

*Advertiser January 19 1880*

## PROFESSOR WATSON AND THE RABBITS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—If we are to reap any benefit from Professor Watson's discovery this season now is the time, when the rabbits are most numerous and becoming half-starved, to spread the disease amongst them. Their rapid increase in this (Lake Hamilton) district has been something marvellous. Where one was to be seen this time last year there are literally thousands, turning the country into a perfect desert, and leaving not a vestige of anything behind them. The strips of Government land along the coast, and also around the lakes where they can get surface water and cover in the thick rushes, are positively swarming, and they are fast advancing towards Port Lincoln. Of late the lessees have been reminded that their lands are liable to be forfeited if they do not strictly adhere to the rabbit destruction clause contained in their leases, but the Commissioner cannot be aware of the state of these infested districts at the present time or he would know the utter impossibility of such a regulation being carried out. A man might just as reasonably attempt to bail the sea dry with a bucket as to rid his property of rabbits in its present state. Through this pest, and low prices, taxes, freights, and distance from markets, farmers can scarcely live as it is, and to enforce the destruction clause would simply mean abandonment of the country. A few scattered impoverished settlers cannot reasonably be expected to do what the Government, at an enormous expense, have tried and failed to accomplish, and their lands have now become the chief breeding places, and the rabbits from them overrun the property of those who are trying to keep them in check. I am glad to see another discovery has recently been made by M. Pasteur, which will likely be more effective than Professor Watson's. Seeing the very rapid rate at which these rodents are devastating whole districts no more time should be lost in checking their spread.—I am, &c.,

A SUFFERER.



Advertiser January 21/88

The *Australasian Medical Gazette* for January has the following observations upon Dr. E. O. Stirling's address at the Adelaide University on "The Aims and Methods of Biological Sciences:"—Dr. Stirling's thoughtful, scholarly, and indeed masterly address deserves a far wider circle of hearers than those who had the pleasure of listening to it. The eloquent and able advocate of the attractive and useful sides of biological science has no need to apologise for the want of the arts and refinements of a cultured style. Dr. Stirling's address throughout is marked by conspicuous superiority, and is alike worthy of his noble *alma mater* and of the holy cause of science which he has so devotedly and faithfully championed in the chief seat of learning in the metropolis of his adopted country. It is not without feelings of shame at this "Centennial," when we are holding up to the gaze of admiring nations our unprecedented history of developmental success, that in science, alas! there are no trophies. But it is not without encouragement for the future, now that the trials incidental to the formation of new lands are over, that we not only have science holding her proper place in the universities, but that we have exponents of the natural sciences who, having given us a taste of their quality as in this lucid and elaborate exposition are able and willing to help on the young aspirants to scientific honors to the goal of their ambition. In former years it was to the few and far between, who were privileged to sit at the feet of Gamaliels in the older world, that science unfolded her ample page. But *Non Contingit cuivis homini adire Corinthum*. Now we have fully-equipped medical and scientific schools in the Universities of Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide. If the last be the youngest daughter, she certainly gives golden promise of excelling them all. Amongst the reasons for the study of science Dr. Stirling says:—"It is a claim of science, and I think a strong one, that it seeks not to carry conviction to the mind by any *obiter dictum* of authority, but expressly suggests, by its fundamental methods of observations and experiment in the great realms of nature, 'an ultimate court of appeal' to which all may apply with the certainty that, in things knowable, a verdict uninfluenced by any bias, prejudice, or tradition, will be given to him who understands those methods, and rightly applies them." One outcome at least of such an appeal is a practical acquaintance with the value of evidence that can scarcely be reached in any other way. "The surest and best foundation for that complex superstructure we call a liberal education is science, in virtue, both of its methods and of its facts. The facts, perchance like other facts, may be forgotten, but the spirit of philosophic enquiry, wholesome scepticism, and veritable craving after accuracy remain ever as a lasting possession, and as applicable to any walk in life as they are to the science of which these faculties were begetters." We count the students of the University of Adelaide happy in having so able and devoted a teacher as Dr. Stirling. It is men of a like calibre that we require to rouse enthusiasm and persevering interest in our students. Contests in the wider arenas of the older countries have proved that our youths have the qualities which, if not throttled in the flower of their adolescence by the too engrossing interest in gain, would yield noble fruits to our national granary of Australian science.



