

W.H. Archer, Esq.,

I was just going to write you such a funny note my dear Mr. Archer telling you that you had promised more than you were going to perform when I got yrs of the 21st — mirabile!<sup>1</sup> how you can abbreviate and condense and get three lines of a note to serve as many purposes and contain as much matter as an egg does of meat. And with yr note of the aforesaid date (21st wd have been shorter wouldn't it? but I wish to show you that I am not afraid of long notes and I scorn tautology even tho' I am writing to a head of a department — legal? phew! what a parenthesis) I got item to wit IO bundle of maps (thanks) 2° statistical papers (gratias) 3° regulations of B. of Education (kudos) and then you say to crown all that you have Prof. Neumayer's work<sup>2</sup>; and lastly you give me permission to dedicate a little pamphlet<sup>3</sup> to you, likewise a fossil<sup>4</sup>— it never rains but it pours. It won't be very long before my paleontological notes are ready and then you will see yrself going down to posterity on the back of a sea—urchin, period unknown — probably Miocene.

N.B. isn't it a funny thing to go down to posterity backwards and upwards — *Hemiaster archeri*, Woods. Miocene or Lower Pliocene<sup>5</sup>, Mt. Gambier. But there it is whether you like it or no: the fiat has gone forth and the printer has the copy — and oh it would make you laugh if you knew the reason why I chose yr name. But of all the nice things I have seen in the scientific way for a long time, nothing equals yr microscopic photographs of the *Bicellaria trita*,<sup>6</sup> Busk.<sup>7</sup> Have you done any more, and why oh why did you not send me a lot if you have them? Don't think I mean to insinuate what I don't. I'll tell you what I do think and now I think I understand you. You are not a dilett (no - I won't write that word again) you are a man who has too many things to do and responsibilities wh you must not shrink from. And therefore it is a matter of great praise that you can, in your weary leisure, saved from rest, do any science. And even if we only get crumbs, are there many with your work from whom we get them likewise? Are there any with far less to do from whom we get more. You think I am bantering doubtless. I am not. I would have answered yr letter sooner but I only came home yesterday from a tour of 18 days in killing weather, with precious little meat, and yet having to provide refreshments for the fleas of about 12 shepherds' huts. Ah pity me or envy me rather for I often pray God to shorten the time of my labour. God bless you and yours my dear Archer and believe me.

vytryyrs

J.E. Tenison Woods.

If you give Neumayer's volume to Dwight<sup>8</sup> he will see it forwarded to me.  
How did you like my Exploration Book.<sup>9</sup> Don't spare me. The Burke and Wills Expedition?<sup>10</sup>  
Ah do give me a line if you have any incense to offer.

<sup>1</sup> Wonderful

<sup>2</sup> Georg. Neumayer (1826-1909) Astronomer, meteorologist and physicist from Bavaria set up the Observatory at Flagstaff Hill, Melbourne, in 1858 with £2,000 worth of equipment brought from overseas (building developments made it imperative in 1862 to move the Observatory to the Botanic Garden). Though he met with prejudiced opposition even in the colonial legislature, Neumayer was able to enlist the support of the press, the commercial community and local scientists. A prominent and active member of the Royal Society of Victoria he returned to Germany after his magnetic survey of Victoria (1858-64) (A.D.B., Vol. 5, pp. 329-331). The work referred to could be *Results of the Meteorological Observations 1859-62* and *Nautical Observations 1859-62*, which was published in 1864.

<sup>3</sup> Pamphlet *The Geology of Portland* resulted from two lectures on local Geology delivered at Portland on 10th and 13th February, 1865, and in its dedication to Archer, Woods mentions the many kindnesses received.

<sup>4</sup> "*Hemiaster archeri* (This specimen is named after my friend Mr. W.H. Archer, Registrar-General of Victoria — a scientific man of eminent learning, whose accomplishments in natural history researches have been of much service to me in these investigations.)" "The Tertiary Rocks of South Australia" *Trans Phil. Soc.* For 1866. Adelaide 1867.

