

# INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE FERGUSON BOWEN, G.C.M.G.,

TO THE

NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE,

As its first President.

AUGUST 4, 1868.

GENTLEMEN,—

Seventeen years—a period of great changes and of rapid progress in this country—have elapsed, since my able and accomplished predecessor, Sir George Grey, in 1851, opened, as its first President, the New Zealand Society. That Society may be regarded as the precursor of the New Zealand Institute, which has now been founded and endowed by the wisdom and liberality of the Colonial Legislature. The Board of Governors, over whom I have the honour, by virtue of my office, to preside, having conveyed to me a wish that I should deliver the Inaugural Address at the first public meeting of this Institute, I felt much satisfaction in complying with their request. In a Colony possessing all the powers and privileges of Parliamentary Government, the Representative of the Sovereign shares in that “dignified neutrality” which belongs to the Crown itself. I assure you that it will always be one of my highest pleasures, as well as one of my most important duties, to meet, as on the present occasion, members of all religious communions, of all social classes, and of all political parties, on the common ground of education, science, and literature.

*The New Zealand Society inaugurated by Governor Sir George Grey, K.C.B. in 1851.*

I will begin by briefly explaining the character and objects of the Association which we now inaugurate. Those objects are concisely stated in the preamble of the Act of the Session of 1867 (31 Victoria, No. 36,) which recites that “it is expedient to make provision for “carrying out the geological survey of the Colony, and to establish “and incorporate a public institution in the City of Wellington, to be “called ‘The New Zealand Institute,’ which Institute shall comprise “a public museum and laboratory, and a public library;” and that “it “is also expedient, by means of lectures, classes, and otherwise, to “promote the general study and cultivation of the various branches “and departments of art, science, literature, and philosophy.”

*Character and objects of the New Zealand Institute founded by Act of the Colonial Legislature, 31 Victoria, No. 38.*

Appoint-  
ment of Dr.  
Hector,  
F.R.S., as  
Director.

Moreover, provision has been made by law for the appointment of a Director to superintend and carry out the general purposes of this Institute, and of the affiliated societies, the establishment of which it will encourage in all our chief centres of population. And here I must observe that the Government has been very fortunate in securing for this important office the proved ability and judgment, the wide experience, and the untiring energy of Dr. Hector, F.R.S. It is to him that we are mainly indebted for the valuable collections of Art and Science already accumulated in these halls; and he will always be ready to give his advice and assistance in the formation of Museums in our principal towns. Co-operation is the secret of success in all scientific pursuits; and the New Zealand Institute, while leaving its affiliated societies unfettered in the performance of their separate functions, will publish their chief transactions on a uniform plan, thereby concentrating the information collected by local observers throughout the country, and providing for the preservation, in a permanent and accessible form, of the result of their labours. It should not be forgotten that the New Zealand Exhibition of 1865, held at Dunedin, was an effort in the same direction; and that, if we may judge from the reports, it appears to have been very successful in procuring much novel and accurate information respecting the natural resources of this Colony.

New Zealand  
Exhibition  
of 1865.

Public  
Museum and  
Library.

And now, gentlemen, I congratulate you on already possessing in this Public Museum and Library, facilities for that moral and intellectual culture, without which no advantages of genius or of wealth can confer personal happiness, and no political privileges can secure immunity from national decay. Lord Bacon, the prince of philosophers, "*il gran Maestro di color che sanno*" in the modern, as Dante said of Aristotle in the ancient world, has pronounced that "Knowledge is power," and also, that "Knowledge is pleasure." So too, Milton, the prince of modern poets, has sung:—

How charming is Divine Philosophy!  
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute:  
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.\*

The main  
object of the  
Institute is  
to facilitate  
the practical  
work of co-  
lonisation.

Still, let me remind you, that the main object of the Legislature in founding this Institute, was not merely to make provision for healthy intellectual recreation, but rather to provide guidance and aid for the people of New Zealand in subduing and replenishing the earth,—in the "heroic work" of colonization.

