

AUSTRALIAN POETRY.

DENTAL CONGRESS

as the standard of Australian dentistry is admittedly high we feel proud of the South Australian members of our profession.

A WEALTH OF ACHIEVEMENT

Adelaide Delegates to Fore

REG. 15-9-27

BY A. E. M. KIRWOOD.

MR. CLIVE CAREY'S PUPILS.

Australian poetry begins on a note of optimism. Our earliest writers, almost without exception, were convinced that in the course of time there would be found in this land of unlimited opportunity men of vision, of quickened sensibilities, of poetic imagination. So Wentworth prays the muse—

"Days there were when he who sings (Dumb so long through passion's losses) Stood where Moon's water crosses Shining tracts of green haired mosses. Like a soul with radiant wings; Then the psalm the wind rehearses— Then the song the stream disperses Lent a beauty to his verses— Who to-night of Moon's sings."

That yet an Austral Milton's song Pictorial-like flow deep and rich along— An Austral Shakespeare rise, whose living page To Nature true may charm in every age; And that an Austral Pindar daring soar, Where not the Theban eagle reach'd before.

Our poetry depicts not only the landscape, but also certain distinctive types of character, some of which have even already disappeared. The gold digger, the drover, and the shearer, the bullocky, and the sundowner, the stout-hearted settlers,

and Harpur forecasts the fame of him— Whom the Muse shall name. Her first high-priest, in this bright southern clime.

who struggled against odds to make a home in the wilderness, and the women who shared with them their hardships and disappointments—all have been given life, and it may be immortality by our poets.

In the brief period of our national history much indeed has been done, and although Australia has not as yet given birth to a really great poet, she may with reason be proud of the goodly company of music-makers who are her sons and daughters. The extent of our poetical literature is perhaps not generally known. In Mr. Percival Serle's exhaustive bibliography no less than 2,700 volumes of verse by 1,420 separate authors are recorded as having been published up to the year 1924. Now while the mass production of literature is to be deprecated, and indeed Mr. Serle maintains that the writing and printing of three-fifths of the volumes in his list was "a pathetic waste of time and money," it would seem certain that an atmosphere favourable to poetry is being made; in the fulness of time we shall have our renaissance.

But to be truly national literature, whether poetry or prose, must be much more than mere description: it must be imbued with that intangible something which we call the national spirit. It must give some kind of expression to the vague feelings that are born of the things of actual life. It need not be a pictorial representation, but it must be an emotional reaction. The consciousness of nationhood, as it has been termed, is becoming stronger in our life and thought, and its influence, direct and indirect, upon literature is certain. It is manifested in different ways—in a realization of the opportunities offered for the building of a nation and of the responsibilities involved in such a task, or in a strong buoyant hope that is not blind, yet will not be dismayed. Sometimes the song is set in a minor key, and the strain of sadness prevails: the task has been hard, the way long, and rest seems best at last:—

Much of our poetry is descriptive; the Australian landscape has a fascination and beauty of its own and may well be a source of inspiration. To some it may appear a "haggard continent" upon which "the wide sun stares without a cloud," a vacant, desolate land of dust and heat against which the gumtree provides only "a ragged penury of shade." But there are others who share Dorothea Mackellar's love for this sunburnt country we call our own, this land of beauty and of terror—

"Then measure me out, O merchant mine, Twenty gallons of sleep."

An oval-hearted country A wilful, lavish land.

Hopes have been thwarted and desires unfulfilled; the flesh is weak and the enemies of the soul are mighty. This is the spirit of much of Lawson's verse; he felt that the desolation of the far west was not more terrible.

"I'm sick of fog and yellow gloom, Of faces strange, and alien eyes, Your London is a vault, a tomb, To those born 'neath Australian skies. O land of gold and burning blue, 'Tm crying like a child for you!"

"Then the Great Grey Plain of years, Where a fierce fire burns the hearts of men— Dries up the fount of tears; Where the victims of a greed insane Are crushed in a hell-born strife— Where the souls of a race are murdered On the Great Grey Plain of Life!"

The more forbidding aspect of Nature in Australia has affected both the substance and the spirit of our poetry. In Henry Lawson's "The Great Grey Plain," W. H. Ogilvie's "Drought," and B. H. Boake's "Where the Dead Men Lie," to mention only a few outstanding examples, the terror of the bush is the moving force. These lines are from Ogilvie's poem:—

But slowly and surely in spite of disappointment, the work of nation-building goes on, for

"My road is fenced with the bleached, white bones, And strewn with the blind, white sand; Beside me a suffering, dumb world moans On the breast of a lonely land."

Man by Man must grow space, and Man by Man must thrive, And Man from Man must snatch the torch that lights the race alive; Yea, here and now her citizens, as in the years far gone, Stone by stone, and joy with moan, upbuild Babylon.

On the rim of the world the lightnings play, The heat waves quiver and dance, And the breath of the wind is a sword to slay And the sunbeams each a lance."

