

Quebec, August, 1830.

It is, no doubt, very generally known that one of the principal objects of inquiry contemplated by the founders of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, was the investigation of the Natural History of the Canadas. In furtherance of this important object, the Class of Natural History was formed, to which all communications relative to it are referred.

In my situation as Chairman of the Class, I have been requested to draw up an Address, to be circulated through the Province, inviting attention to the subject, and soliciting communications relative to it. I cannot but indulge a sanguine hope that the attention of the rising youth of the country in particular, will be directed to this interesting subject; it is so admirably calculated to occupy their leisure hours agreeably and usefully, to embellish and enlarge, as well as to invigorate their understanding: and above all to purify their taste, and to awaken in them a relish for some of the highest enjoyments of which we are susceptible.

The resources of this great country are so imperfectly known, and its population is so scattered over its vast surface, that it is by the co-operation only of many individuals that any approximation to the end in view can be obtained; that insulated and apparently unimportant facts become valuable when collected and grouped in a common centre, by which their relations to each other can be established and their anomalies explained.

The range of observation is a very wide one, including

as it does, all the objects of Natural History, animate and inanimate; the earth and its rocky basis—its surface, varying in its qualities and fitness for the endless variety of organized beings animal and vegetable, which depend upon it for subsistence; and capable, as it is, of an indefinite improvement in its productive powers under the hands of a well-conducted agriculture—the air we breathe teeming with life, and liable as it is to occurrences pregnant with good and with evil to us, guided in all its movements by laws, the mysteries of which we are yet so ignorant of: and that mainly from the deficiency of facts, on a comprehensive view of which, and of which alone, we can hope for an insight into the nature and causes of those wonderful phenomena which are so perpetually occurring, to the terror of the uninformed; but tending unequivocally to the well being of the whole.

This wide range of object, inviting to such an indefinite variety of pursuits, is most happily adapted to the different tastes of individuals, so that each may lay himself out for those inquiries, and furnish those contributions, to which his wish may incline, or his situation adapt him.

In a communication of this kind it is not possible to notice in detail the objects of peculiar interest; but it is obvious, with reference to inanimate objects, that we are all interested in obtaining information relative to the localities and modifications of the more useful rocks and minerals; of the applicability of the former to building, and to ornamental architecture; to the mason and the millwright.

Thus it appears that in the township of Broughton a bed of rock is found which will become of the most valuable application, since it combines durability with a softness

which renders it almost as workable as wood. It has become known to the community generally by means of the Society. Again, in another place, a rock well adapted for millstones has been found,—in a third locality it is said that a peculiar combination of iron stone with clay exists, which may hereafter render the country independant of a foreign supply of the principal ingredients in a cement, which will consolidate under water. It is known that iron ore abounds in the country, but it must be from inquiries made and specimens furnished, that those of the best quality and of the easiest reduction can be traced; and it may be that an enlightened curiosity may detect other mines of valuable metals: as of copper and of lead.

In a more advanced state of agriculture, the beds of lime and of gypsum, which no doubt exist, will become of the greatest use as manures, and for other purposes. The first step is to ascertain their presence and accessibility; their application will soon follow, so as to extend rapidly the productive powers of the country. In association with these last minerals it is more than probable that coal and rock-salt may be found, or at least springs of brine strong enough to be brought into use, whenever a judicious search is made for them.

In animal life, the country swarms with it in all the gradations, from the larger quadrupeds to the minute and yet unnamed insect. Any facts which develop their habits, the laws which regulate their increase and diminution, or their periodical migrations, will always be interesting to the Society; and not less so the contribution of specimens, particularly when new or rare.

Of vegetables, observations pointing out their localities, their use in the arts, or in domestic life as adding to our

choice of food, as applicable from the strength of their fibres to clothing or to cordage, or to our stock of useful medicines, will be received with satisfaction. It cannot be too well remembered that plants which in their natural state are most noxious, become harmless and even grateful under skilful culture : and that others require the aid of man only, to increase indefinitely the nutritive matter, which, in a wild state is scarcely traceable in them. Thus it is, that the most useful grains of wheat, rye, and barley have, from culture probably, (for their origin is lost in the depths of antiquity,) swollen into bulk, and have become the deposits of a greatly increased quantity of farinaceous matter ; and the bitter and scanty root of the potato, as it is found in its natural state, is enlarged to its present dimensions, and has lost all its disagreeable qualities. Our finest fruits, in all their rich variety, have arisen from origins equally simple and unpromising ; all the varieties of the grape have no doubt originated from a common stock, and that, austere and anything but grateful to the taste. It is probable that we are even yet but in the infancy of our knowledge of the extent and of the variety to which analogous products may hereafter arrive, so that, to select one among innumerable instances, it does not appear to be improbable that such a plant as the well known Indian rice (*Zizania aquatica*) even now the occasional resource of the aborigines, may hereafter become an abundant source of aliment : rivalling in these cold latitudes, its analogue of the tropics.