The field of Science may be compared to a clearing in one of our primeval forests, where the more trees a settler fells, the greater appears the expanse of wood around him. And it might almost

\* Milton—Comus.

be said that every colonist in a new and unexplored country is, unconsciously, more or less of a scientific observer. For example:—the first discovery of the mineral treasures which are now fast yielding up their riches to us,—of our coal, our gold, our copper, and our iron,—is due, not so much to scientific research, as to chance, if that term can be properly applied to any of the great dispensations of Providence. When such a variety of valuable minerals has been presented to our view, almost without design or exertion on the part of the earliest discoverers, what rich harvests of knowledge, what vast practical aid to the industrial arts, may be expected from the systematic exploration of the Geology and Mineralogy of this country? Our extensive coal-fields are storehouses of wealth, which even now contribute in no slight degree towards our material welfare and our expanding commerce. What the future may bring forth it is not for man to foretell with confidence; but certainly coal has been the instrument by which the steam-engine, and others of the most wonderful inventions of modern times have been enabled to triumph over time and space. Again,—I trust that Industry, guided by Science, will develop still further our gold-fields. It should never be forgotten that, while the gold discoveries have accelerated by at least a hundred years what without them would have been the comparatively gradual progress of the Australasian group of Colonies, they have also powerfully facilitated the removal of commercial restrictions, and the advancement of social improvement in the Parent State;—adding immensely, at the same time, to the general trade and wealth of the British Empire, and of the entire civilized world.

Geology and  
Mineralogy.

The geological survey of New Zealand, in addition to the practical advantages thereby secured to the existing settlers and their successors, will assist materially in solving many important and interesting problems in general science. To quote from the authoritative work of Dr. Hochstetter; “Not inhabited probably till within late centuries of the history of man, and then but thinly populated, and only along the coasts and along the banks of navigable rivers, New Zealand has fully preserved within its interior the originality and peculiarity of its remarkable animal and vegetable kingdoms up to our present time. No monuments of any kind,—no tombs of kings,—no ruins of cities,—no time honoured fragments of shattered palace domes and temples are there to tell of the deeds of ages or nations past and gone. But Nature, through her mightiest agencies,—through fire and water,—has stamped her history in indelible characters on the virgin soil of the Islands. The wild Alpine heights of the South, towering in silent grandeur to the sky,—their lofty summits crested with fields of ice and decked with glacier robes; the volcanoes of the North, looming up into the regions of perpetual snow, glisten from afar, dazzling the wondering

The Geologi-  
cal Survey  
of New  
Zealand.

“ eyes of the mariner as he approaches the coast. Fertile and well watered alluvial plains are there awaiting the enterprising settler;— a virgin soil, on which he founds a new home;—a land blessed with the most genial climate, where he has but to battle with and subdue the wilderness to reap the never failing fruits of his labours.” \*

**Botany.**

Next to Geology, Botanical research will command the attention of the Institute. Here we have an admirable model for our guidance in Dr. Hooker's *Handbook of the New Zealand Flora*, a work which proves how much cordial co-operation furthers the advancement of Science. The author was enabled, through his genial spirit and personal influence, to secure the zealous assistance of numerous independent observers labouring in harmony with his own efforts, and thus to produce a book which, if we look to the sparse population and the inaccessible nature of a large portion of these Islands, is regarded by all competent judges to be almost marvellously complete. Still, much remains to be done by the help of botanical research, especially in comparing the various kinds of timber supplied by our forests, and in ascertaining the qualities of the fibre-bearing plants of our valleys, for which there is a large and growing demand on the part of British Manufacture. Again, our attention may be profitably directed to facilitating the introduction and cultivation of the valuable and ornamental fruit trees, plants, grasses, and flowers of other countries. The indigenous vegetation is fast disappearing before the progress of settlement, and it is alike the interest and the duty to their successors of the present generation to replace it by a new and remunerative growth. And here it is to be observed that the establishment of a Botanical Garden in connection with the Institute would much facilitate its operations.

