

LIBRARY AND HISTORY SOCIETY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO, ILL.

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OFFICERS
OF THE
LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FOR THE YEAR 1835.

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JOSEPH SKEY, M. D.

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COUNCIL SECRETARY,
THOMAS LLOYD, M. D.

TREASURER,
ROBERT SYMES, Esquire.

LIBRARIAN,
REV. DANIEL WILKIE, A. M.

CURATOR OF MUSEUM,
HENRY D. SEWELL, Esquire, M. A.

CURATOR OF APPARATUS,
WILLIAM H. A. DAVIES, Esquire.

REPORT

PROPERTY AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEW YORK

OF THE

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF NEW YORK

FOR THE YEAR 1881

AND

OF THE

PROPERTY

OF THE

SOCIETY

FOR THE YEAR 1881

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FOR THE YEAR 1881

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FOR THE YEAR 1881

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OF THE

REV. DANIEL WHELAN, A.M.

REV. HENRY H. NEWELL, D.D., M.A.

WILLIAM H. A. DAVIES, ESQ.

REPORT

OF THE COUNCIL of the LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, at the Anniversary Meeting of the Society for the election of officers, January 13th, 1836.

Although, in some points of view the Council of the past year may not have it in their power to give so satisfactory a statement of the affairs and of the proceedings of the Society, as did that of the preceding one ; yet in others its progress onwards towards the attainment of some of the great and varied objects contemplated by its institutors, has not fallen short of the best wishes of its friends : and indeed the unequal rate of progress in the different paths of pursuit in societies like ours, is rather to be expected than regretted.

Accidental and temporary impulses will be given in some directions at one period, while in another, other objects of pursuit will be taken up, and urged beyond the general progress.

The influence which is felt upon a great scale, as indicating indeed the prevailing pursuits in any one age or country, or even the intellectual world generally ; will be felt also in their operation during more limited periods of time, and in much smaller societies.

Thus for instance, the characteristic of the present age is the investigation of the physical sciences ; since the first impulse was given to them by the Philosophers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, subsequently methodised and directed by our own immortal Bacon. The attention of the philosophical world was at this period directed to experimental philosophy. Then chemistry, at that time a chaos of insulated facts, was traced up to important general laws. And more lately still geology, which a few years since was merely a collection of ingenious hypotheses is now based, after a series of cautious inductions, upon scientific principles.

Perhaps this concentrated attention to specific objects, leads to a quicker progress in all, from its very concentration, while the feeling that some branches of knowledge have experienced a retardation out of keeping with the general progress, stimulates powerful minds to work up the lee-way, so to speak, and to place those previously neglected ones in the advance of others : which again produces a re-action in favor of those in their turn left in the rear of the general march of the human mind, towards the illimitable objects of its pursuit.

But to recur to the more immediate object of this Report—

It is to be regretted that the lectures which were delivered by some of our most zealous Members in 1834, have not been resumed : as it was hoped they might have been.—Yet when the general state of society in this community is considered, it is rather to be admired, that individuals could be found among us, who combined attainments and leisure adequate to the devotion of both towards this most desirable object.

There are, in fact, so few individuals who are not deeply immersed in the occupations of active life, that it is not easy to find such as can, with all their wishes in favor of it, command time to discharge some of the more laborious offices connected with the regular movement of the Society.

Under such difficulties, the Society and the community generally lie under great obligation to those individuals, who, in that year, snatched leisure enough from their laborious professions, to give the lectures which were heard with so much interest.

It is painful to reflect, that we have to deplore the loss of two of those talented individuals, Dr. Lyons and Dr. Lloyd, who have been as it were prematurely cut off by diseases—the foundations of which were laid, or their constitutions were at least broken, by their active public services in unhealthy climates.

If however we have failed in this object during the past year, we have had occasion to remark, how much more fully than heretofore our meetings have been attended, and our hours improved, either by the reading of papers, or by conversations upon subjects connected with the objects of the Society.

The same causes which have prevented the continuation of the lectures, have operated to check the supply of original communications; yet amidst the general deficiency some members have largely contributed to this primary object of the Society's Meetings.

Among those Members, our zealous and learned Librarian, the Reverend Mr. Wilkie, has borne a part highly honorable to himself and equally useful to the Members; whether the high aims of the subjects he selects be considered, as

connected with our moral relations, the advancement of mental philosophy, the investigation of that of language, or the powers of analysis he displays in the development of the intellectual processes—powers which he has proved himself to possess in no ordinary degree. Other Members have contributed their full share to a knowledge of the early history and historians of the country, and the proceedings of its first explorers; or have contributed to the arts as applied to obviate the inconveniences resulting from its severe climate, or have extended its geology—and as connected with the latter, the discovery of one of our Members, Captain Baddeley, R. E., that the schistose rock of Cape Diamond is convertible to a firm cement, is likely hereafter to become one of great utility to the Province.

