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ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
OF
MONTREAL,
FOR THE YEAR ENDING MAY 18TH, 1858.

The Council of the Natural History Society have the honor to lay before the members, the following Report of the condition and proceedings of the Society during the past year, along with some suggestions for the consideration of their successors in office.

The Council have much pleasure in noting that the past year has been one of marked interest to the students of natural history in this city. In the month of August last, we had the honor and pleasure of giving a hearty welcome to "The American Association for the Advancement of Science," which met for the first time in this city and province. This meeting has been the most noteworthy event which has ever happened in the history of the Society. Mainly through the efforts of the Society was this meeting brought about. In conjunction with influential citizens of Montreal, you invited the Association to meet here in the year 1857. This invitation having been cordially accepted, your Council, co-operating with the Local Committee of the "Association," made every effort to provide suitable accommodation for its several meetings, and for the hospitable entertainment of its members. These efforts, the Council are happy to report, were eminently successful. In the most prompt and cordial manner the Court House, with its halls and rooms, so admirably adapted for the purposes of the "Association," was put at the disposal of the Local Committee. The City Council also freely granted the use of the City Hall to your Society, for the public entertainment of our guests.

In accordance with the resolution of the Society, a portion of the funds granted by the Legislature for the reception of the "Association," was appropriated for a public *Conversazione* in the City Hall. This meeting was held on Thursday, Aug. 13, 1857, and was attended by about 800 of our fellow-citizens, who welcomed with much satisfaction the officers and members of the "Association." Considering our inexperience in the management of such large assemblies, it was yet most gratifying to witness the general excellency of the arrangements, and the complete success of the entertainment. For the interest of the meeting your Council were successful in obtaining for exhibition the celebrated Indian curiosities and pictures, the property of Paul Kane, Esq., who, with a liberality worthy of all praise, placed these valuable objects freely at our disposal.

The Council feel that they not only express their own sentiments, but also those of every member of this Society, when they state that the opportunity which this scientific convention afforded them of meeting with so many gentlemen of scientific celebrity, was in the highest degree gratifying, and an honor which they highly appreciate. We had then amongst us the distinguished representatives of the Geological and Linnean Societies of Britain, together with the savans of the United States and Canada, vying with each other in the exposition of their scientific discoveries. Many valuable papers were read, and facts of interest and value elicited in discussion, in the various sections into which the Association was distributed. In the more popular departments of geology and ethnology the citizens generally took a deep and appreciating interest. In the various sections it was also gratifying to note the cordial reception and honorable position accorded to the representatives of Canadian science. May we not indulge the hope that a Canadian Scientific Association may soon be organized, and take an honorable place alongside of similar institutions in Europe and America?

Your Council have good reason to believe that this most successful meeting of the "American Association" has awakened an interest in scientific pursuits, both in this city and in the province at large, which will yet prove most beneficial in its results. Your Society has, undoubtedly, reaped much advantage from this event. Its zealous members have been greatly cheered, its numbers considerably increased, and hopes have been awakened, that it will yet occupy a higher position of scientific eminence than that to which it has yet attained.

The Council report with regret that their sanguine expectations of being able to proceed with the erection of a new and more commodious building than that which the Society now occupies have been frustrated. In the report of last year it was announced that a site had been obtained, on very liberal terms, from the Governors of McGill College, that plans had been prepared for the building, that contributions to a considerable amount had been subscribed, and that we only waited a favorable offer for the purchase of the present building to commence operations. This last and indispensable step to further progress has, contrary to their expectations, not yet been carried into effect. In these circumstances the Society must wait a more favorable season for the prosecution of this good project. Your Council are equally of opinion with their predecessors, that the premises now occupied are most unsuitable in many important particulars, either for a museum, library, or lecture room, and that no great improvement can be expected in any of these departments until a building erected for their special use has been obtained. The Council would earnestly commend this matter to the immediate consideration of their successors.

