

Obituary.

A GAIN we have to record the loss of a Member of our Society,—a contributor to our Magazine,—and again from the ranks of the Professoriate.

HENRY HOW, Vice-President and Professor of Chemistry and Natural History in the University of King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia, died on the 28th of September last, at the early age of 52.

We join with our Canadian friends in lamenting one who though a *naturalist* in the broad sense of the word, and a teacher of chemistry, was essentially and as a specialist, a *mineralogist*.

As such, even more than as a chemist, he distinguished himself in this country—as such he was received upon the other side of the Atlantic,—and as such he was labouring, and, as our own pages will show, writing, when his end came as a relief to long continued suffering.

As Professor How spent the last twenty years of his life in Nova Scotia, it is from those who were thrown into association with him there that we most fittingly must look for the truest vouchers of the worth of the man, and of the value of his work; and from the pages of the "Record" of his own University we extract the following notice.

"It was just as we were all on the eve of gathering at Windsor for the work of Michaelmas Term that the news reached us that the Vice-President of King's College was dead. Failing as his health had been for so long, we had scarcely expected so sudden an end to a life of considerable usefulness and activity. Every one who had come in contact with Dr. How had been struck with his honesty of purpose, his great love of science, his varied literary taste. From the moment he landed in this country, fresh from the wonderful laboratories of Europe, and glowing with enthusiasm for the prosecution of his favourite studies, he had lived a life of obscurity, almost seclusion. A few there were, and only a few,

who had come to appreciate his talent as an analyst, his great learning as a chemist, his industry in fields of original research. He had come to Windsor, Nova Scotia, as the first Greek scholars of the Renaissance came to England—pioneers of new studies. The missionary who endangers his life among the Maoris or the savages of Borneo, is scarcely more worthy of commendation than the sensitive, ardent man of science, who throws himself far from congenial minds, and congenial surroundings, into the raw, though not unkindly, community of a new country. It is not right that men should deny a just tribute to those who, if they be not the martyrs, have a fair claim to be called the missionaries of science.

“Twenty-five years ago the state of education in this province was not what it is now. King’s College had not then her list of scientific alumni. There was no Dalhousie College with its zeal for physical research, turning out year by year young men well equipped for work in their native country, and encouraging the ablest of them to seek the completer knowledge of Leipsic or the London Schools. The earliest form that culture took in the Canadian provinces had been that of the Oxford of fifty or sixty years ago.

“These new countries were late in putting away the bigotry of learning which lingered in their midst, often allied, indeed, with the gentle and refining scholarship of these old European seminaries, which are only just beginning to break away from the shackles of mediæval pedantry. We believe that at last physical science is beginning to obtain the paramount prominence she has fairly won, not alone by her vast discoveries in the domain of phenomena, but by quickening and inspiring generally that fearless spirit of enquiry, which, within the last few years has done so much to clear away what have long been the reproach of theology and metaphysics. Our lamented friend has done something towards this consummation in Nova Scotia.

“The place of Professor How in the history of this Institution, and of this Province is that of one who first expounded to the youth of Nova Scotia, from the abundant resources of an accomplished mind, the doctrines of Faraday, Lyell and Agassiz. It would be difficult to base a plea for grateful remembrance and respect towards a professor of learning upon more solid grounds than these.

“Although a specialist in the best sense of the term, the late Professor was also a man of considerable general attainments.

“For many years before his death he suffered much excruciating pain and accompanying depression ; but his pupils and colleagues never doubted

to the last his quick sense of the claims which others had on his consideration and courtesy, and his unwearied anxiety to discharge well his many duties as Vice-President, Professor and Librarian.”

Professor How was an industrious worker;—between the years 1855 and 1876 he published twenty papers on mineralogical subjects. The style of his contributions to our Magazine vouches for his enthusiasm.

M. F. H.