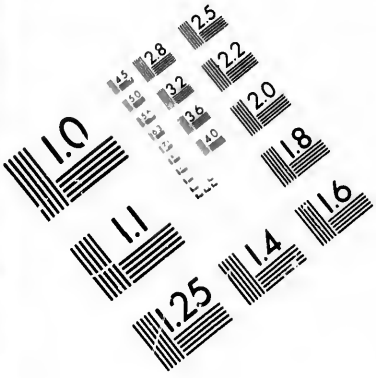

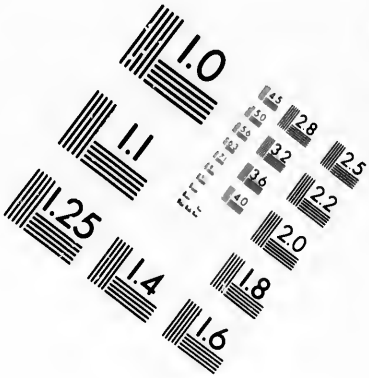

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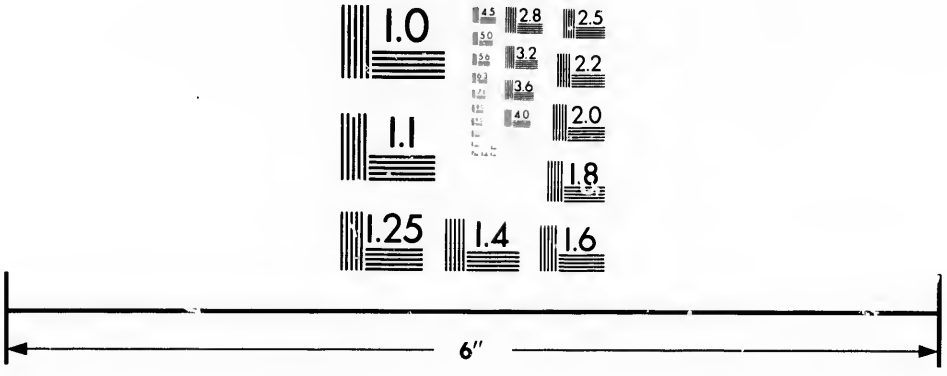

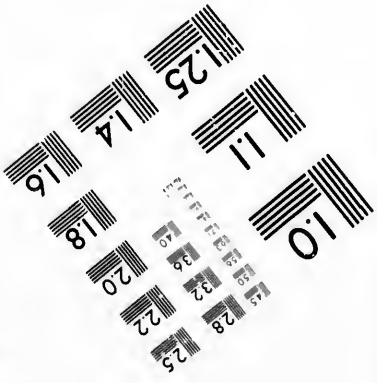

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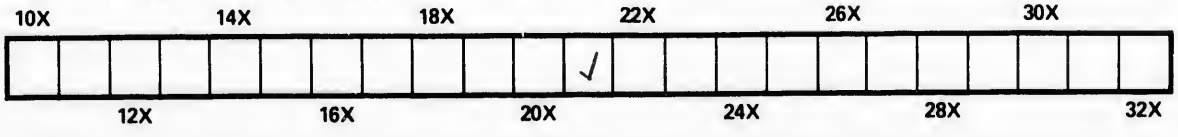

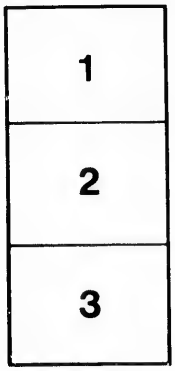

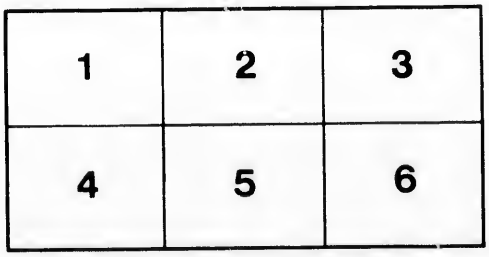

[From The American Journal of Science, Vol. IX., January, 1900.]

Obituary.

Sir John William Dawson.

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Sir William Dawson, which took place at Montreal on November 19th in the 79th year of his age. By his death Canada loses a distinguished geologist as well as one who was intimately identified with educational work of all kinds, but more especially with higher education, in the Province of Quebec.

He was born at Pictou, Nova Scotia, on October 13th, 1820, his father being a shipbuilder in that town, and studied at Pictou College and subsequently at the University of Edinburgh, under Jameson, Forbes and Balfour. He returned to Nova Scotia in 1847 and three years later, having already attracted some attention by the publication of a number of papers, reports and lectures, he was appointed Superintendent of Education for that Province. His work in connection with this position obliged him to travel continually through all parts of Nova Scotia, and on these journeys he accumulated the materials for his largest work, that entitled "Acadian Geology." While carrying on this work he met Sir Charles Lyell, with whom he studied the now celebrated Joggin's Section on the Bay of Fundy.