Your Council have also to report that petitions have again this year been presented to His Excellency the Governor General, and to both Houses of the Legislature, urging them, from public and national considerations, to grant a more liberal sum of money to the Society for scientific purposes, than we have hitherto received. It may be confidently said that there is no scientific institution in the country so comprehensive in its aims as ours is, possessing a larger collection of scientific objects as our museum contains, or publishing transactions on natural history of greater scientific value that are to be found in our Journal—these facts, we therefore think, entitle us to some more marked consideration at the hands of the Legislature than we have yet obtained. We deem it at least but justice that this, the oldest and not the least honorable of the incorporated institutions of the country, should be placed upon an equal footing as regards public support as the Canadian Institute of Toronto. Hitherto we have been left mainly to our own efforts and resources in arranging and furnishing our museum and library; and the building we now occupy, together with our valuable collections in zoology, geology, and ethnology, testify to the liberality of our members and friends. But it is now felt that if the Society is to take that place which the rapid progress of modern science demands, large additions *must* be made to its

museum and library, and some method adopted to keep alive a public interest in its proceedings. This last desirable object the Council think would be best attained by the publication and gratuitous distribution of our transactions among the members. Preceding Councils have advised and attempted this, but as yet without success. With our limited income such a step has hitherto been quite impossible. It is therefore to be hoped that the prayer of our just and reasonable petition to His Excellency the Governor and to the Legislature will meet with a favorable response.

LECTURES.

Your Council have much pleasure in reporting that the series of Lectures, in accordance with the Somerville bequest, have been of much interest this season, and been generally well attended. The gentlemen who have lectured with so much acceptance are all members of your Society, and are entitled to your thanks for their zeal on its behalf. The Council deem that it would be an improvement, did your funds permit, to invite some of the distinguished naturalists of Britain, the United States, or Canada West, to take part in these lectures. They would commend this matter to the consideration of their successors, hoping that means may be found to carry it into effect.

The subjects of the lectures are as follows :—

Things to be observed in Canada and especially in Montreal and its vicinity, by PRINCIPAL DAWSON, the President, 25th February.

Scripture Botany, by the REV. A. DeSOLA, LL.D., 4th March.

On the Alkalies, by T. S. HUNT, Esq., 8th March.

Marine Algæ, by the REV. A. F. KEMP, 18th March.

The Boracic Acid Springs of Italy, by MR. DUTTON, 25th March.

MUSEUM.

The Council have much pleasure in reporting that the Museum has undergone a thorough review and re-arrangement, under the able superintendence of Mr. W. S. M. D'Urban, for some time our sub-curator. The departments of Ornithology and Mammalia have been carefully classified, and many new specimens added. Upon each object the specific name has been placed; and the divisions of genera, family and class, have been noted and labelled. The Ethnological collection has also been judiciously arranged and described. The valuable collection of Minerals and Fossils,

which had hitherto been in much confusion, has likewise been revised and classified by the careful hands of Mr. D'Urban. In the department of Entomology many new species and some new genera have been added to the collection by the sub-curator; and the Council would specially note, in this connection, the valuable cases of classified British Lepidoptera which Mr. D'Urban has presented to the Society. This gift is of no small scientific value, pertaining as it does to a department in which the Museum was very defective. Mr. D'Urban having retired from the service of your Society, the Council cannot permit this opportunity to pass without stating their high estimate of the value of his laborious, zealous and efficient services, especially in preparing the Society's collections for the meeting of the "American Association," as well as for public exhibition and scientific use. The Council would recommend that some skilled naturalist be occasionally employed to overlook the collection, to attend to its preservation, and to add new specimens to the genera that are yet only partially or not at all represented in the Museum.

The contributions which have been sent to the Museum, and for which the thanks of the Society have been awarded to the donors, will be found in the Appendix to this report.

LIBRARY.

