

W.H. Archer, Esq.,

My dear Archer,

Many thanks for your promptitude in giving me the note of warning,¹ but do you know I hardly think it worthwhile to answer poor Dr. B.² Still I have done so as you will see per *Argus*,³ being moved thereto principally by thinking it good fun to have a little sparring. I hope I have not overdone it. Tell me if you think so. You know it is a delicate matter as we are both priests. Above all be at his elbow when he replies for I would rather come off second best than that he should make a fool of himself. So you didn't read the book. Oh, fie! Read the book I send herewith which has your name to it; and since it has can only wish it was more worthy of it. Many many thanks for your kind promptitude in my requests as to maps and books all of which have come to hand except your statistics for 1863. How can I return your kindness — but who knows what yet may lay in my power. If you see J. Smith⁴ remind him that I am wondering why he did not answer my letter or send back my MS. I wrote for it and hardly like to write again. Just give his memory a jog.

Now, would you — could you? Only think if you and I could publish in the colony a **diagnostic** history of the Bryozoa. I wd find MS and **you** the microscopic **photos**. The printing wd not cost £20 and I have lots of new species which would go down to posterity thus. *Catenicella dubia* — Woods and Archer, or I should say — but my pen slipped — Archer and Woods. Now, I am really serious and if you will do the photos I will guarantee to have the letterpress done by six months. What a valuable work it would be and what privileges we could get on the strength of it. Ah now will you lay aside your thousand and one occupations and think of this one. Kindest regards to Mrs. Archer and family and believe me.

vy try yrs.

J.E. Tenison Woods.

I wish you would write a review of my book for the *Argus*.⁵

¹ . Woods in *A History of the Discovery and Exploration of Australia* had been critical of the part played by the Exploration Committee in the Burke and Wills Expedition. Rev. J. Bleasdale's president 's address to the Royal Society of Victoria, 4th May, 1865, acknowledges that the Woods' work "bids fair to be a standard work of reference on many matters" but regrets "that this talented and youthful author should lend himself to abuse the Exploration Committee, and write for sensation." (*Trans. Roy Soc. Vic.* Vol. III, 1865 - 66, p .12) The *Argus* (Melbourne) 5th May, 1865 reported the meeting and Dr Bleasdale's comments on Woods.

² John Ignatius Bleasdale (1822-1884) a Catholic Priest arrived in Melbourne in 1851. Prominent in the Church, in scientific circles and in public life his many offices included organiser for the Intercolonial Exhibition 1866-67, trustee of the Museum, Public Library and National Gallery, member of many boards connected with health and education, President of the Royal Society of Victoria, secretary to Archbishop Goold and in 1874 Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Melbourne. He was an important contributor to the Australian Wine Industry and migrated to California in 1877 after his health failed. (A.D.B. Vol. 3, pp. 183-185 and T.J. Linane *From Abel to Zundolovich*, Vol. I pp. 26-27.)

³ Woods' reply (16th May, 1865) to Dr. Bleasdale's comments appears in the *Argus* (Melbourne) Monday, May 22nd, 1865 and answers the criticism point by point. He finally assures Dr. Bleasdale that his youthfulness is a fault he is overcoming day by day.

⁴ James Smith (1820-1910) an experienced and able journalist migrated to Victoria in 1854. He joined the staff of the *Argus* in 1856 and contributed leading articles, literary reviews and dramatic criticisms. For a time he edited the **Australasian** but from 1863-68 he was Parliamentary Librarian. The first to suggest the foundation of a National Gallery he exerted a great influence on art as critic and as trustee of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery. He wrote articles for most of the important Melbourne literary journals, 185 and T.J. Linane *From Abel to Zundolovich*, Vol. I pp. 26-27.) was a much sought public lecturer and worked for the intellectual and cultural elevation of the colony. (A.D.B., Vol. 6, pp. 145-146)

⁵ . The review appears in the *Argus* of Tuesday 16th May, 1865. (The date of this letter). It gives a detailed description and concludes "The history which Mr. Woods gives of the expedition in which Wills played such a noble part, is a graphic and impartial one, and there can be a few now who will not approve of the spirit in which he writes and concur in his conclusions." Archer had been a member of the subcommittee appointed by the Exploration Committee to decipher the papers of the Burke and Wills Expedition found at Coopers Creek. Among the Archer papers (University of Melbourne Archives) is found an invitation to William H. Archer and Lady from Mr. Summers to see the casting of the Burke and Wills' Statue on Friday, 16th September, 1864