

CLASSICAL STUDY.

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR R. S. CONWAY.

Professor R. S. Conway delivered the second of his public lectures at the University last night. The subject was, "The place of classical study in the British Empire." The acting vice-chancellor of the University (Professor Chapman) presided.

British and Prussian Ideals.

The subject of the lecture proved to be political freedom, and the training which was most likely to fit men and women to enjoy it and preserve it. Professor Conway said that in the British Empire they were all embarked on a great experiment, and experiments were things that often failed. The clearest light that could be had upon the present problems of the world came from the political experience of Greece and Rome, in which all the great problems of modern life had, in fact, been worked out lucidly on a small scale. Starting from the European War, the lecturer recalled the prolonged successes of their enemies and the outcry thereby aroused in England in favor of improvements in the study of technical arts. It was contended that their misfortunes on land and sea were mainly due to the superiority of the Germans in this kind of training. Disclaiming any hostility to new knowledge of any kind, and confessing himself incompetent to discuss questions of technology, Professor Conway pointed to a more fundamental question, "Was there anything in the British type of education to account for the difference between the British and the Prussian ideals which the war brought home to us, and which in the end decided the whole issue?" There was one thing lacking in the machine of education directed from Prussia which was a marked element in the British system, and in fact the centre of the discipline of the great schools of Britain, a principle so familiar that they forgot it ever had a beginning. Yet it belonged to an epoch which the German organization had not yet reached. It had been discovered in a definite period of history, and its discoverers had to fight and suffer for it, perhaps longer than the authors of any other conception which had ennobled human life. This was the discovery of freedom, by which, of course, they meant free self-government; the limitation of individual liberty by a sense that one's fellows ought to enjoy the same; the choice of the Government by the governed, and the responsibility of rulers to their subjects. This was invented in the 6th century B.C. by Solon for the Athenians, the people who created every form of intellectual life—physics, mathematics, astronomy, botany, zoology, medicine, sculpture, painting, poetry, drama, philosophy. All these things the world owed to Athens. The freedom which they won had to meet the terrible test of the Persian Wars from 490 to 478 B.C., when one or two of the free Greek cities resisted the Empire of Persia which controlled the whole of the East from Bactria to the Aegean. In 480 B.C. the Athenians suffered their city to be burnt and trusted entirely to the wooden walls of their navy till they had destroyed the Persian fleet at Salamis. But for this, freedom might have been unknown in Europe for many centuries.

The Nature of Freedom.

Professor Conway illustrated the nature and beauty of freedom by a quotation from the great speech of Pericles in 432 B.C., and asked how many of his principles were yet out of date. How many of their modern communities had succeeded in translating them completely into fact. "Our Government," said Pericles, "is in the hands of the many, but the claim of personal excellence is recognised and the good man is preferred in public service, not as a privilege, but as his right. Poverty is no bar. A man may do good service to his country however obscure his birth and condition. Unconstrained in our private intercourse, we are led in our public actions by a spirit of reverence, and prevented from wrong-doing by respect for the laws. We call a man who takes no interest in public affairs not harmless, but useless. In our opinion the great hindrance to action is not discussion, but the want of knowledge gained by discussion. Fix your eyes upon the greatness of your country until you are filled with love for her, and reflect that this Empire has been built up by men who knew their duty, and had the courage to do it. Make these men your example, and be sure that happiness springs from freedom, and freedom from courage." The professor then traced briefly the history of free government in Europe, pointing out that from Greece it passed to Rome, and to all the communities included in the Roman Empire. These were all expected to govern themselves within their own boundaries. This

municipal freedom, as it had been called, survived the barbarism of the dark ages and of the Feudal system more clearly in Switzerland and Great Britain than anywhere else. From this system had grown first the House of Commons, and then the whole system of the British Empire. But the rulers of Prussia had no share in this growth, for it was not until 1545 that the inhabitants of the great Prussian plain had escaped from Paganism and other barbarous conditions of life even so far as to have their language written down. For the earliest record of the language of Prussia was a translation of Luther's catechism made in 1545 by German missionaries sent to the still heathen Prussians. William II., though calling himself Emperor of Germany, had been in the hands of the war lords of Prussia, whose conceptions were those of barbarous chiefs, hating the whole idea of free government. What decided the war had been the spontaneous resolve of the great free nations like Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, who had inherited the Greek tradition of free government, to fight for it to the end, and it was the power of the same idea which brought in the United States.

The Meaning of Empire.