The Library Committee have reported to the Council that no great additions have been made to the Library during the past year. The 2 vols. of the "Contributions to the Natural History of the United States," by L. Agassiz, and "Blodgett's Climatology," have been purchased; and several books and papers of value presented to the Society, by Authors and Societies, a list of which will be found in the Appendix. The Committee have carefully classified the volumes, and labelled the departments, so that the works we possess may be readily referred to. There is no department of the Society's collection in which the Council feel so little satisfaction as that of the Library. Its progress has not at all kept pace with the advancement of knowledge. While it contains some ancient volumes of much value, and several modern works of scientific note, it is still extremely defective in books of recent publication, without which it is scarcely entitled to the name of a Scientific Library. The Council hope that means may ere long be found to supply this manifest defect, and to make your Library worthy of its name.

THE CANADIAN NATURALIST AND GEOLOGIST, AND PROCEEDINGS OF
THE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF MONTREAL.

The Committee appointed to edit this journal report to the Council that a second volume has been successfully completed, which, as regards matter, illustrations and printing, admits of most favourable comparison with any similar publication.

In this volume will be found not only original articles on subjects of Natural History, but also articles of scientific value and novelty, extracted from the journals of Europe and America. The desire of the Editors has been to assist young naturalists in their studies, and to awaken an interest in the pursuits of Natural Science in this country, in which they believe they have not altogether been unsuccessful. Such was the design of Mr. Billings, its original projector and editor, and they would recommend that the same plan be pursued in succeeding volumes.

The Editors deem that Mr. B. Dawson, the publisher, is entitled to the thanks of the Society for his liberality and readiness in furnishing all necessary illustrations for the articles, and also in contributing to the Society several copies for exchange, and distribution among learned Societies. They have pleasure in reporting that the circulation of the magazine is already considerable and encouraging; they would, however, urge upon all interested in the advancement of Canadian Science the importance of so increasing the subscription-list as to place the Journal on a self-supporting and even a profitable basis.

The second volume, just completed, contains twenty-nine original papers pertaining to the various departments of Natural History, all of which have been contributed by gentlemen connected with the Society. The valuable Meteorological tables of Professor Smallwood, of St. Martin, are also published monthly. These, with the Selected Articles, Reviews of Scientific Publications, Proceedings of Societies, and Miscellaneous Intelligence, make this magazine a work not only of periodical but also of permanent value.

The *third* volume now in progress, of which the *second* number has been issued, will contain, in addition to the usual matter, the Meteorological Observations of Prof. Hall, of Montreal; and, from the experience acquired during the past year, the Editors trust that the third volume will be even more interesting and valuable than its predecessors.

The "Canadian Naturalist" is now a good vehicle for the publication of investigations and discoveries in the Natural History of

Canada. It has a wide circulation in Canada, the United States, and Europe. The Committee are therefore in a position to invite communications from those engaged in scientific pursuits. Short statements of interesting facts will be equally acceptable to the Editors as more elaborate papers.

The Council beg to draw the Society's particular attention to the fact, that this Journal of admitted value to science, although edited by its members, is not published at the cost or risk of the Society; but is entirely supported by its own subscribers, and issued at the risk of the publisher. The members of the Society have therefore no special privilege in regard to it, and can only obtain it on payment of the full subscription price, over and above their annual subscription to the Society. This is a state of things which your Council cannot regard as satisfactory. The Council are decidedly of opinion that it would be most beneficial to the Society, were each member to receive a copy of the Journal gratuitously, on the payment of his annual subscription. Nothing they conceive would more materially promote the interests of the Society or the advancement of that department of science with which it is identified than this. They therefore deeply regret that the Society's funds will not admit of such a desirable object being immediately carried into effect. They cannot help comparing their condition, in this respect, with that of the Canadian Institute of Toronto. That Society has been able, by a liberal annual parliamentary grant, to give its Journal gratuitously to its members and to circulate it widely among the scientific institutions of America and Europe; whereas our Society, older and equally devoted to the advancement of Canadian science, has hitherto been all but left to its own resources. It is therefore to be hoped that the Legislative aid for which we have again applied, will this year be granted, so that we may be able to assume our just position as a Canadian Scientific Institution. The publication of our Journal for circulation among our members, and for distribution as a vehicle of scientific research among learned societies, is one of the chief objects, on account of which we have again urged our petition upon the Legislature. Your Council are of opinion that this is a step of the utmost importance to the future welfare of the Society, and would recommend that it be prosecuted with perseverance and energy by their successors.

