

The Flower Memorial.

THE following is abridged from *The Times*, 27th July, 1903 :—

A bust of the late Sir William Henry Flower, F.R.S., Director of the Natural History Department of the British Museum, was formally presented to the Trustees of the British Museum by the Flower Memorial Committee, of which Lord Avebury is chairman, at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, on Saturday; and the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the representative of the Trustees, received and unveiled it. The ceremony took place in the central hall of the Museum in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering.

Professor Ray Lankester, F.R.S., Director of the Natural History Department of the Museum, opened the proceedings with a few words, and introduced Lord Avebury, the chairman of the Memorial Committee.

Lord Avebury, in presenting the bust to the trustees and asking the Archbishop to unveil it, expressed the respect and admiration which he had always felt for the late Sir W. Flower, a naturalist of great eminence, who had rendered magnificent service to the Museum.

Dr. Sclater, F.R.S., speaking as an old and intimate friend of the late Sir W. Flower, gave a brief sketch of his career. He pointed out that he had held the office of president of the Zoological Society of London, and stated that when the directorship of the Natural History Museum became vacant in 1884, Sir W. Flower was selected *omnium consensu* as the fittest man for that important post. Virchow, of Berlin, was said to have designated him as the "Prince of Museum Directors." The late Director had filled three of the most exalted and conspicuous posts that a devotee of zoological science could expect to occupy, and had made his mark in all of them.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (who presided) said it was as a principal Trustee of the British Museum that he was allowed the privilege of accepting on behalf of the Museum, and of unveiling, a memorial to one of the very best officers who in its long history had ever served it. But it was as a close personal friend of the remarkable man whose bust he unveiled that he rejoiced specially in being fortunate enough to be the official recipient. After a tribute to Sir W. Flower's personal qualities, the Archbishop stated that, in 1889, as President of the British Association, Professor Flower, as he then was, delivered an address, taking for his subject "Museums;" and in that address there were two or three passages which expressed so strikingly what his ideals were that he could not refrain from quoting them. He said :—

"What a museum really depends upon for its success and usefulness is not its buildings, not its cases, not even its specimens, but its curator. He and his staff are the life and soul of the institution, upon whom its whole value depends. . . . A museum is like a living organism—it requires continual and tender care. It must grow, or it will perish; and the cost and labour required to maintain it in a state of vitality is not yet by any means fully realized or provided for, either in our great national establishments or in our smaller local institutions. . . . A museum has been defined as a collection of instructive labels illustrated by well-selected specimens."

It seemed to him that no man among the scientific men that he had known had done so much as he to popularize in that particular way for uninstructed people, like himself, in scientific subjects the vast mass of material which was collected in buildings such as that, and to make available for the nation's good that which was the nation's property to start with.