During the past year a third part of the third volume of the Transactions of the Society has been published, containing original papers, which will bear no unfavorable comparison with the previous ones; and which had certainly given to its proceedings a character in Europe, quite equal to every reasonable expectation of its friends.

The Council have endeavoured in the same period to quicken enquiries, by proffered prizes, into various subjects bearing on the antiquities, the history, and the statistics of the country; on the Aborigines, their traditions, their languages, their affinities to other races, particularly the Asiatic; on their progressive distribution through the continent, and on the means of effecting their civilisation.

Other questions have been submitted for elucidation—on the arts as applied to the Canadas; on the natural history of the country, as applicable to the arts; on its botany; its indigenous nutritious vegetables, and the means of increasing the proportion of nutritious deposit in them;

on the introduction and culture of plants of the most obvious utility congenial to the climate, and on its agriculture generally; on the important question of coal formations, and the probability of their detection in the country; on its mines generally; on the exploration of the yet unknown portions of its extensive territory, and on the all engrossing question, of facilitating the means of communication over its vast surface.

On the fisheries of its rivers, lakes and coasts; of the salmon; the sturgeon; the porpoise and the whale, more especially.

These subjects are of wide research, and if fully investigated would tend greatly to the increase of the productions of the colony; and would deter from fruitless exertions by giving a wholesome direction to them.

It is to be regretted that the Society has not received any communications which, in the opinion of the Council, authorise them to award the prizes upon any one of those subjects—a striking proof of the yet stagnant attention to objects of the highest interest to the advancement of the country, and equally so of the necessity that a Society like ours should persevere in arousing attention to them.

The failure of the first will but excite us to fresh exertions.

During the past year the Society has added largely to its list of Members of every class.

From the Reports of the Treasurer and acting Recording Secretary, it appears we have now upon our list Ordinary Members, Associate, Corresponding, Honorary,

44. 88. 84. 41.

Having received an increase in the last year of

3. 10. 14. 18.

Within the last year we have to regret the loss of two Associate Members, Dr. Lloyd and Dr. Tessier, both of this City.

By the death of Dr. David Hossack, of New York, the Society has lost an Honorary Member, who stood upon a high eminence in his own country in his profession as a physician; was distinguished for various attainments in other branches of knowledge; and who always proved himself a cordial co-operator with us, and by the liberal donation of his works, one of the most valuable Members of our Society, in his class.

While this Report is writing we have to lament the death of another Associate Member, Mr. G. Drolet, who has been suddenly cut off in the midst of his useful and honorable career.

Immediately on the arrival of His Excellency the Earl of Gosford, the Council waited upon him with an Address of congratulation, soliciting His Lordship to honor the Society with becoming its patron, and he was pleased to accede to the request, following his assent by a wish to be enrolled as a Member.

We have now the honor to find his name at the head of our Ordinary Members.

The Council deemed it advisable to unite the Society more intimately with what is eminent in Science in various Societies in Europe, and of the United States; by recommending, as Honorary Members, some of their most distinguished associates; the measure it is hoped will prove to have been a wise one, as leading to a closer connexion with the great republic of Literature and Science, and to that reciprocity of communication which, while materially advantageous, will impart by far the greatest share of good to our young and struggling Society.

MUSEUM.

The increase in the Museum during the period under Report has been very considerable,—such indeed as to surprise the most zealous friends of the Society.

This increase has not, however, extended equally to all the Cabinets—nor was such to be expected.

The public spirit of individuals has, at almost every Meeting of the Society, loaded our tables with donations of various value ; some of great local—others of general and permanent interest.

Thus we have had large additions to our coins—modern ones indeed generally—but many of these will in the lapse of time acquire a much greater value than they possess at present.

In one, and that the most important branch of numismatics, we are yet greatly deficient—in those unrivalled specimens of Grecian and Roman art, which abound in the cabinets of Europe.

Perhaps it is scarcely to be expected that in this remote portion of the world, objects of such extensive and keen collection elsewhere, should yet reach us ; but it is to be hoped that the friends of the Society will in time leave us but little to complain of from deficiencies in this branch of art ;—It is particularly desirable to form such a collection where a love of classical literature is yet to be roused ; and where the necessity for every means of illustrating it is consequently great.

Many fine Geological and Mineralogical specimens have been added to the collections already in the Society's possession, and as appears from the Report of Curator of the Museum, we are not without hopes of receiving additions to them from other parts of the world.

But it is in the Zoological branch of Natural History, and ornithology, that we have most reason to pride ourselves

from the additions of the last year ; and it is but just to add that we are mainly indebted for them to the zeal and rapidly improving skill of our Assistant Secretary Mr. Smith ; who has amply justified his selection for this branch of his office.

