

Register 1/7/21

AT THE UNIVERSITY.

Several of the teachers on Thursday afternoon attended at the Adelaide University to witness something in the way of a display of physical phenomena by Professor Kerr-Grant. He demonstrated the properties of liquid air, and the peculiarities of the vacuum pump. The professor, who was armed with a flask of liquid air, showed how metals immersed in it were converted into some other condition than their natural characteristics. As an instance he put a leaden bell into the liquid air, and after a short bath, it was taken out and it was rung so as to yield a note as if it were constituted of some resonant metal. Next a carnation was thrust into the liquid air and when drawn out it fell to fragments at a touch. After other illustrations, he said that the air was not yet of much therapeutic value, but there was a belief that as knowledge of it grew, so would its use extend. Liquid air was already sold commercially in London, Paris, and New York. Demonstrations of the working of the vacuum pump (or pumps), concluded an interesting two hours. In moving a vote of thanks to the professor, the teachers expressed a wish that he would invite them to see further experiments, especially as regarded wireless telegraphy and wireless telephony. The demonstrator said that he would do so with more than pleasure, as he had a keen appreciation of the value of the services rendered by the primary educator.

God—and defined its laws; he showed that the Atlantic cable was not the insult to the Almighty which vast numbers held, and he proved the obstacles were impure copper, rubber, and a receiver not delicate enough. 4. His sole contribution to the problem of life on this globe lay in the suggestion I named, that it got here from other worlds through aerolites. Futile as it seems, it is an admission that he neither wanted nor looked for a deus ex machina. This seems to me to tally closely with materialism, save for the views of extreme adherents. Professor Thomson, page 87, says, "But why should the scientific mind be so afraid of the insinuation of a metaphysical principle. Simply because it is a confusion of thought which paralyzes intelligence." I have no wish to cross-examine Mr. Hackett's own witness; it is my case. As to Haeckel, his frauds (Mr. Hackett says) were known in 1874, and after continuing for 34 years came to a crisis in 1908. Yet Professor Thomson (his own witness), on page 133 of the same work, writing of evolution, says, "It became current intellectual coin when Darwin, Wallace, Spencer, Haeckel, and Huxley, with united but varied achievements, won the conviction of the majority of thoughtful men."—I am, Sir, &c.

A. BARHAM BLACK.
(This correspondence is closed.—Ed.)

Register 2/7/21

DISEASE AND MATERIALISM.

To the Editor.

Sir—As Mr. Hackett raises issue on only one point out of the seven or eight I gave him, I presume his arguments go no further. He claims I have misrepresented him. I have not. He headed with Lord Kelvin's some dozen names, the owners of whom "certainly gave no support to the dogma of materialism." To avoid the impasse that, beyond most doctrines, materialism has no dogma, had we not best define materialism? It is a conception of this earth as subject to natural development so that sequences are "describable in terms of matter and motion." I quite agree with Mr. Hackett that "agnostic" and "materialist" have different real meanings, though used indiscriminately as abusive terms by the religious and spiritualistic press. Often found in the same man, they are like two superimposed but eccentric discs with overlapping margins. Mr. Hackett deals with but one of the reasons I gave to refute his claim re Lord Kelvin, and even there he objects to Kelvin's using "agnostic" in the true sense! In what sense does my critic prefer to use it? Kelvin was rebuking those who love to label their fellow-men "agnostic" or "materialist," usually wrongly, always uncharitably. 2. Dealing with my next point, Kelvin affirms that his agnosticism is not merely as to science, but extends to the religious field, about matters which "we don't know." This does not imply that he was not religious. Having myself been closely in touch with one of his circle for over two years, I do not need Mr. Hackett's somewhat strange corroboration. "A regular and reverent communicant in the Church of England" slightly conflicts with "When at Largs (where he passed many of his last years) he attended the Presbyterian Free Church." His family circle included several Unitarians and Irish Presbyterians, and he leaves us records that he paid not the slightest attention to the difference of creed. Born myself in that part of the world, I appreciate how broad and liberal his later views must have become to affirm this, a view the Galloway Scot of the sixties held in anathema. 3. Although Kelvin, as a few ultra-materialists do, could tolerate the idea that life began spontaneously on this globe, he held no brief for the literal truth of the Bible. The old Scots one with its marginal dates for everything was in his family, as in mine. In Professor Thomson's "Bible of Nature," which Mr. Hackett alludes to favourably, page 63, we see his line of thought. Materialistic geology and biology demanded some 50 to 100 million years for creation. Professors Tait and Kelvin, working on a material basis of solar shrinking, at first "refused to allow more than 10 to 20 millions. Under pressure, however, the grant was increased to 40 or even 100 millions!" And yet does Mr. Hackett claim Kelvin lent no support to materialistic views? He left an army of inventions behind him, which if they never had existed would have delayed material science for a century. Not one of these shows any intellectual interest in metaphysical affairs, or would prove of use at a spiritualistic seance. He found electricity known only as lightning, the symbol of an angry

UNIVERSITY DEMONSTRATIONS IN PHYSICS.

