

Putou, Jan'y 16, 1855.

Sir Charles Lyell,

Dear Sir;

I duly received your favour of Dec 18, and cannot sufficiently thank you for your kind attention and useful hints. I now enclose a note from the Lieut. Governor of this Province\*, and a copy of a testimonial from Rev. A. Forrester, my successor as superintendent of education, <sup>and a good naturalist known to many in Edinburgh</sup> the original of which was sent by him to care of Mr Chambers Esq. I also enclose the advertisement of my "Ancient Geology", omitted in my last. Sir E Head has been so kind as to write to me informing me that he has enclosed to you a letter to Lord Palmerston.

When I last wrote, the news of Prof. Forbes' death was so recent and I was so hurried that I had scarcely time to think of the blank he has left. He combined in a remarkable degree minute knowledge and powers of observation with large general views and ~~such~~ felicitous expression and illustration. I have very recently been studying his views on the distribution and migrations of species, and his descriptions of fossils for the Geological Survey; and just before the news of his death arrived, had read his playful yet profound review of Murckheim's Siluria. It would be hard to find another man equally capable of these three dissimilar productions. The extent given by his occupancy of the Edinburgh chair, and the apparent want of a successor equally gifted, help to account for the extent of

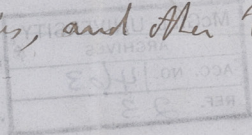
\* I am sorry Sir Susford speaks of imputation from England. He took that from Mr Jones, to whom I said that I had encouragement to try.

The present competition. I have no doubt however that exaggerated estimates have been made of the pecuniary value of the chair under him. For a year or two, it might possibly have approached £1600, but its permanent value could not, without a large increase in the number of the students in the University, much if at all exceed £1000.

I cannot of course in such a competition be very sanguine of success, nor can I be blind to the disadvantages of my present obscure position. I think however I ought to persevere, because I am confident that, with God's blessing, I could fulfil the duties <sup>of the office</sup> as usefully and creditably as any of the candidates I have yet heard of, unless though I no doubt am to many of them in eminence in special departments of natural history. Without this confidence and a determination to do all in my power to realize it, I could not ask your countenance and aid; nor shall I expect to receive your support, if you find any candidate in the field whose appointment will in your opinion be more conducive to the interests of science.

The division of the chair has I observe been suggested by the professors and town council. This I think is wise, more especially as grave doubts may be entertained whether the subdivision of natural history is really desirable in a scientific point of view. If for instance, the students, or the bulk of them, could not be induced to attend both classes, I have no doubt that the zoologists without geology and the geologists without zoology would be less likely to do good

To science than if their time had been divided between the two; and it would hardly suit for the Zoologist to lecture on Paleontology, and the geologist to introduce enough Zoology to enable his pupils to understand fossils. It appears to me also that the objection to <sup>the</sup> large field occupied by the united chair, arises as much from professors being tempted to give undue time to details and favorite hobbies, than as from any other cause. Garrison used habitually to leave his course unfinished from this cause. I do not know how Oakes had arranged, as I have not seen his syllabus. The difficulty could be easily overcome by keeping in view that students require a view of fundamental facts and general principles, classification and practical methods of study and investigation, with just so much of detailed description as may suffice for illustration, and to point out the present limits of knowledge and the most desirable paths of original inquiry. A good lecturer ought to give interest to this without entering into matter which may be found in any popular work on the subject. The entire course should in my opinion commence with Zoology, under which there should be a full account of comparative physiology, including all the recent discoveries on the reproduction &c of the lower animals, and a full view of the structural differences on which species, genera, &c. are based. This would make the classification easy, and give interest to the descriptions of typical or important species by which it might be illustrated, as well as enable them to be short. Having thus built up the skeleton of the subject, a few lectures might be specially devoted to geographical distribution of species, Man and his varieties, and other topics of special interest. In mineralogy,



I would go thoroughly into characters and method of determination, as good preparations for accurate observation, and would illustrate the Chemical and "Natural Historical" classifications, and describe all the more important species. All this could be done and leave sufficient time for geology and Palaeontology, which would of course be comparatively easy after such preparation. If however the chain be divided I should still be disposed to try for the Mineralogy and geology, and should not despair of collecting a respectable class. The fair course in case of a division would be to give the endowment or most of it to one of the classes, and make the attendance of medical students on the other compulsory.

As it may be important to answer letters by return mail, which cannot be done here by ordinary course of post, I have requested Hon Wm Jervis to open my letters in Halifax, and inform me by telegraph of anything requiring immediate attention. It will have a little delay however if you will have the kindness to enquire to him (Hon W. Jervis, Attorney Genl. &c, Halifax) any letter requiring immediate attention.

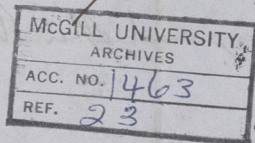
After closing my last, I wrote to Prof H. Forster. I was introduced to him in 1847.

I have not asked you if it will be necessary to write directly to Lord Palmerston. I have taken it for granted that it will be more for my interest, that he should receive my application or through you.

With thanks and much good wishes

Yours respectfully

W. Dawson



PS I may mention that the Forestia certificate is merely a rough first copy; but I thought it as well to send it in his own writing—in which, as in religion, he is a disciple of De Cholmery.

W.D.

Letter to Doyle July 1858