Turning to examine the meaning of the word "Empire," the addition of which to the Royal title by Disraeli had been questioned in England, the lecturer pointed out that the word had, in fact, two quite different senses. The vulgar meaning which implied domination over unwilling subjects was due to Napoleon who usurped the title of Emperor and made it odious in his own country above all. A Swiss professor who taught in French had remarked that he never allowed his pupils to translate the Latin Imperium by the French word "Empire," which denoted a totally different idea. The British Empire had revived the old and true meaning of the Latin word, which meant the guidance (by delegated authority) of the external and mutual relation of a vast number of self-governing communities, each of which had Francis Bacon called "the greatest advantage ever given to man" was administered by a government of willing nations (volentes populos). Two great characteristics of the Roman Empire had reappeared again in the British Empire. The first was positive. The different parts of the Empire might expect mutual aid in trouble. This was the spirit which had astonished the world and awakened the immeasurable gratitude of the mother island in the coming and the glorious achievements of the Anzac contingent. The second might be called negative, yet in the present state of the world it was almost more important than the first. As between nations included in the Roman Empire, so between the great peoples that made up the British Empire, the notion of war was inconceivable, and what the rest of the nations were dimly struggling to achieve, had been already won, and established, as they hoped and purposed, for ever, in the relations between the members of the Empire. The central principle of these relations had been learnt from the statesmen who, through five centuries, built up the Empire of Rome. And it was to the Roman Empire that Europe owed the three centuries of universal peace, in which Christianity became the religion of the civilized world. Finally Professor Conway turned from political history to ask by what means the work of the Empire was to be judged, and what were the real blessings to be sought by political effort. No human writers had pictured in so moving a fashion the ends of a great Government as the poets Horace and Virgil, who had inspired the Roman Empire. The protest of Horace against vulgar ostentation, and his insistence of the real blessings of life, contentment, health, and knowledge, had made his poetry a great refiner of men's thoughts. And from the Aeneid it was shown that in Virgil's judgment the greatness of the Roman Empire, and the value of the peaceful government which it brought to an afflicted world, was to be measured in terms of a peasant mother's care for her husband and her children, and the only occasion on which Virgil expressed any confidence that his own writings were destined to survive, was the outburst of deep feeling after the death of the two boys Nisus and Eurylus in Book IX. of the Aeneid. They volunteered to make their way from the enemy's lines in order to fetch back Aeneas to the camp, which was in danger, and perished in the effort. But Virgil called them fortunati, "blessed"—that is, "Blessed are the young who give their lives for their fellows."

O, happy both! If aught my song avails,
No day shall blot you from remembering years
While by the Capitol's unmoving rock
Aeneas' houses shall stand, and he whom Rome
Calls Father, gives commandment to the world.

The new humanity of Australasia, endowed with a beauty and fertility more than Italian, might well surpass the culture of Europe; that it must keep open the old high road of humane studies and keep in view the great ideals towards which mankind had climbed and struggled to such a degree of civilisation as it had so far attained.

In reply to a vote of thanks Professor Conway strongly advised universities to follow the example of Manchester where there were two chairs of Classics, one of Latin, and one of Greek, besides several readerships in Hellenistic Greek philology and the like. A separate chair of Latin, as at Sydney, was essential to any efficient university. In Adelaide that would leave Professor Fitzherbert free to devote himself to Greek, and in particular to his own chosen work, the interpretation of Plato.

LECTURE TO STUDENTS.

At the University in the morning Professor Conway lectured to students on "The Patrician Stamp on Latin Syntax." He said linguistic study and archaeological excavation of the last 30 years had explained the gulf between the Patricians and Plebeians at Rome. They belonged to two different strata of population, and spoke different though kindred tongues. The Plebeians were the folk on the soil before the invasion of the Etruscans, and their language was the foundation of Latin (though their older name for themselves had been Latiarum not Latini). The Patricians were Sabines, a conquering people from the North, who drove the Etruscans out of Rome, and in the end amalgamated with the Plebeians, and imposed upon them their own higher moral, especially the habit of regarding the father as the head of the family, and not counting descent through the mother, as, for instance, was done by Drances, the representative of primitive Latium in Virgil's Aeneid (Book XI). In the course of this amalgamation great violence was done to the structure of the Latin language, just as the Normans did in English to the grammar of Anglo-Saxon. This Professor Conway illustrated from the many curiosities of Latin grammar.

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THE HOME OF FREEDOM.

Our Debt to Greece.

Professor Robert S. Conway, Litt.D., (Cantab), delivered his second lecture in the physics lecture theatre of the Adelaide University on Friday evening under the auspices of the Graduates' Association. The subject of the address was "The Place of Classical Study in the British Empire." The Chancellor of the University (Sir George Murray) presided.