The demonstration of production of high vacua by Professor Grant at the University will be repeated next Friday (July 8), at 4 p.m., for the benefit of those who were unable to secure admission last Friday.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF ANTHROPOLOGY.

"Edward Stirling Chair" Suggested.

Speaking at a meeting of the University Graduates' Association at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Adelaide University, on Monday night, Professor Wood-Jones uttered a spirited and well-reasoned plea for the establishment of a local chair of anthropology.

Professor T. Brailsford Robertson (President of the Association) occupied the chair. Professor Wood-Jones said the title of his address, "Anthropology in Australia," was not a fair one; it was a lure: for he did not intend to address the meeting on anthropology. What he intended to do was to point to the utter lack of facilities for the conduct of research and teaching in anthropology in Australia. Attending a recent conference of scientists at Honolulu, he was profoundly humiliated to confess the lack of present-day anthropological work in Australia. The representatives of America said what that country was doing for the dying race under its domination, and there was a similar report from the Philippines, and even the Japanese delegate—an extraordinary able man—was able to say what Japan was doing. Then he had to report what Australia was doing—nothing! He could tell the congress what had been done, in South Australia particularly—extraordinarily good work in anthropology. South Australia had been the pioneer in the anthropology of the Australian natives, and had done a very great deal in this direction.

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But at this period they had no institution in the whole of Australia that was devoting itself to anthropology, no institution that was training or teaching anthropological students at all. As to what had been accomplished in Australia, the earliest work was done, and some of the most valuable records made, by mounted constables, those of South Australia especially; but these records were difficult of discovery and correlation. In a later period were men like Simpson Newland, and there was also Mrs. Stow. But the premier anthropologist in the whole of Australia was the late Sir Edward Stirling. They had an honourable record in this State, therefore, for there was, besides, the work of Dr. Rogers and Dr. Ramsay Smith. But South Australia seemed temporarily to have forgotten the pressing question of the anthropology of the Australian aborigine. What was

wanted to-day was another Edward Stirling, some one who could not only carry on his work, but interpret the collection of anthropological material he had left, and the accumulation of which was an important part of his activities.

—What We Do Not Know.—

When they came to take stock of Australian anthropology, in a strictly scientific sense, however, they found that they knew relatively nothing of the Australian native, who, to use a vulgarism was, he suspected, in the habit of "pulling the white man's leg." It was extraordinarily difficult to come within the range of the psychology of the Australian native; and there would be little definite data available until they were able to let loose among the Australian aborigines properly trained psychologists and anthropologists. They knew little about the pathology and physiology of the aborigine, about his sense of colour, and smell, his sight and hearing. They knew the minimum about the anatomy of the native, except for his skeleton. He did not want to be anatomical, and he might sun up by saying that they knew nothing about "his insides." (Laughter.) They knew extremely little about the written sign language of the Australian aborigine, and yet it would still be possible for any one with sufficient patience and training, if he could get the confidence of the native, to learn the meaning of this fascinating writing.

—Where Did the Aborigine Come From?—

One of the biggest things science did not know was the origin of the Australian native, or where he came from, although shrewd guesses might be made from the fact that so much of his inherited knowledge was extraordinarily Mediterranean. But if he came by a wonderful series of migrations from that area, they did not know how he came and when. The flint industry of the Australian native, again, was a thing of outstanding importance and interest of which they knew almost nothing. The Australian aborigine was living to-day in the stone age, and there was open for study in this country practically the whole of the flint implement culture of prehistoric men. There was possible the elucidation, from practical examples, of almost all the problems in relation to flint implements which were calling for solution in Europe to-day. It was important to remember that the Australian aborigines were a dying race, that important tribes had utterly disappeared, and that others were dying as fast as possible. It was up to us, as usurpers of their territory, to put on record all we could about them, even if only on sentimental and humanitarian grounds. If Australians did not do this work, they would be failing in their duty in a scientific sense, and placing themselves under an obligation to any other country which was fulfilling its own obligations. How were they to prevent the exportation of their anthropological material, if they did not work at it themselves?

—Adelaide as Centre for Anthropology.—

Further than that, now that Australia had post-war control over certain Pacific islands, it would be necessary for the administrators of those new areas, for the members of the colonial service, to have certain anthropological training, to make them acquainted with the native point of view. What was wanted was a centre for the study of anthropological subjects and for the training of anthropologists, and Adelaide was undoubtedly the place for that centre. There was in the South Australian Museum a collection of material incomparably greater in variety and in every other way than that in Sydney, for instance. There should be in Adelaide a man capable of teaching anthropology to medical students, and as part of the science course, and to teach Federal students designed for work in the Pacific Islands. It would be a magnificent thing to establish in South Australia, as the first of its kind in Australasia, a chair of anthropology, to be a memorial to Sir Edward Stirling—the Edward Stirling Chair of Anthropology. (Applause.)