**Zoology.**

In respect to Zoology, though New Zealand is generally deficient in animal life, there are many interesting fields open to the observer, especially with regard to the marine fauna of our coasts. Several of our shells and fishes present singular anomalies, and represent forms of life found in other parts of the world only in a fossil state. The progress of Acclimatization, already so successful, will gradually replenish this portion of the earth with every domestic animal and bird profitable and useful to man. It will stock our woods with game and our rivers with fish; while it will bring the feathered songsters of our mother-country to delight the ears of our children with their sprightly melody.

Let us consider, moreover, the interest which was excited throughout the civilized world by the discovery in New Zealand of the remains of a gigantic race of wingless birds, which appear

---

\* *New Zealand*. By Dr. F. Von. Hochstetter Chap II.

to have become extinct only in modern times. It is the opinion of the highest authorities on this subject that at no distant period it will be impossible to procure a collection of many species even of the common birds now found in this country. Before long, these too will have disappeared with the Moa. But local observers and collectors still have it in their power to place on record accurate information respecting their numbers, habits, and distribution.

With regard to the Physical Sciences, the study of Meteorology will prove of much practical benefit in these tempestuous latitudes; for the discoveries of Sir W. Reid and his followers have enabled Science to encircle with definite laws the apparently capricious phenomena of the atmosphere, and to set at defiance the terrors of the storm. Already, weather-indications are obtained throughout this Colony, and are published for general use on a uniform system. Moreover, the importance of New Zealand as a station for magnetical observations is everywhere recognised. It will be our duty, as members of the Institute, to contribute to the general stock of knowledge, not only of Terrestrial Magnetism, but also of Geodesy, or the exact measurement of the form of these Islands, upon which many problems of high interest depend.

The irregularities of the seasons, the oscillations of the level of the coast line, the connection between the variations of magnetic currents and volcanic force, as manifested by earthquakes;—all these and many other kindred subjects are of great scientific and practical interest at the present day, while our transactions respecting them will afford valuable materials for future philosophers and historians.

I have now glanced, in these imperfect remarks, at the practical advantages of the study of Geology, Botany, Zoology, and of the Physical Sciences. I firmly believe that the New Zealand Institute contains within itself a sure principle of vitality, because it contains a sure principle of usefulness.

And now, gentlemen, we must not forget that the halls in which we are assembled, contain numerous and valuable illustrations, not only of the Natural History and Geology of this country, but also of the manners and customs of its aboriginal inhabitants. It will be one of the main objects of this Institute to collect all records that can help to throw light on that very complicated and difficult, but highly interesting subject,—the past and present condition and future prospects of the Maori race. My predecessor, Sir George Grey, has done much for the preservation of the poetry and traditions of the Maoris; and I know that I shall gratify you by quoting the eloquent words with which, in his Inaugural Address, he called the attention of the New Zealand Society to this part of its duties. He said:—

“ We who stand in this country occupy an historical position of extraordinary interest. Before us, lies a future already brilliant

