

"Most Flyblown Country in the World."

Professor T. Hardie Johnston, Lecturer on Zoology at the University, attended at the Agricultural Bureau Congress on Wednesday to reply to a query by the Millicent branch as to the best method of combating the blowfly pest in sheep. In the course of an address, he said he wished it understood that his remarks would have reference particularly to Queensland, as he was not yet acquainted with local conditions. However, he did not think they would compare for a moment with those in western New South Wales and Queensland. The problem was a tremendous one and meant the loss of millions to this country. However, we were not solitary in the matter, which seriously affected other parts of the world. It was becoming very serious in New Zealand, and in South Africa was beginning to assume formidable proportions. However, Australia was holding the undesirable record of being the most flyblown country in the world. (Laughter.) There were several varieties of blowflies, and the greenish-blue ones were the worst. They did their work according to varying climatic conditions. Provided they had dry weather the pest was not so bad; moisture was essential to a real blowfly crop. It was a peculiar thing, but the blowfly curse seemed to be the penalty for trying to grow good wool. The best bred sheep were far more susceptible to attack than the crossbred. In Queensland the ewes were more susceptible than the wethers. For some unexplained reason the fine wool appeared to have become specially attractive to the blowfly. When we did not grow such fine wool we did not have such an extensive blowfly crop. It had been stated that in a favourable season from 50 to 100 per cent. of the sheep had been struck in the districts where the pest was bad. Professor Johnston then gave some interesting facts in relation to the life history of the blowfly, and said that under moist conditions the egg developed into the maggot from 15 hours to a day after having been deposited. The flies lived for at least 30 days under Queensland conditions and laid hundreds of eggs. They started to breed four or five days after coming out of the pupae.

Destroy All Carrion.

They required decomposing animal material of some sort to breed in, and a dead rabbit might be the means of putting thousands of flies on their property. Consequently, if there was any form of carrion on their neighbour's property—he knew, of course, nothing of the sort would be found on theirs (laughter)—it behoved them to have it got rid of as soon as possible. If the wanted to satisfy themselves on the subject, he advised them, if they came across the carcass of a rabbit, or any other dead animal, to net it in and in a fortnight or a month's time they would be able to see for themselves what an amount of infection it could convey. It had been proved that blowflies could fly from 10 to 13 miles in two days, so they could see that it was no good thinking they could control the blowflies by individual effort. They must get their neighbours to join them in the campaign, and destroy every bit of carrion in the district. If they could not burn the carrion they should bury it, but burial was a bad second best. Blowfly traps were not a success. The trap was the lazy man's excuse for dodging his job. The only thing to do was to destroy every chance of breeding.

Attempts to Control the Pest.

The question of introducing the natural enemies of the blowfly to control the pest had been considered by the authorities, and small wasps had been imported with that object in view. One group attacked the maggot, and while it had proved extremely effective under laboratory conditions, it was too early to say yet what it would do in the open. Another kind of wasp had been liberated, and where it could get at its prey it did its work most effectively. There was talk of introducing other varieties from another part of the world, and he hoped to have full information regarding it later on. In South Africa, where the position was very bad, the trouble had increased since the introduction of the high-class Australian merinos. The better the sheep were in health the less likely they were to be affected. The most effective treatment was a strong solution of arsenic. When they applied it they must make sure that it reached the skin. A solution of the ordinary strength for tick was useless. It required to be of about 25 per cent. strength. A system that had been proved to be very successful was that known as "jetting." The solution was sprayed on to the sheep with a force of from 120 to 200 lb. to the square inch. The sheep were packed tightly together and so were not knocked about, and in about 10 minutes got a thorough wetting. The method was effective, and expeditious, and did not require much labour. Professor Johnston was heartily thanked for his interesting and informative address.