The Council invite the particular attention of the Members to the Report of the Curator of the Museum, and to the suggestions he offers for its increase, by means within the reach of any Member of the Society—nor can the Council permit this opportunity to escape them of expressing the great satisfaction they feel at the able manner in which the duties of this laborious office have been executed by Mr. Henry Sewell.

The arrangements of the specimens have been in most branches nearly wholly made by him ; and in some entirely so : while the catalogue *raisonnée* he has kept of all the collections of the Society is such as, whether considered as a specimen of clerical accuracy or of scientific arrangement, will probably bear a comparison with those of the best arranged cabinets of Europe.

APPARATUS.

Scarcely any addition has been made to the Philosophical Instruments previously in the possession of the Society, the low state of our funds has totally precluded its possibility ; and although the discontinuance of the lectures has rendered the want less immediately urgent, yet we have to regret the absence of many instruments which, if placed in the careful hands of individual members under due responsibility, would be usefully employed in various objects of pursuit.

It is to be hoped that an improved state in our finances may enable us, in no long time, to make such additions as are most urgently called for.

The Curator of Apparatus in his Report speaks of the neglected state in which a part of it lies in a detached room.

The remark applies to a mixed collection of Chemical Instruments and Agents, presented to the Society by Sir John Caldwell, the residue of an old laboratory; put by until the Society is placed in a situation more favorable for the fitting up of a laboratory than it is at present.

Under the existing circumstances it is not possible to form one, or to conduct any systematic course of lectures on Chemistry—objections would be made, and very properly so, until the apartments of the Society are removed from the present building.

LIBRARY.

The tardy increase of the Library is matter of deep regret, more especially as the works of which we are most in need are too expensive for private collections, and because moreover, the country is lamentably deficient in publications upon Natural History generally and its correlative subjects; even in those which, by placing the enquirer here upon a level as to present information, enables him to ascertain what has been done by his predecessors, and thus prevents him from pursuing subjects in which he may have been anticipated; or points out those which are likely to lead to new results.

So depressed have been our funds that we have barely been able to continue the series of publications already commenced.

Some valuable additions have however been made to the library by permanent donations; and one great work has been entrusted to our charge until a contingency occur, which is not perhaps in immediate prospect.

His Excellency Lord Aylmer, with the advice of the Executive Council, has placed under our charge the publication of the Record Commission, which has been presented to the City of Quebec by His Majesty's Colonial

Authorities, until the libraries of the Legislative Council and Assembly are united.

Measures have been taken to procure other volumes which were omitted to be sent in the first instance; and the Secretary of State has directed the King's Printer to transmit all such additional volumes, not previously sent to any part of North America.

The Council took the measures they deemed advisable to render these records accessible to all the public authorities in the country, as well as to the community generally; in so far as was practicable, and yet compatible with their due preservation.

The Legislative Council of the Province has presented us with a complete series of their Journals.

The honorable W. Smith has added to his former donation another volume, the 9th of the MS. Journal of the House of Commons for the year 1645, brought by Golfe, the regicide, to North America; and has thus completed this curious document bearing upon a momentous period of our history.

As connected with this part of the Report of the Council, it may be right to add, that copies of the third part of our third volume of our Transactions have been sent to Mr. Gould, our active friend in London, for distribution to public bodies and societies in Great Britain; while others have been consigned for sale to booksellers here and at Montreal.

Holding in view the splendour and superlative merits of Audubon's great work on American Ornithology, the Society has ventured to petition the House of Assembly for a grant to enable us to procure the same.

The result is doubtful, but it is not so that the Assembly, by acceding to the request, will put us in possession of a work of the highest value towards the attainment of one of our great objects; and will derive honor by an appropriation so calculated to inspire a taste for, and an extension, of this

branch of knowledge, by the access which would thus be given to its public exhibition, under proper regulations for its security

The Society will remark that the Librarian reports that losses have been sustained from irregularities in the mode of taking out books; in as much as receipts for them are not left with the Assistant Secretary, and the removal of the books is not noticed in the proper catalogue.

Another cause of loss to the Library arises from their not being returned at the periods pointed out by B. L. 60.

It will be necessary to enforce the penalties enjoined by the laws—but it will be of more avail if all Members requiring books, enforced upon themselves a rigid adherence to the laws regulating the Library.

FINANCE.

Although the increase in our Ordinary and Associate Members gives a full assurance of the augmented interest taken in the Society, and thus also increases its permanent income; it cannot be concealed that we are suffering most painfully from the want of funds, even for the necessary movements of the Society; and had it not been for the public spirit of our Treasurer, Mr. R. Symes, who has at times advanced aid from his private resources, the Society would have been reduced to great straits—even as it is we have been distressingly cramped in our operations, and have been compelled to forego very desirable additions to our collections.