Register February 4<sup>th</sup> 1888.

## UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS.

The following correspondence has been forwarded to us for publication :—

Extract from Professor Boulger's letter to the Registrar of the University of Adelaide, dated Queen's College, Cork, April 4, 1883 :—

"Till the arrival of your letter, dated January 27, 1883, I was not aware that my appointment was for five years only, renewable at the pleasure of the Council. I hold my present post during 'good behaviour,' and should dislike any other conditions. If, however, the tenure of all your Professorships is quinquennial, or if there are any special circumstances connected with the endowment of the English Chair which necessitate such a limitation I am willing to waive my objections."

To this letter no reply was received.

From Professor Boulger to the Chancellor of the University of Adelaide, dated November 11, 1887 :—

"My dear Mr. Chancellor—With reference to our conversation of this morning I beg to state that I still desire the petition contained in my last letter to the Council to be considered by that body. If the Council advertise the approaching vacancy, stating the conditions of the next tenure, and invite applications from candidates, I shall then have time to consider whether it is expedient for me to compete. Please communicate the substance of this letter to the Council and oblige,

"Yours sincerely,

"E. VAUGHAN BOULGER."

From Professor Boulger to the Council of the University of Adelaide, dated December 7, 1887 :—

"Gentlemen—When elected to the Chair of English in your University I contemplated that any one of the following contingencies might arise at the end of my five years' tenure :—1. The election of some new candidate. 2. Re-election during good behaviour. 3. Re-election for another five years. I did not contemplate, nor, so far as I am aware did the Council contemplate the course now proposed by Dr. Farr, viz., that I should, if re-elected, be liable to dismissal on a year's notice. Seeing that in order to come to Adelaide I resigned a life-appointment under the Crown entitling me to a retiring pension after twenty-three years' service, I venture to suggest to you that if you are satisfied with my character and professorial capacity you will be good enough to place me in the same position as that in which English candidates will stand in the event of your advertising the approaching vacancy in London. Unless you are dissatisfied with me I fail to see how the fact of my being in Adelaide should be regarded as a reason for 'handicapping' me in competition. I am thousands of miles from home and friends, have given up a good connection in Ireland, and have been prevented by your regulations from establishing any connection here except with the University. I do not question the right of the Council to modify the conditions on which the English chair shall in future be occupied, but I do contend that if the post were now advertised in England candidates would be warned that the successful competitor, if re-elected after five years, must regard his office as an annual and not quinquennial. No such warning has ever been given to me, and I think that if the Council are really anxious to retain my services they will not be disinclined to reappoint me for another five years, giving me at the same time notice of any changes they may purpose adopting at the termination of that period. Five years are a mere trifle in the existence of a University. They are much in the life of a man who has already reached middle age.

"I am, Sir, &c.,

"E. VAUGHAN BOULGER."

From the Registrar of the University to Professor Boulger :—

"The University of Adelaide,  
January 11, 1888.

"Sir—In continuation of the correspondence on the subject of your reappointment to the Hughes Professorship of English, I have the honour to inform you that the general question of the tenure of the Chairs in this University was referred to a committee, who conferred with you and the other Professors concerned, and reported thereon.

"The Council have adopted the recommendations of the committee—that the appointments to Chairs shall be for a fixed term of not more than five years, and that on the expiration of such term the office shall continue and run on, and be terminable only on December 31 in any year (not earlier than the term of appointment) by six months' notice on either side. This rule to be applicable to the tenure of the Chairs already filled for quinquennial terms.