The proposal to establish at Canberra an entirely unnecessary University ought to be nipped in the bud. Telegrams we publish to-day show that unless something is done quickly to avert the threatened waste of Australian money the Commonwealth will become hopelessly committed to the scheme. Sir George Pearce told an inquisitive Senator yesterday that no sites had yet been specifically reserved at Canberra for residential colleges in connection with the proposed University, but ample land was available. It may be hoped that this vacant land will be used for some more urgent purpose. Evidence taken by the Public Accounts Committee yesterday shows that the estimate made last year of the cost of "the Institute of Anatomy" has already risen from £60,000 to £85,000. That is entirely typical of the way in which costs of all building operations at Canberra have a trick of expanding. And it is but a single item of a grandiose scheme which will add one more costly white elephant to the herd the Commonwealth authorities have already imposed on the long-suffering taxpayers of Australia. Why is there to be a University at the Federal city in this early period of its growth? There is no demand for it, unless on the part of persons who are always glad to see Governments busy multiplying the opportunities for lucrative billets. Absolutely there is no need for it. The population at Canberra is too small, and is likely to be for a long time, to justify the enormous expenditure a fully equipped University would involve. And fully equipped it will certainly be, once the Federal Government get going. It will matter little to them whether there are more professors and lecturers than students; the taxpayers will pay, and the Government will do the thing handsomely. Every capital in Australia has a University. Neither the Sydney nor the Melbourne institution is at any great distance from Canberra, and the two between them should be sufficient to meet every reasonable requirement of the handful of settlers in the Federal city for many years to come.

But if the outrageous extravagance proposed by the Commonwealth is not prevented we foresee a disastrous competition with other Australian Universities. There will be no hesitation in endeavoring to tempt into the wilds of New South Wales the best men in the big cities by the offer of the princely salaries which the Commonwealth is in the habit of attaching to all positions of the smallest importance. Already the Federal Government, by setting up an expensive rival at Canberra, have struck a blow at the excellent Forestry School which had already been established in Adelaide. What chance will the Waite Institute have of survival once the Commonwealth Government come to the conclusion that all scientific research should be centralised at Canberra? It is about time that the Australian people put the growing megalomania of the Commonwealth under drastic treatment. The deficit of several millions sterling in a revenue that is far more than sufficient for every legitimate Federal need appears to have conveyed no sort of warning. The Commonwealth is to go on spending with the same recklessness as in the past. All the talk of Dr. Earle Page about "the campaign of economy" now supposed to be in full blast is moonshine. Vast schemes are still proceeded with as though the Commonwealth commanded the purse of Fortunatus. Australia cannot afford to support government on the wildly improvident scale which has been gradually developed since Federation, and either the scope of the Federal functions and powers must be ruthlessly cut down, or the States—at any rate, the poorer ones—will, by the contraction of their over-taxed resources, be forced out of existence as separate and self-governing entities.

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR R. C. CONWAY.

A lecture on "Rome's Master Mind" was delivered on Wednesday evening at the Adelaide University by Professor R. C. Conway. The Chancellor (Sir George Murray) presided. He introduced Professor Conway as one of the greatest living authorities on Latin and Greek languages. His Excellency the Governor and Lady Hore-Ruthven, and Miss Murray were among those present.

Professor Conway expressed his gratitude to the Classical Association of Victoria and the Universities of Australia for the generous invitation which had brought him to "pay a kind of afternoon call upon Britain's better half." He said he hoped that by making plainer the source from which the citizens of the British Empire drew some of their most cherished principles, even a teacher of what was called a dead language might do some service to the cause of all others most vital to humanity—the spirit which lived and moved in this Empire of free peoples. He claimed the title of "Rome's Master Mind" for the poet Virgil as a leader and maker of thought, not merely as a teller of noble tales and a creator of compassion. He asked whether any other writer in the history of Europe, with the possible exception of Shakespeare, had realised so vividly the meaning of human life. He described Virgil's early life on the farm, where his father was an overseer. The site of this farm had been determined by recent research. Instead of being among the marshes of Pietole, forty miles from any hill, which had been the accepted traditional site, and was so marked in the maps of Italy, it was now certain that the farm was 28 miles north-west of Mantua, in full view of the Alps. "where the hills melt into the plain." Virgil's father was a trusted servant who married his master's daughter and rose to wealth by bringing wild land into cultivation, and by his skill in keeping bees. Virgil's love for every detail of his life on the farm, and his veneration for his father, were reflected in many passages of his writings, and there seemed to be two glimpses even of his mother, such as the picture of the poor peasant woman rising for her children's sake, to begin her work long before light, to whose industry Virgil compared the zeal of the God Vulcan when he made divine armor for Aeneas. Virgil's boyish poetry included a farewell to school and some of his teachers, which began thus—