The remark applied to this one plant may be extended very widely, and to objects at present very little suspected to be capable of becoming useful ;—the reference is made solely by way of illustration of a most important truth.

As a means of obtaining information so beneficial to humanity, so calculated to enrich the yet scanty agriculture of this country, and thus to increase her productiveness, the Society will at all times receive with thankfulness contributions bearing upon any of them; its obligations to individual contributors will be duly acknowledged and widely circulated. Specimens so furnished will be added to the cabinet with the names of the donors. The collection of the Society is already become a valuable one, and is rapidly improving.— Its utility is incalculably increased by the measures taken to classify and arrange the specimens, so that in time the rooms of the Society must become in many branches of Natural History, as it already is in Mineralogy, a valuable school of information. Its doors will be widely opened to all contributors, and these again will thus be rewarded for the aid they have afforded. There is no doubt also that the Society will be willing to enrol among its corresponding members, all who are residing at a distance, and who prove their wish to carry on its views by contributing their own observations; and especially those who furnish it with well authenticated facts, and also enrich its cabinet by their contributions.

In thus addressing the enlightened portion of the community, the Committee hope they do not call in vain upon it for all the aid which can be afforded towards the attainment of an object of such paramount importance, whether as regards the general prosperity of the country, the acquisition and dispersion of much useful information, and the awakening a relish for laudable pursuits generally.

JOS. SKEY, M. D.

Depy. Inspector of Hospitals:



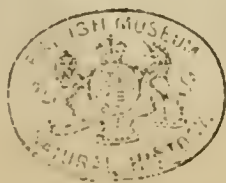
Errata for LIEUT. BADDELEY'S *Communications.*

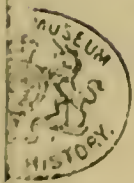
- Page 82—2nd line, for *eastern* read *western*—5th line of same for *colorophane* read *chlorophane*.
- Page 87—(Note,) for *analogies* read *analogues*.
- Page 94—9th line, for *magnetic iron* read *magnetic iron ore*.
- Pages 334, 340, 347 and 394—For *Houghborough* read *Loughborough*.
- Pages 345, 350—For *sulphuret* of strontian read *sulphate* of strontian, and 6th line from bottom p. 345, for *shaded* read *shaped*.
- Page 346—Last line, for *had been* read *have been*,
- Page 361—(Note,) for *basalt* read *columnar basalt*.
- Page 362—15th line, for *to have* read *to have had*.
- Page 366—5th line from bottom, for *real* read *red*,
- Page 376—13th line, for *octohedral crystals of iron and garnet* read *garnet and octohedral crystals of iron*.
- Page 379—8th line from the bottom, for *probable* read *improbable*.
- Page 384—12th line, for *various* read *variable*.
- Page 389—5th line, for *impossible* read *infusible*.
- Page 390—3rd line, for *heuzenite* read *lenzenite*.
- Page 410—5th line, for *which* read *what*.
- Page 412—11th line, for *limestone* read *sandstone*, 17th line of same page, for *argillate* read *argillite*.
- Page 413—21st line, for *leave* read *have*.

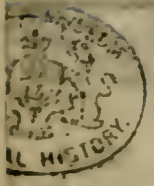
NOTE.—The graphite mentioned at page 368 appears, upon further examination, to be an earthy chlorite intermixed with some black powdery substance; when *dry* its powder and streak are greenish.

*Errata in the Topographical Notices, by ALEXANDER
SHIRREFF, Esquire.*

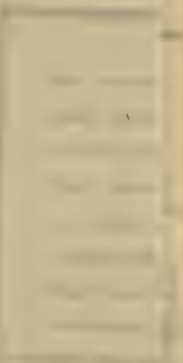
- Page 254—5th line from bottom, for “least” *read* last.
- Page 260—5th line from top, for “stream amidst” *read* stream
producing amidst.
- Page 262—5th line from top, for “moss” *read* mass.
- Page 262—8th line from bottom, for “most fertile” *read* least
fertile.
- Page 264—13th line from bottom, for “equal depth” *read* great
depth.
- Page 264—2nd line from bottom, for “great tracts” *read* good
tracts.
- Page 265—10th line from bottom, for “la Bosse” *read* La Posse.
- Page 265—9th line from bottom, for “entrance” *read* clearance.
- Page 269—12th line from top, for “paddles” *read* paddlers.
- Page 275—13th line from top, for “difficulties” *read* difficulty.
- Page 276—8th line from top, for “Hurons” *read* Huron.
- Page 278—10th line from top, for “stream” *read* run.
- Page 279—5th line from top, for “heavy” *read* heaving.
- Page 281—17th line from top, for “for the stream” *read* The
stream.
- Page 283—4th line from top, for “have not yet” *read* read
have yet.
- Page 300—7th line from bottom, for “and” *read* ends.
- Page 304—15th line from top, for “strong” *read* stony.
- Page 307—3rd line from top, for “the immense” *read* this
immense.