And in the work there is joy, for youth will not be denied— Youth that rides a race with Death When the frightened cattle break, Living in the moment's breath, Risking all for honour's sake, Lightly knows it holds in fee Life and immortality.

The immensity of the land and its very emptiness, its relentless cruelty, its silence—these are responsible for the undertone of melancholy in so much of our verse; thus Daley says that the "Muse of Tragedy" who "walks on burning sands" is

This refusal to be daunted by failure, this bounding self-confidence and reckless daring are finely blended by James Hebblethwaite in his poem "Wanderers":— The world is wide and we are young, The sounding marches beat, And passion pipes her sweetest call In lane and field and street. So rouse the chorus, brothers all, We'll something have to show When death comes round and strikes our tent, Pull up the stakes and go!

"The greatest of the Muses Three In our Australian lands."

AUSTRALIA, 1905.

But the beauty of the bush has also been finely expressed by our poets; many, like A. B. Paterson, have seen and been stirred by

By Sir Archibald Strong.

"The vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended, And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars."

Careless she lies along the Southern Main, The lovely maiden, wanton with the spell Of sun and vastness and the ocean swell! Northward the great gnomes watch her beauty, fain To snatch her wealth of gold and fleece and grain. And bend her being to their purpose fell; But she lies lazy, and the passing bell Of older glory stirs her sense in vain.

Kendall, whose avowed purpose it was to make

Nor shall she wake and know her danger near Till some high heart and true, her fated lord, Shall kiss her lips, and all her will control, And fill her wayward heart with holy fear. And cross her forehead with his iron sword, And bring her strength, and armour, and a soul.

"A cunning harmony Of words and music caught from glen and height, And lucid colours born of woodland light And shining places where the sea streams lie,"

deserves more than any other to be known as the Nature poet of Australia. He loved the boldness of the mountains, but more the peace of woodland glades, cool wildernesses, "where dripping rocks gleam and the leafy pools glisten." He exulted in the wild grandeur of the open ocean, but he was filled with tender feeling when he called to mind the little streams he had known in childhood.

There is much poetic beauty in Kendall's verse and much genuine emotion:—

CREDIT TO STATE

Discussing the sixth Australian Dental Congress held at the Anatomy School of the University of Melbourne recently, Mr. A. Swann (secretary of the South Australian delegation) said that it was one of the most successful yet held, and was attended by 20 representatives from this State.

"The South Australian delegation," said Mr. Swann, "was led by Dr. H. T. J. Edwards, B.D.S., D.D.Sc. (Adelaide). His work reflected great credit on this State. "In the dental profession of South Australia few men have the disposition to devote ability, time, and money on behalf of their calling. Dr. Edwards has a great future. For his years he has achieved much. As a member of the Dental Board he has occupied a conspicuous place under Sir Wallace Bruce (president). He is demonstrator of crown and bridge work at the local Dental Hospital, as well as honorary dental surgeon to the Children's Hospital and to the Protestant Children's Home. He is a member of the dental faculty at the Adelaide University, and was a captain in the dental corps during the great war.

"South Australia is greatly in need of efficient and suitable men to fill positions occurring in academic and other economic dental circumstances peculiar to the advancement, and calls now made on the scientific and clinical requirements of our professional life. It is in this direction that Dr. Edwards and other such men are going to serve institutions and public alike.

Memorable Congress

"The Melbourne congress was a memorable one, so far as South Australia was concerned. The delegation was representative of the profession in this State. It is only during the last year or two that the dentists in South Australia have agreed to consolidate. They formed one society—the South Australian Dental Association. This will result in greater facilities for a public propaganda of education along the lines of dental and oral hygiene, as well as make for professional fellowship and technical advancement.

"A compliment was paid to the South Australian Dental Association by the Melbourne congress, in that the proposed constitution of the Australian Dental Association is to be on lines suggested by this State. The formation of a Federal association with State branches will bring dentists closer together, and will enable them to adhere to plans which hitherto have failed through lack of unified effort.

"Perhaps the chief of these is the institution of a nation-wide campaign of public education along lines which will minimize and tend to decrease, or even prevent, the ever-increasing ravages of dental caries and disease.

Oral Hygiene

"One of the most impressive sections of the congress was that of dental and oral hygiene. Dentists were enabled to observe what was being done in other parts of the world in the field of prevention. Films suitable for schools were a feature. These told an attractive story, and at the same time conveyed lessons in mouth hygiene in such a manner as to impress the observer with the necessity of oral cleanliness. They also showed how this could be achieved.

"Arrangements have been made with Dr. J. Polack, of Melbourne, an authority in this field of investigation, to visit Adelaide and deliver a public lecture.

"It is the intention of the dental association, during Dr. Polack's visit, to bring the matter prominently before the public, and endeavor to stimulate in parents and children a desire for healthier mouths, and consequently better health generally.