<sup>5</sup> These are geological epochs. Miocene commenced twenty five million years ago and its duration was thirteen million years. Pliocene had a duration of nine million years and began twelve million years ago.

<sup>6</sup> A species of Polyzoa (Note 4, 28/11/63 - The Bryozoa (Polyzoa) are usually small (from 5mm to 15cm) and are aquatic colonial organisms ranging in time from Ordovician (geological period which commenced five hundred million years ago and lasted for sixty million years) to Recent. They are of no geological importance but occasionally they occur in significant volume as reef-building organisms (Whitten, D. & Brooks, J. *A Dictionary of Geology*, Ringwood, Penguin, 1975, p.357.) "Mr. W.H. Archer read a paper on some novel microscopic apparatus which he had lately become possessed of as well as some other which had been made to his order... Mr. Archer next proceeded to exhibit his improvement as connected with the microscopic examination of some new Polyzoa ... " *Argus* 22/9/63 "Royal Society of Victoria.")

<sup>7</sup> Note 5, 28/11/63 - George Busk (1807-1886). English surgeon, zoologist, paleontologist and authority on the Bryozoa. Woods sent specimen of the Bryozoa (Polyzoa) to Busk. See for example "Notes on the Fossil Polyzoa collected by the Rev. J.E. Woods near Mount Gambier, South Australia" by George Busk. *Proceedings of the Geological Society* (London) Nov. 30, 1859, pp. 260-1. Later in his paper, "On Some Tertiary Australian Polyzoa" *J. Roy. Soc. N.S.W.* Vol. X, 1876, p. 149, Julian would name a species of Polyzoa, *Eschara buskii*, "after Professor G Bush F.R.S. etc., the greatest living authority on Polyzoa, and almost, we may say, the founder of its classification".

<sup>8</sup> Note 17, 28/11/63 - Henry Tolman Dwight (1823?-1871) was the leader of the book trade in Melbourne and an early and successful publisher of Australian works. His bookshop at 234 Bourke Street opened in 1854 and became a meeting place for the literary dilettanti of his period. His property was bequeathed to the University of Melbourne, and prizes were established for the encouragement of learning in ancient history, constitutional and legal history and natural philosophy, (*Age* Melbourne, 10th February, 1945 and A.D.B., Vol. 4, pp. 121-122).

<sup>9</sup> *A History of the Discovery and Exploration of Australia*, London, Sampson, Low, Son and Marston . Melbourne. H.T. Dwight 1865. The two volumes were dedicated to His Excellency Sir Henry Barkly — Late Governor in Chief of the Colony of Victoria.

<sup>10</sup> The rough draft of the Seventh and Final Report of the Exploration Committee of the Royal Society of Victoria for 1863 — (Adopted after amendments at the ordinary meeting of 31st August, 1863) — states: "The disaster which befell the Burke and Wills' Expedition created a strong and painful feeling in the moment but the Exploration Committee which was condemned without the formality of a trial, and denounced without the opportunity of defence . . . That prosperity will reverse a decree which was a precipitate as it was unjust, the Exploration Committee confidently expects." Pamphlet inserted in Royal Society of Victoria Minutes of Meeting Book. In the light of this Woods could well expect reaction to his statement, "We may attribute a great deal of the disaster to this very serious mistake (the unfavourable season at which the expedition started), and in this, and a great many other things, we must blame the Exploration Committee for it . . . there were few among them even moderately acquainted with the bush, — and for that they are not to blame, but everyone must blame them for not having shrunk from the position. Knowing that the success of the expedition, nay, human life depended upon their management, they should have acknowledged their incapacity, no matter what the position, influence, or notoriety they would thus sacrifice." (*A History of the Discovery and Exploration of Australia*. Melbourne, H.T. Dwight, 1865, Vol. II, p. 351)