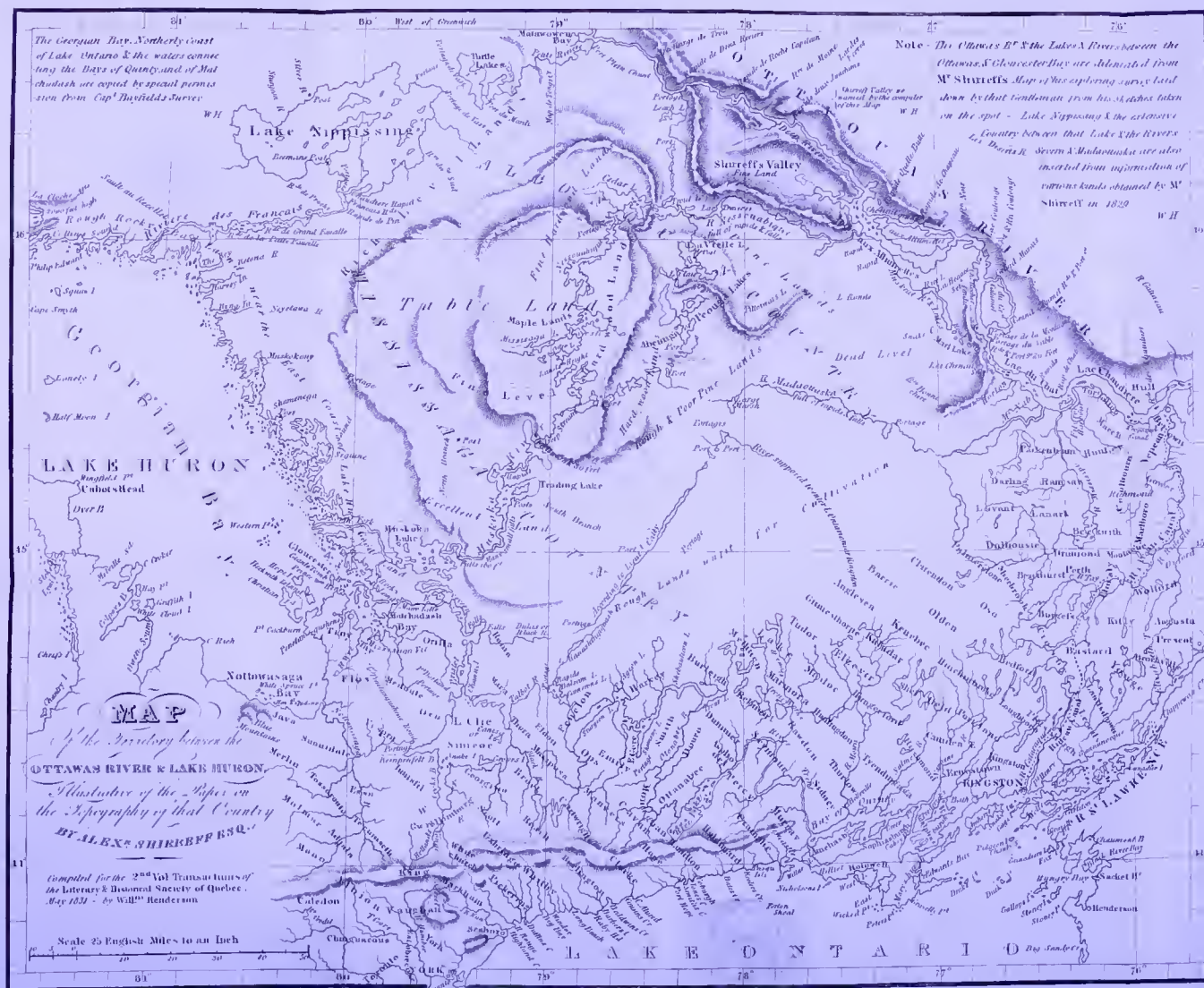






691 - 1904 - 20th Century - 1000 - 1000





For Shirreff's, read Mashkongé Valley, being so named
in the Notices. A. S.





