, that for more than 2000 years, till the building of Babel, the same one language was used by all the inhabitants of the earth, and that at that time the Divine power specially interfered to destroy the unity which had previously existed, and to cause a separation of mankind into different tribes and nations, using a diversity of language, of which act of an overruling Providence, even our limited reason can, I think, see the wisdom and benevolence. If there is (as must be allowed by all who give credence to the book of Genesis as an inspired record) direct evidence that the diversity of language was caused by the immediate operation of the Deity, it is not more difficult to believe, that its original use was caused by the same means. The evidence in the latter case may not be so direct, but it is deduced from facts easily explained on that supposition, and, as it appears to me, wholly inexplicable on any other. It is not necessary to suppose that the earliest inhabitants of the earth had as extensive a vocabulary as we use, or were supernaturally gifted with those powers of language which, in later days, gave birth to the lofty strains of poetry and oratory. All that is necessary to this view is, to suppose that the gift of language for which his physical structure was adapted, was, by his all-wise Creator, conferred on man as well as the power of thought (which latter, indeed, would have been all but useless unaided by the former,) that both were bestowed on him in such degree as was necessary for the circumstances in which he was placed, and that improvement in both these gifts was left to those general laws by which human affairs are regulated, by which the human mind is always striving for something better. New objects, new emotions, new ideas, would force the production of new

means of expression, either by a new adaptation of former words, or by the arbitrary or even accidental formation of new ones. Nor is this process yet finished. In modern times, I am inclined to think instances might be found of new meanings attached to old words, or even of the coinage of new words to describe new objects and ideas. If it be said, that to adopt an explanation so simple is unphilosophical—" *Nec Deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus incidit*"—may we not say the problem is worthy of such a solution. We cannot doubt that the Almighty created man as the highest of earthly beings, and gave him power over the other inhabitants of the earth, not by superior physical strength, in which he is far inferior to many of them, but by superior reason, which, unlike the stationary instinct of animals, has been susceptible of progress and improvement. Without language—the handmaid of reason—the vehicle by which that progress has been carried on—man's reason would not have given him that complete superiority which he has ever had, and the wise and benevolent intentions of his creation might not have been effected. To suppose, therefore, that language was the immediate gift of God to man is only to suppose what was a necessary part of the scheme of an all-wise Creator, and a theory to which we may safely give our grateful and humble assent.

I have thus endeavoured to bring to your recollection the different subjects which have occupied our attention during the past year, and on some of them to state my own opinions, and the reasons on which I found them. In these opinions I do not look for agreement among all who hear me; but, in another opinion which I propound, that the subjects of discussion have been happily chosen and ably treated, I do look for assent from all who hear me. Every one who has prepared a paper for the Society, will admit, I think, that the labour has been improving to himself. The research which is necessary will have given him more knowledge of the subject than he had before, and the exercise of thought in forming and arranging his ideas, he will have found useful and wholesome; and those who have listened will also allow that they have sometimes gained information altogether new, at other times found knowledge previously possessed, placed in a different light, or, if fading from their memories, brightened and refreshed. One object of our Association—mutual amusement and instruction—has been, I

think, fully attained. If we are charged with having done nothing for the public, we might fairly ask, How are we bound to the public service? would the public appreciate our services if rendered? and have we not done as much towards imparting useful information, as could reasonably be expected, up to this time? It is a problem, yet to be solved, whether the vehicle of that information, prepared at no moderate expenditure of time and labour by some of the members of this Society, will be so appreciated and encouraged by those for whose good it is intended, as to render it a safe speculation for its public-spirited and liberal publishers.

I am sure we should all of us rejoice in the ability and opportunity of imparting to others any useful knowledge we may have among us. But we may fairly assume to ourselves the privilege of determining when and how it is to be done. We have made one step on this hitherto untried path; and I think it will be only the part of prudent travellers to ascertain if we have a firm footing before we advance another. There is but one thing to which, as regards the past year, I can allude with regret,—I mean the small attendance of members which I have occasionally observed at our meetings. Some who at our beginning were constant in their attendance, and appeared to take much interest in our proceedings, have all but deserted us. Their vacant places only greet us. Such a course must be prejudicial to the Society; it is one very likely to become infectious, and in the end prove fatal. None, I presume, would join us who did not feel an interest in the maintenance and success of the Society; and nothing is so likely to secure that as a constant attendance of all the members. Good listeners are as necessary as good writers; and we should not be deterred from attending because the proposed subject may seem not likely to interest our particular fancy. I can safely say that I have never been here on any occasion without hearing something I did not know before, or something which started a new train of thought in my mind. This might happen to others as well as to me; and as my parting observation, *ex cathedra*, I would earnestly urge a constant attendance on all my fellow members—undeterred by the atmosphere outside or the subject inside, and even though such attendance may occasionally be at the risk of some slight personal inconvenience.