The Council would further notice, that, during the past year, the monthly meetings of the Society have been regularly held, and sustained with some spirit. At each meeting one hour has

been devoted to business, and the remainder of the evening to the reading of scientific papers and to discussions on topics of natural history.

As most of these papers have been or will be published in the Journal, it is unnecessary further to refer to them here. The Council trust that the next year will be one of even greater activity and zeal than the past. A wide field of investigation is open in this province to the students of natural science. Some departments have not yet been touched, and many are but partially treated. This Society offers to the lovers of nature a happy stimulant to exertion, together with the fellowship of kindred minds, and a medium through which discoveries may be communicated to the world.

APPENDIX.

PRESENTED TO THE MUSEUM.

Various objects from the Crimea, presented by Dr. Gibb, of London, England :

1. A mass of Porphyritic Rock from Cathcart's Hill.
2. Mass of White Chalk from the walls of the great dock at Sebastopol.
3. Five fragments of Rock from the great docks at Sebastopol.
4. Fragment of a Russian Shell from Sebastopol, 1855.
5. Grape-Shot from Fort Constantine, north side of harbor of ditto.
6. Russian Minie Rifle and Musket Balls from ditto.
7. A Brass Medallion Charm, held in great estimation by the Russian soldiers, and given to them by their priests.
8. Two Russian Military Buttons, 21st and 31st Regiments, from Sebastopol.
9. A Russian, a Turkish, and a Maltese Copper Coins.
10. Fragment of a Porphyritic Column taken from a building supposed to have been the first Christian Church in the Ancient Chersonesus. The church is exactly opposite Fort Constantine, and it is entirely built of porphyry and marble.
11. A piece of White Marble (6 by $2\frac{3}{4}$), like white sugar, taken from the powder magazine, close to the aqueduct, and near the head of the great harbour, Sebastopol.
12. A mass of Oolitic Rock (?) from the north side of the Valley of Inkermann.
13. Fragment of Ancient Pottery from the Chersonesus.
14. Cast-iron Spear-head from the railings around the tomb of a Russian admiral at Sebastopol.

From Captain Brown, bark Emily, several Chinese curiosities.

From J. H. Daly, Esq., specimens of Glass broken during a hail-storm, Washington, D.C.

From Prof. F. S. Holmes, Charleston, S.C., remains of Domestic Animals discovered among the Post-Pliocene fossils.

From Mr. W. S. M. D'Urban, five cases of Classified British Lepidoptera.

From George Platt, Esq., a valuable collection of Rocks and Minerals from the volcanic regions of Italy.

BOOKS PURCHASED OR PRESENTED.

Contributions to the Natural History of the United States, by Agassiz, 2 vols. 4to.

Blodgett's Climatology, 1 vol.

Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, U.S., 1855-56, 1 vol.

Contributions to Knowledge, vol. ix., ditto, 1 vol.

Reports, ditto, 2 vols.

Terrestrial Air-Breathing Mollusks of the United States, by Dr. Gould, 3 vols.; presented by the author.

Lower Canada Journal of Education, French and English, 2 vols.; presented by the Hon. J. O. Chauveau.

Bulletin of the Geographical and Statistical Society of New York, 2 vols.

Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History, New York, 1 vol.

Hind's Essay on Insects Injurious to Wheat, 1 vol.

Address to Natural History Society of New York, pamphlet.

Address before American Association by the Hon. Judge Mondelet, pamphlet.

Reports I. and II. Geological Survey of Missouri, U.S., by Prof. J. C. Swallow, State Geologist, 1 vol.

Journal Canada Legislative Assembly, 2 vols.

Canadian Journal and Transactions of the Natural History Society of Montreal, 2 vols.

Catalogue of the Human Crania in the Collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. By A. Meigs, M.D., Librarian, 1 vol.

Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, from pages 17 to 72.

The Canadian Journal of Industry, Science, and Art, conducted by the Editing Committee of the Canadian Institute, Toronto.