Begone, ye barren flowers of speech,
The stuff that rhetoricians teach,
Big words by Attic wit ungraced;
And you, dull tribe of ample waist,
Whose barren joy it is to hammer
Young heads with ding-dong rules of grammar;

and also his poem on The Gnat (Culex), which was the frame work for a picture of the Afterworld, the germ of Book VI. of the Aeneid. Probably in 51 B.C. when he was 19 years old Virgil was introduced to Julius Caesar and his young heir Octavian to whom he then dedicated this poem. At all events, in 41 B.C., when Antony's returning troops threatened to turn Virgil and his father out of their farm Virgil appealed to Octavian at first with success, but Antony was too strong, and Virgil left the farm for ever, barely escaping with his life. A year later when Antony and Octavian came to a peaceful agreement Virgil was inspired by the great hope of an end to the civil wars, and wrote the famous Messianic Eclogue, so called because the whole Christian Church for 17 centuries, read it as a prophecy of its Founder, though they knew now that it was really to greet the birth of an heir to Octavian, who proved to be a girl, the ill-fated Princess Julia. In the Georgics, Virgil's poem on farming, Professor Conway illustrated Virgil's philosophic habit of regarding the farmer's efforts as a part of the scheme of the universe, and as subject to the same mysterious laws of joy and pain, of tranquillity and calamity, as the physical and the human world. This sense of mystery Professor Conway held to be the most characteristic feature of Virgil's thought, and it united the whole of creation, human and non-human, animate and inanimate. In the Aeneid Virgil connected this mystery closely with human affection, the love of men and women for one another and their fellow-creatures, and for mother nature herself. In this human affection Virgil found the source of all joy and all sorrow. The effect of this conception was plainly seen throughout the story of the Aeneid, and appeared above all in the wonderful ending of

its greatest Book, the sixth, in "The Lament for Marcellus." Virgil's last word upon the mystery was that the golden bough, which was his beautiful emblem of human affection, was always to be found in the shadows of the forest when sought in fulfillment of duty, and Virgil bade them, like Aeneas, pluck it eagerly and trust it gratefully to bring them through even darker shadows out into the light beyond; to trust that somewhere, somehow, death itself would be overcome by the power and persistence of love.

Professor Archibald Strong, in thanking the lecturer, said the visit of such a distinguished scholar was likely to give an impetus to the study of classical literature.

Address by Professor R. S. Conway.

Professor Robert S. Conway, Litt.D. (Cantab.), lectured before a large audience in the physics lecture theatre of the Adelaide University on Wednesday evening under the auspices of the Graduates' Association. The subject of the address was "Rome's Master Mind." The Chancellor of the University (Sir George Murray) presided, and His Excellency the Governor (Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven, V.C.), and the Hon. Lady Hore-Ruthven were present, attended by Capt. the Hon. Hugh Grosvenor.

Professor Conway claimed the title of "Rome's Master Mind" for the poet Virgil as a leader and maker of thought, not merely as a teller of noble tales and a creator of compassion. He asked whether any other writer in the history of Europe, with the possible exception of Shakespeare, had realized so vividly the meaning of human life. The lecturer gave glimpses of Virgil's early life on the farm, where his father was at first only an overseer. The site of the farm had been determined by recent research to which first Professor Braunholtz, now of Oxford, and Professor Conway had also contributed in the research. Instead of being among the marshes of Pietole which had been the accepted traditional site and was so marked in the maps of Italy, it was now certain that the farm lay 28 miles north-west of Mantua in full view of the Alps. Virgil's father was a trusted servant who married his master's daughter and rose to wealth by bringing wild land into cultivation, and by his scientific skill in keeping bees. Virgil's love for every detail of his life on the farm, and his veneration for his father, were reflected in many passages of his writings, and there seemed to be two glimpses even of his mother, such as the picture of the poor peasant woman rising for her children's sake, to begin her work long before light, to whose industry Virgil compares the zeal of the God Vulcan when he made divine armour for Aeneas. Virgil's boyish poetry included a farewell to school and some of his teachers, and also his poem on The Gnat (Culex), which was the framework for a picture of the Afterworld, the germ of book VI of the Aeneid. Probably in 51 B.C., when he was 19 years old, Virgil was introduced to Julius Caesar and his young heir Octavian to whom he then dedicated that poem. At all events in 41 B.C., when Antony's returning

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