—Can the Aborigine Survive?—

A brief discussion followed the address. Dr. Basedow said he did not altogether agree with Professor Wood-Jones that the Australian aborigine was inevitably doomed. He believed that if these people could be given sufficiently extensive areas of reservation, and kept away from the white man, they might survive for centuries.

Professor Sir Edgeworth David declared that he had been extremely impressed by the forceful, eloquent, and sympathetic lecture of Professor Wood-Jones. He urged the importance of the Pan-Pacific scientific congresses, and said they must see that the Commonwealth was always adequately represented. He agreed that the primitive people of Australia, who had been dispossessed of their hunting grounds, should be placed in possession for all time of those areas which would be best suited to their needs. If they could be isolated in their natural conditions, he thought they might live happy, healthy lives for many, many years to come. Australia's second duty to the aborigines was to study them,

as Professor Wood-Jones had urged, scientifically and sympathetically. The Adelaide University was to be warmly congratulated upon having upon its staff the principal speaker of the evening, an inspiring teacher, and himself a leader of the scientific world in certain branches of anthropology.

—The First Essential.—

Briefly replying to the points raised, Professor Wood-Jones said he had purposely not touched upon the question of the preservation of the Australian aborigine. He knew that the South Australian Government was sympathetic in this matter, and he knew that it was useless to put the native into a pair of trousers and on to a station, and then give him consumption. That did not preserve him. He believed, in fact, that there would be little hope of preserving him until there was available a staff of trained anthropologists, trained, let them suppose, at the Adelaide University. (Applause.)

Professor Brailsford Robertson, in thanking Professor Wood-Jones, said he regarded anthropology as being in the nature of a link between the arts side and the science side of a university. In a sense, therefore, it was the hub of the institution, and for that reason, as well as for those urged so powerfully by Professor Wood-Jones, he cordially agreed with the suggestion that an Edward Stirling Chair of Anthropology should be established.

Register 5/7/21

ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.

SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS' CONCERT.

As usual there was a large and interested audience at the Elder Hall on Monday evening for the seventh concert of the 1921 season. Conservatorium audiences are always sympathetic and understanding, but there is a special atmosphere of happy anticipation on the occasion of the students' concerts. The programme afforded the young performers wide scope for their varied talents, and the whole entertainment was not only enjoyable in itself, but afforded interesting evidence of the work progressing in the Conservatorium, which is becoming more and more a centre of not only the execution of music, but of appreciation and understanding of the divine art in all its phases. An organ solo, "Toccata and Fugue in D minor" by Bach, was played by Mr. Reginald Cooper in a manner which evinced commendable command of the instrument. The composition with its difficult fugue effects and interweaving of ever more and more complex sound-patterns, made no small demands upon the performer, but Mr. Cooper met them ably. The first vocal number was Goring Thomas's recit, "What means Ivan?" and aria, "Oh, my heart is weary," sung by Miss Dorothy Reed. Miss Sylvia Smith was successful in her rendering of a piano solo, "Sonata, Op. 10, No. 3," by Beethoven. Miss Grace Cusson sang the recit and prayer, "Turn Thee unto me," from "Eli," by M. Costa. She has a clear, pure voice, and unusually distinct enunciation. Heartiest applause was deservedly accorded to Mr. Gilbert Casey for his violin solo, "Concerto No. 1," by de Beriot. Mr. Carlyle Jones gave, as a violoncello solo, "Andante Cantabile," by Tortini, and "Allegretto," a descriptive writing by Popper. Particularly charming was the rendering of two songs of MacDowell—"The swan," and "Long ago, sweetheart mine"—by Miss Doreen Skinner, who possesses a sympathetic voice, and uses it with finish and expression. Miss Jean Price (the Public Examination Scholar) was happy in her rendering the pianoforte solo, "Concerto, Op. 37 first movement," by Beethoven, she has a clear, crisp flowing, touch, and her runs are especially good. Mr. I. G. Remann was at the second piano. Miss Louise Hakendorf—quite a juvenile violinist—played the "Concerto in A minor," by Acolay with striking command over the instrument. Her tone and expression were good. Miss Cylie Whittington, A.M.U.A. gave an artist rendering of the Recit and Air "Plus grand dans son Obscurite" from Gounod's "La Reine de Saba." Miss Brabant Mathews in her piano solo, Chopin's "Ballade, G minor," displayed the possession of a singing and expressive touch, as well as considerable technical command of her instrument. Miss Alice Price in a violin solo, "Romance," by d'Abrosio, showed artistic feeling and expression. Mr. Reginald Thrush submitted two songs by Brains—"Summer Field," and "Love Song"—both were received with hearty applause. A pianoforte solo by Miss Moise Alexander, A.M.U.A.—Liszt's "Recordanza, Grand Etude"—concluded the programme. Miss Alexander has a charming touch, a command of varied tone and expression. Miss Lily Sara, A.M.U.A. acted as accompanist.