SECOND

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MELBOURNE MECHANICS' INSTITUTION.

SESSION ENDING 31st MAY, 1841.

MELBOURNE:

PRINTED BY ARDEN AND STRODE, GAZETTE OFFICE.

OFFICE BEARERS

OF THE

MELBOURNE MECHANICS' INSTITUTION.

FOR THE YEAR 1841-42.

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MAINE,

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Anditors.

JOHN CAREY, AND D. G. M'ARTHUR, ESQRS.

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THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE,

REPORT.

THE Committee of Management of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution approach the duty of rendering an account of their Stewardship for the past year, with feelings of satisfaction to themselves and congratulation to the Members collectively. They felt upon the assumption of the important trust with which they were invested, that in the early stages of such an Institution a duty was devolved upon them, which entailed the success or failure of a first attempt to engraft upon the energies of this infant Province a desire to promote the literary and scientific pursuits of its inhabitants, to engender in the minds of the rising generation, from the example of their elders, a thirst after knowledge. They could not but be deeply impressed with the arduous task they had consented to undertake, from the consideration of the very limited existence of a Colony (being of barely four years duration,) into which they were expected to scatter the seeds of science, and to watch over their progress to maturity. Your Committee could not but be sensible that in a community so circumstanced, wherein every interest might justly be deemed concentrated in other pursuits, they had to encounter a prejudice, that the people were too much concerned in their private avocations to devote any time or attention to the cultivation of their mental endowments. How far their exertions in combating such an opinion, or in performing the duties which were expected at their hands, have met with success, it will remain for the Members to draw the inference from a detail of the proceedings of the Committee.

The previous Report, presented twelve months since, referring to the want of suitable accommodation for the purposes of the Institution, informed you of an application having been made through His Honor the Superintendent to Sir George Gipps, as Governor-in-Chief, soliciting the favorable consideration of the Government in the concession of an allotment of land whereon to erect a Mechanics' School of Arts. Confident in the popularity of the cause and the justice of the demand, there seemed no reason to doubt an immediate and gratifying acquiescence, and a considerable subscription was raised in anticipation of the successful result. It remains with the present Committee to communicate the issue, and place upon undying record the deep regret which was universally created by the rejection of the request for the

bounty of the Government, thus made to Sir George Gipps. His Excellency declined to afford any assistance, until satisfied that the Institution would be well supported by the public, and afford a fair promise of being useful; when at some future period he would be happy to grant the pecuniary aid of three hundred pounds, upon a certificate being furnished of the commencement of a building. Such stipulations appeared to your Committee but as a denial of their presumed equitable right, seeing that at Sydney no condition had been attached of a similar nature to the gratuity bestowed upon the Mechanics' Institution at that seat of Government .-There was consequently no alternative left but to decline the proffered aid; the more especially, when your Committee found that a Society, containing the names of upwards of one hundred and thirty persons, among whom were the most influential and wealthy of the residents of the Province, with His Honor the Superintendent at their head, was not a sufficient guarantee with His Excellency of the respectable foundation of the Institution, and an assurance of its promise of utility.

The letter bearing the decision of the Governor was laid before a Meeting of Committee on the 20th of last July, and on the 6th of the following month a Resolution was passed, that the Secretary be directed to procure two Allotments of one of the Blocks which were about to be submitted, by order of the Government, for sale by auction, limiting the purchase to £500. On the 13th day of August, in due accordance with this instruction, the Lots Nos. 2 and 3, in Block 11, were bought for the Institution for the sum of £285; and your Committee have thus specially drawn your attention to these particulars, no less to repudiate the imputation of having exercised any unworthy or dishonorable means to effect the purchase of this land at its minimum upset price, than to evince the public sympathy in the cause which permitted this trifling sacrifice to the revenues of the Treasury of the Colony.

Having thus obtained a quantity of land beyond the pecuniary means of making it available for the benefit of the Mechanics' School of Arts in the necessary buildings, it was prudently determined to reserve the portion most eligible for such purpose, and to subdivide the remainder in sections for sale, devoting the proceeds to the Fund for Building. The amount realized by this arrangement amounted to £1,141 12s. 4d. The next measure consequent upon this proceeding was to call for specifications and plans for a Structure adapted to the necessities and conveniences of the Institution, and your Committee have now to lay before this meeting of its Members the opinions they have formed upon the various designs submitted to their inspection; and they cannot suffer this opportunity to pass without affording their testimony to the ability and talent displayed by the gentlemen who tendered the several architectural designs, namely, Messrs. Jackson, Patterson,

By a Resolution which passed the Committee on the 12th of

O'Hagan, Rattenbury, Johnson, Hayden and Quinn.