The subject of the lecture proved to be political freedom and the training most likely to fit men and women to enjoy and preserve it. In the British Empire (said the professor) we were all embarked on a great experiment, and experiments often failed. The clearest light upon the present problems of the world came from the political experience of Greece and Rome, in which all the great problems of modern life had been worked out on a small but lucid scale. Starting from the European war the lecturer recalled the early successes of our enemies and the outcry thereby aroused in favour of improvements in the study of technical arts; it was contended that our misfortunes on land and sea were mainly due to the superiority of the Germans in this kind of training. Disclaiming hostility to new knowledge of any kind, and confessing himself incompetent to discuss questions of technology, Professor Conway pointed to a more fundamental question:—"Was there anything in the British type of education to account for the difference between the British and the Prussian ideals which the war brought home to us, and which in the end decided the whole issue?" There was lacking in the machine of education directed from Prussia a marked element in the British system, a principle so familiar that we forgot it ever had a beginning. Yet it belonged to an epoch the German organization had not yet reached. This was the discovery of freedom, by which we meant free self-government; the choice of the Government by the governed, and the responsibility of rulers to their subjects. That was invented in the sixth century B.C. by Solon, for the Athenians, the people that created every form of intellectual life—physics, mathematics, astronomy, botany, zoology, medicine, sculpture, painting, poetry, drama, philosophy—all these things the world owed to Athens. In 480 B.C. the Athenians suffered their city to be burnt and trusted entirely to the wooden walls of their navy till they had destroyed the Persian fleet at Salamis. But for this, freedom might have been unknown in Europe for many centuries. Professor Conway illustrated the nature and beauty of freedom by a quotation from the great speech of Pericles in 432 B.C., and asked how many of his principles were yet out of date, and how many of our modern communities had translated them completely into fact. He then traced briefly the history of free

government in Europe, pointing out that from Greece it passed to Rome, and to all the communities included in the Roman Empire. These were expected to govern themselves within their own boundaries. This municipal freedom, as it had been called, survived the barbarism of the Dark Ages and of the feudal system more clearly in Switzerland and Great Britain than anywhere else; and from this system had grown first the House of Commons, and then the whole system of the British Empire. But the rulers of Prussia had had no share in this growth, for it was

not until 1545 that the inhabitants of the great Prussian plain had escaped from paganism and other barbarous conditions of life, even so far as to have their language written down. What decided the war had been the spontaneous resolve of the great free nations like Australia, New Zealand and Canada, who had inherited the Greek tradition of free government, to fight for it to the end; and it was the power of the same idea which had brought in the United States. The British Empire had revived the old and true meaning of the Latin word "imperium," which meant the guidance (by delegated power) of the external and mutual relations of a vast number of self-governing communities, each of which had a separate treaty with the central authority. Two great characteristics of the Roman Empire had reappeared in the British Empire. That the different parts of the Empire might expect mutual aid in trouble. That was positive. The second might be called negative, yet in the present state of the world it was almost more important. As between nations included in the Roman Empire, so between the great peoples that made up the British Empire, the notion of war was inconceivable; and what the rest of the nations were dimly struggling to achieve had been already won and established, as we hoped and purposed, for ever, in the relations between the members of the Empire. The central principle had been learnt from the statesmen who through five centuries built up the Empire of Rome. And it was to the Roman Empire that Europe owed the three centuries of universal peace, in which Christianity became the religion of the civilized world.

Finally, Professor Conway asked by what means the work of the Empire was to be judged, and what were the real blessings to be sought by political effort. No human writers had pictured in so moving a fashion the ends of a great Government as the poets Virgil and Horace, who had inspired the Roman Empire. Horace's protest against vulgar ostentation was typical of his refining influence on men's thought, and from the Aeneid it was shown that in Virgil's judgment the greatness of the Roman Empire and the value of the peaceful rule which it brought to an afflicted world were to be measured in terms of a peasant mother's care for her husband and children; and the only occasion on which Virgil expressed any confidence that his own writings were destined to survive, was the outburst of deep feeling after the death of the two boys Nisus and his friend Eurylus in Book IX. of the Aeneid. They had volunteered to make their way through the enemy's lines in order to fetch back Aeneas to the Trojan camp, which was in danger, but perished in the effort. Virgil called them fortunati ("blessed"), that is, "Blessed are the young who give their lives for their fellows."

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The new humanity of Australia, enriched by Nature with a beauty and fertility more than Italian, might well outdo the records of Europe; but it could only hope to do so by treading the old high road of humane studies and seeking the great ideals towards which mankind had climbed and struggled through the centuries of the past.

In replying to a vote of thanks, Professor Conway strongly urged the establishment of a separate Chair of Latin as essential to any efficient university, so as to leave Professor Fitzherbert to devote himself to Greek, and in particular to his chosen work, the study of Plato.

PATRICIANS AND LATIN.

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