With diminished means we have been called upon to incur increased expenses, and that unavoidably.

Thus the removal of the Society from the apartment they previously occupied, obliged us to incur a considerable expense, which was increased by the necessity for fitting up large cases for the preservation of our Zoological specimens.

The printing of the Transactions is become a debt, for which we have to provide.

Under these circumstances the Council recommended that petitions should be presented to the three branches of the Legislature, for those aids which they formerly bestowed upon us ; but which have failed us in the last two years.

The Council retain a hope that the Society may receive a continuance of the same.

The necessity is urgent, for there can be no doubt but that, if this resource fail us, we shall be completely arrested in our progress ; though we may barely exist.

If granted, the funds bestowed will be, as it is hoped they have been, exclusively devoted to those objects for which the liberality of the Legislature was first exercised towards us.

It will become, the Council conceive, the paramount duty of their successors to relieve the Society from all outstanding claims ; and not until they are cancelled, to incur any expense whatever for any object, beyond that increase of the Museum which may be necessary to give employment to the Assistant Secretary ; so long as his services are retained.

ACTING RECORDING SECRETARY'S REPORT.

With reference to the Report of the Acting Recording Secretary, the Council would call attention to the difficulties he has experienced in drawing out an accurate list of the Members, and to the remedies he suggests.

The Council cannot but notice in an especial manner the valuable aid afforded to the Society by Mr. Augustus Sewell, in various respects.

BY-LAWS.

Some beneficial changes have taken place in the By-Laws during the first year ; beneficial, because they have given a character of increased liberality to the principles upon which the Society was established, and because they have, by extending the range of choice for the Officers of the Society,

to all Associate as well as Ordinary Members, enabled it to avail itself of the talents and qualifications of all.

This was effected in a change of By-Law No. 3.

In the same spirit By-Law No. 30 has been so modified as to extend the interests in the property of the Society to the Associate as well as the Ordinary Members.

A third By-Law, to wit, No. 20, has been amended; which, by limiting the choice of Honorary Members to persons of distinguished attainments in science, literature, and the fine arts; prevented us from expressing our gratitude to those who had conferred essential benefits upon the Society; by their election as Honorary Members.

Before concluding this Report, which has already trespassed too long upon your patience, we claim your indulgence to dwell for a moment upon the future prospects of the Society.

What are they? What may they be?

Assuredly they are such as to keep alive a warm hope of an increase of usefulness and of consequent importance; already is the Society quietly, almost stealthily, effecting much good; it rouses attention to its high objects, it directs enquiry and quickens research, it embodies a vast collection of materials for elucidation, and it affords facilities for study to the enquirer in various paths of pursuit—but the future will be greatly effected by our own conduct—to ensure all the good which ought to result, it behoves us when we enter these walls to look solely and fixedly, as we have hitherto done, at the great end we have in view; and to devote ourselves to trace out and to adopt the best means of effecting them.

Assuredly it then behoves us to soar above all local and temporary and extraneous interests; to exclude all party feelings and private prejudices—to avail ourselves of the talents of all—to select those best qualified to discharge the duties of its offices in all their details; and if appointed to such, it equally behoves us to devote ourselves and our faculties to the faithful discharge of the duties they imply,

with reference to the Society and its objects exclusively ; to hold it an imperative obligation upon ourselves to give a careful obedience to the laws by which we have bound ourselves, a duty which, considering the objects for which we are associated, we are especially called upon to fulfil with that high mindedness which, in the relations of Society, is considered the point of honor, rather than a cautious adherence to legal enactments.

If such be the uniform line of our conduct, can we despair when we include in our brotherhood, individuals so eminent in moral, metaphysical, and high philosophy—in mathematics and their application to the great objects of life—in geology and mineralogy, and botany, and natural history generally ; and when we see around us so many animated with a common zeal to enable the Society to lead in the extension of knowledge, and to place her at no greatly inferior level below her elder sisters elsewhere.

Then will the emblem upon our seal be a type of that bright noon of which we trust it is the harbinger—then, and under her auspices and with her not feeble aid, will the cleared forest give birth to products rich in nutriment and in materials for the arts.

Then will the philosophical explorer have given to the miner a sure guide to his obscure researches, and enable him to bring to light those hidden treasures which no doubt exist, and which, though they may not prove to be the precious metals, while even of these there are no doubtful indications, will trace out those far more valuable products of the inner earth, which derive their main value from the exercise of industry upon their manipulations, and by that exercise advance, through much intervening good, the final results of art—while they themselves will afford the means of further progress in art, and consequently in civilization.

JOS. SKEY, M. D., President.

Quebec, January 8, 1836.