November last, the sum of £2,000 was fixed as the maximum cost to which the designs invited to be submitted were to be limited, and premiums were offered in the several amounts of twenty, ten, and five guineas, for the three most meritorious that might be presented In accordance with a public notification to the above effect, two plans only, from the hands of Mr. Patterson, were received, and laid before the Committee on the 1st of February; but as the specifications for the erection of either proposed building exceeded the prescribed estimate, they were necessarily rejected; at the same time a proposition was made to Mr. Patterson for the acceptance of one of his designs, provided he could reduce the expense within the limited sum. No notice being taken of this suggestion by any regular tender to the Committee, it was determined to renew the calls for plans and specifications, and upon the sixth day of April there were five several designs brought under. the inspection of the Committee. Upon this occasion the drawing forwarded by Mr. Johnson was generally selected as best adapted for the purpose desired, although it did not entirely meet approbation; and certain alterations were proposed to Mr Johnson as the condition of the acceptance of his design. Between the last mentioned period and the 18th ultimo, no communication having been made to the Committee upon this point, it remained solely to your Committee to consider how far any other design before them might justify them in its recommendation for adoption by the Members upon this present occasion. After mature consideration the draft plan prepared by Mr. O'Hagan was deemed the most elegant and imposing design, as such would reflect credit both upon the architect and the Institution; but being upon a scale beyond the resources calculated for the expenditure, a reference was directed to Mr. O'Hagan to ascertain the possibility of reducing the proposed extent of his projected building to such a limit, that, whilst securing the requisite accommodation, should not exceed the specified outlay. In accordance with this view, Mr. O'Hagan has remodelled his plan; thus furnishing a design commensurate with the immediate necessities of the Institution, and upon a scale of expenditure in the construction of the building within the proposed estimate; and at the same time providing for the extension of the structure whenever the circumstances of the Society will admit. and their need of accommodation require an increase thereto, without any detriment to the elevation. Your Committee, therefore, beg leave to recommend Mr. O'Hagan's design for the approval of the Members of the Institution.

Whilst the uncertainty thus existed of a permanent building being erected for the Institution, it became necessary to procure a suitable repository for the safe preservation of the property which had accrued to the Members, by various donations of Books and other articles of value.—Your Committee, therefore, selected the house, situated at the corner of Bourke and Queen Streets, for this purpose: which had been tendered by one of the Committee

at a reasonable rental, with the condition of tenure, dependent at a very short notice, upon the pleasure of the Committee. Upon these premises are deposited a small collection of useful Books, which have been contributed by the liberality of a few persons, which have been contributed by the liberality of a few persons, who aware of the limited pecuniary resources of the Institution at present, have thus set the example of a laudable generosity. There is also deposited in this temporary School of Arts, an Electrifying Machine, which has been lately presented to our infant association by Dr. Nicholson, the Vice President of the Sydney Mechanics' Institution.

Your Committee have, likewise, through this arrangement, been enabled to secure a fixed place for their assemblies, without having recourse to solicit the appropriation of premises to their use, when their duties called them together, and thus tax the kindly feelings of friends at the expense of their comfort and convenience; and when it is stated that your Committee have been convened upon six and twenty occasions since the last Anniversary, the Members may readily conclude, that a necessity existed for the Institution possessing within itself the means of accommodation for their Committee of Management.

Still, however, for the more important purposes of Lectures, the Society has been compelled to rely upon the indulgence of their friends; and it would be an act of ingratitude were they to neglect the tribute of their thanks to the Rev. Mr. Forbes and the Managers of the Scots School, for the appropriation to these occasions of their commodious room, for the past Session: as also of their consent to its use during the present year. To Mr. Davis, also, the proprietor of the dwelling in which we are now congregated, the acknowledgments of the Members, are due, for his unsolicited proposal of accommodation whenever required by the Institution.

Your Committee have now to advert to the subject of the Lectures delivered since the last general assembly, and to place upon record the names of those gentlemen, who have presented themselves in the foremost rank in leading the "forlorn hope" against ignorance, and its batteries of indolence, folly, and vice. The following is the gratifying list of those who have thus signalized themselves in the fields of Literature and Science:—

1840.

June 12.—Dr. GREEVES, Geology.

July 3.-Mr. Sewell, Heat.

10.—Rev. P. B. Geoghegan, On the Existence of a Deity, proved by Nature and Reason.

Aug. 7.—DR. WILMOT, On the present State of Science.

Sept, 19.—MR. OSBORNE, On Phrenology.

" 30.-MR. BARRY, Agriculture.

1841.

April 21.-Mr. Andn, On the Acquirement of Knowledge.

The arrangements for the Lectures of the present Session have met with some interruption dependent upon inevitable causes; but when it is considered that the Institution has mainly to rely upon gentlemen engaged in professional pursuits for these services, and excuse will at once present itself for that interruption. The opening Lecture of the season delivered by Mr. Arden, upon "The Acquirement of Knowledge," attended as it was by a numerous and attentive audience, whilst affording evidence that the public are gratified by these means of mental recreation, hold out encouragement to those gifted with the power of disseminating knowledge, that their exertions in the cause will not be made in vain; and many gentlemen of scientific and literary acquirements have consequently expressed their consent to furnish lectures. Your Committee have much pleasure, therefore, in announcing that at an early day the Lectures will be resumed, and continued at stated intervals during the remainder of the Session.