In 1855 Sir William was appointed to the Principalship of McGill University, a position which he held until 1893. He was at the same time Professor of Geology, and the University prospered under his management beyond the most sanguine expectations of its friends. In addition to administering the affairs of the University and delivering several courses of lectures every year, he was first and foremost in every movement to further education and also found time to carry on original work along several lines, achieving very valuable results. He was also the author of many popular books on scientific subjects, more especially in connection with geological science.

In 1883 he traveled extensively in Egypt and Syria, studying the geology of these countries and its relation to sacred history.

He took an active part in the organization and proceedings of the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Montreal on the following year, on the occasion of which he received the honor of knighthood.

In 1893 Sir William was seized with a very severe attack of pneumonia and his health became so seriously impaired that he was obliged to give up work for a time and spend the winter in the south. His strength, however, was not restored, and he resigned his position as Principal of McGill University in 1894. During the later years of his life his strength gradually ebbed away and what little work he could undertake consisted in arranging his collections and working up some unfinished papers. Several of these were published in 1894 and 1895, but the years of quiet labor to which he looked forward at this time, were cut short by a series of sharp attacks culminating in partial paralysis, which forbade further effort. He passed away on the 19th of November very peacefully and without pain.

Lady Dawson, with three sons and two daughters, survive him. His eldest son, Dr. George M. Dawson, the present Director of the Geological Survey of Canada, has inherited his father's love for geological work and has achieved wide distinction in the world of science.

Sir William's first original contribution was a paper read before the Wernerian Society of Edinburgh in 1841 on a species of field mouse found in Nova Scotia. From that time onwards he was a continuous contributor to scientific journals and to the publications of learned societies.

The most important work of his earlier years was an extended study of the geology of the eastern Maritime Provinces of Canada, the results of which are embodied in his "Acadian Geology" already mentioned, a volume of nearly 1000 pages accompanied by a colored geological map of Nova Scotia, and which has passed through four editions. He subsequently devoted much time to various researches in palæobotany, more especially in connection with the Upper Silurian, Devonian and Carboniferous systems of eastern Canada and of the Cretaceous and Tertiary of the western portion of the Dominion. The results of these researches were published in a long series of papers which appeared chiefly in the Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society and in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada. He also contributed a volume entitled "The Geological History of Plants" to Appleton's International Scientific Series.

In 1863 he published his "Air Breathers of the Coal Period," which contained the results of many years study of the fossil batrachians and land animals of the Coal Measures of Nova Scotia, the earliest known remains of Microsauria having been discovered by him in the interior of decayed tree stumps in the Coal Measures of South Joggins. The results of his later studies of these creatures were embodied in a series of subsequent papers

Sir William also while residing in Montreal, devoted much at-

tention to the Pleistocene deposits in the vicinity of the city and in fact to those of eastern Canada generally, especially to the remarkably rich invertebrate fauna which they contain. His "Canadian Ice Age" embodies the chief results of this work and is one of the most important contributions to the palæontology of the Pleistocene in America, which has hitherto appeared.

His work in connection with Eozoon Canadense is well known. Sir William was also a prolific writer of popular works on various geological subjects. Among these may be mentioned his "Story of the Earth and Man," his "Fossil Men and their Modern Representatives," his "Meeting Place of Geology and History," and many others. These books, written in a very entertaining style, had a wide circle of readers. Many of these volumes as well as many papers contributed to various religious papers treated of the relation of science and religion. He was a Presbyterian of the old school and strongly opposed to all theories of the evolution of man from brute ancestors, nor would he allow anything more than a very moderate antiquity for the species. The study of geology, too, he would have emancipated from "materialistic infidelity which, by robbing nature of the spiritual element and of its presiding Divinity, makes science dry, barren and repulsive and diminishes its educational value."

These works on the relation of science and religion, while they undoubtedly met a popular demand, have but a transitory value and are not those by which Sir William Dawson will be remembered. His reputation will rest on his great contributions to our permanent stock of knowledge, representing achievements of which any man might well be proud.

His name has been perpetuated in connection with the geological work of McGill University by the erection of a second chair in geology to be known as the Dawson Chair, which has just been endowed by Sir William Macdonald.

Sir William was a man of quiet geniality, gentle and even deferential in manner, but decided in opinion and firm in action. The preëminent note of his character was sincerity and singleness of purpose. His loss will be felt by all who knew him, but especially by the members of the University with which he was so long connected.

FRANK D. ADAMS.