“ with the light of a glorious morn, which we are to usher in to  
 “ gladden unborn generations. Behind us, lies a night of fearful  
 “ gloom, unilluminated by the light of written records, of picture  
 “ memorials, of aught which can give a certain idea of the past. A  
 “ few stray streaks of light, in the form of tradition, of oral poetry, of  
 “ carved records, are the only guides we have. And, in the gloom of  
 “ that night, are fast fading out of view, although dim outlines of them  
 “ are still visible, some of the most fearful spectres which have ever  
 “ stalked amongst mankind, in the hideous shapes of idolatry, human  
 “ sacrifice, and cannibalism;—mixed up with which, in uncouth  
 “ unison, is much of real poetry, and of actual grace of fancy.  
 “ Future generations will almost doubt that such gloomy forms of  
 “ thought have haunted their highly cultivated and civilized homes;  
 “ or that a people, debased by such barbarities, could yet have felt and  
 “ cherished so much of the poetic and good :—and if they could then  
 “ question us, who have seen these now fading superstitions ere they  
 “ wholly vanished, what eager questions they would propose to us  
 “ regarding their monstrous shapes, their horrid aspect, the rude and  
 “ inharmonious voices with which, with horrid shouts and yells,  
 “ their orgies were fulfilled! How eagerly the poet, the painter, the  
 “ sculptor, would seek to recover some traits of their terrible  
 “ lineaments, or of their softer outlines, when they related to scenes  
 “ of the gentler passions, or of domestic life!—that either a stern  
 “ grandeur, or the romantic glow of a primitive state of existence,  
 “ might be imparted to some work of art.”

To these graphic and striking words I will only add that no  
 problem of Ethnology,—no question of Political Economy (in its best  
 and most practical sense), can be regarded as alien to us Britons, who,  
 throughout our vast Empire, are brought into contact with so many  
 and such diverse nations. The noble exhortation addressed to the  
 Romans of old by their greatest poet, is, in its spirit, equally  
 applicable to our own Imperial race, which now rules those Indian  
 realms that baffled the arms of Alexander, and is fast peopling and  
 replenishing that Australasia, or “ Great Southern Land,” which lay  
 beyond the charts of Nearchus and Strabo, of Marco Polo and  
 Columbus :—

Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra,  
 Credo equidem, vivos ducent de marmore vultus;  
 Orabunt caussas melius, cœlique meatus  
 Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent;  
 Tu regere impero populos, Romane, memento;  
 Hæ tibi erunt artes. \*

If I did not feel that I had already trespassed too long on your  
 attention, I would, in conclusion, urge the expediency of the

Conclusion.

\* *Virgil. Æn. VI 848-853.*

encouragement, in some departments of the colleges and schools in this new land, of that technical and scientific education, which is now year by year asserting a higher place among the studies of our fellow-countrymen in the old world. It would, indeed, ill become me, as a grateful son of the University of Oxford, to utter a single word in disparagement of the study of ethics, mathematics, history, and classical literature; or of the intellectual vigour and grace derived from the contemplation of the pure models of antiquity. Still, in common with the foremost philosophers, scholars, and statesmen of the present day, I am convinced that it is no longer wise, or even politically and socially safe, to cultivate exclusively those branches of learning. The intellect of the existing generation appears to be most progressive in the physical and natural sciences; and the treasures won from them seem the richest heirlooms which we can bequeath to our posterity. It has been powerfully argued, moreover, that if we look to what should be the grand object of all study, the formation, namely, of the mind and the character, it will be found that there is scarcely any mental or moral faculty which Science cannot develop and discipline. It was said of old that "there is no royal road to Knowledge;" and it has been said of late, with equal truth, that "there are no false keys to the book of Nature." The successful student of that book must possess an almost ignominious love of minute details, as well as that sound and practical judgment which can arrange and classify the mass of facts and observations which he has stored up with patient and conscientious toil. But the reward is great; above all, for those who "look through Nature up to Nature's God." An able writer has remarked that "at the close of all labour a man must ask to what good end he has given himself. There are few who will find the answer so easy as those who have contributed even the smallest help in widening our knowledge of the order of Nature, and in revealing for our adoration the Divine ideas which are at the basis of all things. In the generous efforts they are called to make, they have a hope, better founded than most human expectations, that they will find that education of their faculties for the future, which we may reasonably suppose to be the most important object of our present existence." In a like spirit, Knowledge has been compared to that mystic ladder in the Patriarch's dream; the base of which rested on the primeval earth, while its crest was lost in the glory of Heaven. \*

The importance of Technical and Scientific Education.