

Register, Feb. 19th 1909.

Register, Feb. 25th 1909

PROFESSOR STIRLING.

HONOURED BY CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY.

LONDON, February 18.

The University of Cambridge has bestowed the degree of Doctor of Science upon Dr. E. C. Stirling, C.M.G., F.R.S., Professor of Physiology at the University of Adelaide.

Dr. Stirling was born at Strathalbyn in 1848, and educated primarily at St. Peter's College. He afterwards studied in Germany and France, and matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Before he left that scholastic centre he received his M.A. degree. He decided upon a medical career, and took his M.B. and M.D. degrees at Cambridge. Dr. Stirling returned to South Australia in 1881, and was chosen Lecturer on Physiology at the University, and held the post until 1900, when it was converted into a professorship, and he was appointed to the new chair. Professor Stirling is also Director of the South Australian Museum, and has rendered his State invaluable service in zoology and its allied sciences. He was elected President of the first Intercolonial Medical Congress in 1887, but did not serve. His work in the scientific world was recognised in 1893, when he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society, the highest honour to which an English scientific man can aspire. In the same year the Companionship of the Order of St. Michael and St. George was bestowed upon him. His work in the scientific world extends to the literary side, and he is the author of many papers and publications. For three years—from 1881 to 1884—Dr. Stirling represented North Adelaide in the House of Assembly, and he carried a measure through, but without the constitutional majority, for the admission of women to the privilege of the poll. In 1891 he accompanied Lord Kintore on his trip across the continent, and subsequently was a member of the Horn scientific expedition to Central Australia. He was President of the Australasian Medical Congress held at Adelaide in 1905. His brother (Sir Lancelot Stirling) is President of the Legislative Council.

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UNIVERSITY SPORTS GROUND.

The initial step toward the realization of the cherished desire of University students for a suitable recreation ground was taken some time ago, when an arrangement was made whereby a portion of the park lands between Frome road and the City Bridge was granted, under certain conditions, for their use. Already £300 has been expended in fencing, levelling the ground, and laying down the necessary water service. In some places the soil has had to be cut away to a depth of 18 inches, and in others depressions have had to be filled up. A considerable area in the centre has been covered with turf for cricket pitches, while couchgrass seed has been sown extensively, and, thanks to a plentiful supply of water, is sprouting up nicely. Later it is intended to erect a pavilion, capable of accommodating a large number of persons, toward the cost of which ten donors have given £100 each. Recognising the important part in the physical development of the students represented by rowing, Mr. R. Barr Smith recently gave £750 for the construction of a boatshed, which is in process of completion. The structure is 60 ft. long and 30 ft. wide, and stands a few yards from the lake, and between it and the recreation ground. It was designed by the honorary architects (Messrs. English & Soward), and, like the oval, will supply a long-felt want. The lower story is composed of brick, with uprights of iron—these will resist the ravages of the white ants that abound in the neighbourhood—and the upper story of jarrah. There will be several tiers for the reception of the boats, oars, and other paraphernalia on a level with the ground, and bath and dressing rooms upstairs. A fine balcony in the front will afford a splendid view of the lake, and particularly the finishing point for the races. A suggestion has been made with a view to enable the students to reach the recreation ground and the boatshed easily and quickly, that a swing footbridge should be constructed across the lake thereabouts, but whether this will be adopted has not yet been decided.

AN IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY.

A question that has lately been much discussed in England and elsewhere is whether the present systems of university education adequately meet current national and Imperial requirements? The consensus of opinion appears to be that they do not; and Oxford especially has been severely criticised for alleged deficiencies which have been brought into unpleasant prominence by the inauguration of the Rhodes scholarship scheme. One of Lord Curzon's earliest official acts as Chancellor was to appeal to the British public for £250,000 to enable the authorities to introduce urgently needed reforms and to provide up-to-date equipment for the teaching of science. In some respects the two most ancient seats of culture in Great Britain have been surpassed by the new provincial universities, which were organized upon a broader and a more modern basis. Lack of scientific appliances is not however, Oxford's only handicap. It is said that the best advanced students from America prefer to go to Germany rather than to Oxford, despite the exceptional attractions offered by the Rhodes foundation, because the Continental universities supply greater facilities for systematic post-graduate work. There are differences of opinion concerning the desirableness of encouraging inexperienced graduates to undertake "what is called a piece of original work," which generally ends in the production of more or less "crude technical monographs," but even the conservative critics who deprecate this practice admit the importance of giving students training that will qualify them for the higher branches of intellectual activity and enable them to "know when they have got to the bed-rock of fact in any subject they may be studying." Those who entertain these opinions endorse Professor Bragg's contentions that the most effective post-graduate study is usually that which is undertaken in conjunction with, and under the supervision of, experienced investigators; and that professors might with advantage delegate to capable and trustworthy students much of the necessary drudgery of research. As the Rhodes scholars are picked men, most of whom go to Oxford with the definite purpose of fitting themselves for some chosen calling, the importance of such training is obvious.

During a recent discussion at the Royal Colonial Institute Dr. Parkin called attention to another aspect of Oxford's imperial mission which deserves serious consideration. He believes that if the governing body of that institution would strike out boldly along new lines, and say:—"We are going to establish the best Imperial schools of law, geography, languages, and government that the world has ever known," the British people at home and abroad would rise to the occasion and help forward the realization of so inspiring an ideal. At present the university has a great and distinguished law school, but it is not distinctively Imperial, and nothing short of that will, in Dr. Parkin's view, harmonize with the new conditions. The legal systems of the British Empire cover practically the whole range of Oriental and Western jurisprudence. In Canada the British common law has been modified

by the old French code; the South African system rests upon a Roman-Dutch basis, and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council recently had to decide in an important appeal the correct interpretation of a passage in the Koran. "What seems to me to be the great ideal Oxford should hold before itself," said Dr. Parkin, "is that a man coming from any part of the Empire should get the particular study of law he requires for his part of the Empire more perfectly at this university than he could get it anywhere else." This illustration is capable of almost indefinite extension, for there is hardly any branch of academic or scientific study which does not lend itself to similar

Imperial co-ordination. Not the least important result of systematic university expansion along these lines would be that it would tend to promote one of the chief purposes of Mr. Rhodes's scheme—that the young men who are selected for an Oxford training should subsequently return to their native countries and apply to the solution of local problems or to the public service the knowledge and resourcefulness acquired in the motherland. The proposal is certainly opportune, because unless the large sum of money now being raised for the benefit of Oxford shall be wisely spent with a view to making the university more capable of worthily discharging the onerous Imperial trust imposed upon it by Mr. Rhodes, the success of the great scholarship scheme may be seriously delayed. It will not be sufficient that Oxford shall be placed on a parity with younger British competitors in regard to modern facilities for teaching science. The Rhodes foundation has raised this ancient institution to a unique Imperial status, and opened new vistas of progress which are still closed to all the other universities. Every false step taken at this momentous juncture will ultimately have to be retraced, perhaps with difficulty, before permanent success can be achieved in the wider sphere of Imperial influence.