In the present dearth of Scientific Apparatus in the possession of the Institution, it is impossible to expect that enlivening variation in the character of the Lectures, which is necessary in general to secure the public attention. It cannot, therefore, but prove most gratifying to remark the interest which has been manifested by the attendances of the Members and Visitors at each Lecture, which leads your Committee to hope, that when furnished with the means of illustrating the Sciences by the aid of apparatus, the subjects selected for lecture may range into the pleasing and more popular studies of experimental and mechanical philosophy.

The next topic which has to be brought under consideration is the state of the Library, consisting at present of about One Hundred Volumes; a number, which trifling and insignificant as it must appear, is nevertheless consisting in Works of great utility, and the more to be prized from the consideration of their having been presented to the Institution.

Your Committee have in the next place to advert to the circumstance of Ninety-six Members having joined the Institution during the last twelve months, thus making the aggregate up to this day upon the list to amount to Two Hundred and Fifty-eight, being the most convincing evidence that can be adduced of the progressing prosperity and popular approval of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution.

Your Committee have finally to draw attention to the appointment of the Officers of the Institution for the succeeding year, terminating on the 31st of May, 1842. They have presumed to submit the List which they have proposed for confirmation, the various nominations to vacant Offices being made in accordance with the Bye Laws. It will be perceived that there are three vacant seats of the Committee of Management, arising from three of the elective Members being appointed to the Honorary Office of Trustees of the Land Fund, which qualifies them ex-officio for voting

in the Committee of Management. It is therefore suggested to elect Messrs. Westgarth, Harrington, and Dr. Greeves in their stead.

The Five Members retiring by rotation have been fixed upon by a reference to the attendances at the Meetings of Committee by its Members, and your Committee would recommend this system being adopted as the future rule of guidance on similar occasions. The gentlemen who will thus vacate pursuant to Bye Law No. 14, are Messrs. Barry, Maine, Murphy, Peers, and Sutherland, who being eligible for re-election your Committee beg to place in nomination for such purpose.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Members of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution, held June 7, 1841, the following Resolutions were unanimously passed:—

F. M'Crae, Esq., in the Chair.

Moved by A. M. M'Crae, Esq.; seconded by G. Were, Esq.—That the Report as now read be confirmed, and that the same be printed for the use of the Institution.

Moved by P. W. Welsh, Esq.; seconded by A. M'Killop, Esq.—That the thanks of this Institution be given to the several gentlemen who have favoured the Institution with Lectures during the past year.

Moved by R. Wilson Esq.; seconded by W. Belcher, Esq.—That the thanks of this Institution be tendered to the Committee of Management during the year 1840-41, for the services they have rendered.

Moved by G. Arden, Esq.; seconded by R. Reeves, Esq.—That James Simpson, Esq., be the President of the Mechanics' Institution for the succeeding year.

Moved by R. Barry, Esq.; seconded by R. Reeves, Esq.—That the Chairman do quit the Chair, and that Mr. Welsh do take the same, and that the thanks of this meeting be given to Dr. M'Crae for his presiding upon the present occasion,

DONATIONS

TO THE

MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

OF THE

MELBOURNE MECHANICS' INSTITUTION.

DURING THE YEAR 1840-41.

Spears and Waddies of Natives	Mr. Robinson
Compendium of Mechanics'	Mr. Rushton
Lecture on Steam Engine	Ditto
Historical Table of ditto	Ditto
Artist's Portfolio	Mr. Thurlow
Six Volumes of Flora Sicca	Mr. Bertram
Almanac	Mr. Kerr
Work on Australia Felix	Mr. Arden
The early Numbers of the Edinburgh	
Review	Mr. A. M. M'Crae
Malte Brun's Universal Geography, 9 vols	Mr. Strode
Mitchell's Australia, 2 vols	Dr. M'Crae
Collection of Coins	Rev. Mr. Waterfield
Anatomical Preparations	Dr. Hobson
An Electrifying Machine	Dr. Nicholson
Mechanics' Register, 16 numbers	Mr. M'Arthur, (D.G.)
The Colonial Journals, Gazette, Patriot,	•
and Herald	The Proprietors

Account Sales of the undermentioned Property, sold by the Melbourne Auction Company by Auction at Melbourne, the 14th December, 1840, and 6th day of February, 1841, by order of Trustees of Mechanics Institution.

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MEMBERS.

Honorary Members are distinguished thus *. Junior Members thus †.

*A'Beckett Arthur *A'Beckett Dr. Adamson John Anderson Joseph +Anderson Adam Anderson Alexander Arden George Arnold Thomas Arskine David Bacchus Captain Barry R. *Barney Major Baskerville John Baylie Dr. Baxter B. Beaver George †Beaver F E. Beale Anthony Bell R. Benjamin S. Best David Bodicen P. +Bodicen M. H. Boyd D. Bowman W. Brewster E. J. Broadfoot Alexander Brodie G. S. Brown Captain Brown John Burns Thomas Burns William Cains Captain Campbell D. S. Campbell Robert Campbell A.

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Langhorne William

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