"As the result of our conference we regret to tell the public that so far no positive cure has been found for pyorrhoea. The consensus of opinion seems to be that to cure the disease we must begin before we have it.

"Prevention is the reliable way to avoid it. The use of correct foods, which give to the jaws the requisite vigorous exercise, will not only prevent to a great extent this scourge, but will decrease, if not altogether eliminate, other dental ills."

"The regulation of children's teeth is becoming an increasingly important branch of dental activities. Most large cities, including Adelaide, have dentists who specialise in this work.

During the meeting in Melbourne there was formed by these specialists a Society of Australian Orthodontists, to enable them to co-operate more effectively with the scientific nature of correcting abnormal cases.

"Papers and clinics were given by Drs. A. R. Southwood, A. Chapman, Gilbert Brown, and Mr. P. Begg, of Adelaide.

An interesting programme of music was submitted to a large audience at an invitation concert given by the pupils of Mr. Clive Carey, Mus. Bac., at Elder Hall on Wednesday. A violin pupil of Mr. Charles Schilsky, Master Harry Hutcheba, was the assisting artist. The boy displayed a surprising mastery of technique, and essayed the first movement of Wieniawski's Concerto in D minor, with commendable assurance and fine tone. He was also warmly received for his playing of "Scene de ballet" (De Beriot), Sir Hubert Parry's beautiful song for soprano, "My heart is like a singing bird," brightly sung by Miss Minetta Cleworth, who was the initial offering. Miss Alice Shaw presented modern composers in "Brown is my love" (Roger Quilter), and "from the tomb of an unknown woman" (Granville Bantock). A meritorious song by Mr. Carey, "Bright is the ring of words," and "The joyous wanderer" (Edgar Bainton) were given by Miss Lois Thompson. Miss Alison Lane revealed a delicate lyric soprano and much grace in her singing of Cyril Scott's arrangement of "Cherry ripe," and two other numbers. Opera was not unrepresented. Miss Myra Buchanan offered "Ah lo so," from Mozart's "Magic Flute." Mr. Ewart Lock "Eri tu," from Verdi's "Il ballo in Maschero;" Miss Olive Bassett, a selection from Saint-Saens' "Samson and Delilah;" Miss Isobel Burton, "Invocation," from Delibe's "Lakme;" and Misses Agnes Wainwright, Ruth Naylor, and Lillian Wilkinson, the final scene from Richard Strauss's "Der Rosenkavalier." Mr. Robert Steen infused much feeling and taste into his singing of "Sanctuary" (Maurice Bevil). Miss Shiela Moore gave much pleasure by her singing of Vaughan Williams's "Silent noon," and Miss Dorothy Belcher made an acceptable offering in "Hymn to the sun" (Alexandre Georges). "To Mary" (Maude Valerie White) was a fitting vehicle for the performance of Mr. Sid Morrell. Accompaniments were supplied throughout by Miss Alice Meegan.

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ADVANCE OF EDUCATION.

Speaking at the jubilee celebrations in connection with the Mount Barker Public School on Wednesday, the Minister of Education (Hon. M. McIntosh) said, in 1877 there were 302 schools, controlled by the Education Department of South Australia, and in 1926, there were 979, and the pupils attending those schools were 27,305 and 80,507; 653 teachers employed, and to-day there were more than 3,000 teachers in the State. In 1877 the money expended was £73,424, including £13,231 contributed as fees by parents, and in 1926 the total cost of primary, high, and technical schools was £853,488, exclusive of interest on buildings, and endowments to the University, and so on. Last year the cost per child in average attendance was £9 1/7, the corresponding amount in 1877 being £4 14/8. Last year the cost of educating each child in London primary schools was £16. This year, the sum to be spent on primary, high and technical schools, and contributed to the University, Public Library, and other bodies would be in the region of £1,200,000. South Australia, therefore, could not be accused of being neglectful to the claims of education.

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ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY.

There was a large attendance of members on Wednesday night at the monthly meeting of the local Astronomical Society. Professor R. W. Chapman (President of the society) occupied the chair, and the arrangements were in the hands of Mr. F. W. Hiscock (hon. secretary). Professor Walter Howchin, in the course of an interesting address, explained the Wagener theory of floating continents. The subject of the moving continents, he said, was creating a great deal of interest in scientific circles at the present time. In support of the contention that the vast continents, which formed only two-fifths of the bulk of the world, being the lighter of the two elements, floated upon some abysmal oceans, Professor Howchin quoted several theories. The heavy segments of the ocean, he said, could not rise above the lighter segments of the earth. Several interesting exhibits were displayed by the lecturer to illustrate the theories to which he referred.

Dr. F. S. Hone will give a public lecture, under the auspices of the Federal Council of the National Councils of Women of Australia, at the Institute lecture room, North terrace, on Friday evening on "Maternal and child welfare."