HAWKE'S BAY PHILOSOPHICAL INSTITUTE.

FIRST MEETING: *11th May, 1891.*

H. Hill, B.A., President, in the chair.

The President delivered his inaugural address.

ABSTRACT.

The President regretted the departure of Messrs. Hamilton, Harding, and Macdonald, and said that to Mr. Hamilton was due the growth of the Museum, and especially of the magnificent collection of Maori curiosities, which he deemed second to none in the colony. He dilated on the necessity for encouraging in young people the habit of observation, and deplored the general want of enthusiasm in scientific matters. He considered that the New Zealand Institute did not use its great influence effectively in fostering and promoting science, and thought that scientific workers out of reach of specialists might be much assisted if they could transmit to head-quarters free of expense specimens for identification. Type collections, he also considered, should be distributed to provincial museums by the central department.

The President then mentioned the meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science at Christchurch in January last as the great event of the year, and called attention to the graceful and complimentary remarks made by Sir J. Hector in his presidential address regarding the Rev. W. Colenso, F.R.S., and his scientific labours — remarks that the members would appreciate none the less that they were spoken of the founder of their own branch of the Institute.

Of events of worldwide interest, he mentioned the journeys of Nansen in Greenland and Stanley in Africa. Nansen's journey across Greenland, he said, points to the whole of that country south of 75° lat. being covered with a vast glacial sheet, estimated by Nansen at not less than 6,000ft. thick; while Stanley's discoveries are of extreme interest as making living truths of the supposed myths of old writers in long-past centuries. But surpassing these is the great discovery by Professor Koch, who towards the close of the year announced to a wondering world that he had found a specific for the cure of consumption. When Tyndall, some seven years ago, called attention in the *Times* to Koch's discovery it was received with something like scorn, as was Pasteur's great discovery for the cure of hydrophobia; and, though the expectations first held out have not been entirely fulfilled, still a vast impetus has been given to biological science. He then gave a succinct account of the theories of Liebig and Pasteur on the causes of fermentation and putrefaction.

The President went on to say that the discovery of the lowest form of animal organisms in connection with the highest opens up several questions of biological interest bearing on the theories of life as enunciated by Lamarck, Darwin, and others. Having given a summation of their respective theories, he continued as follows: "In order to get a