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 members were sorry to observe the encroachment of the St. John's Wort—a most destructive weed, which seems to be practically uncontrolled. Unless prompt measures are taken to eradicate this pest the identification of plants in the park may soon be a simple matter, as no other plant will be able to live there but St. John's Wort.

## LORD KELVIN. CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS. ADELAIDE MAN WHO KNEW HIM.

The centenary of the birth of Lord Kelvin is being celebrated in Melbourne and Perth this week. Mr. B. P. Clark, of the Adelaide University, who worked in the Kelvin and White laboratory, tells some good stories of the great scientist.

So far Adelaide has not moved in the matter of celebrating the centenary of Lord Kelvin's birth. The great physicist was born in Belfast on June 26, 1824. James Thompson, the father of Lord Kelvin, was a teacher of mathematics in the Belfast Academical Institution, and afterwards accepted the position of professor of mathematics in Glasgow University. William Thompson received all his tuition from his father, and matriculated at the exceptionally early age of eleven years. By the time he was fifteen he was far advanced in his mathematical studies. In April, 1821, he entered Cambridge University, where he continued his studies in mathematics and physical science, and in 1846 he was appointed to the chair of natural philosophy at Glasgow, which he held for 33 years.

Described by his admirers as the Napoleon of science of the nineteenth century, Kelvin, in his lifetime, achieved a far greater reputation than most of his contemporaries in science, not so much by his theoretical discoveries as by his practical inventions. Leaving out those taken out by the firm of which he was director, his personal patents number fifty-six, all of a high order of merit. Professor Osborne, of Melbourne University, says:—"One has only to meet a sea captain to learn in what veneration Kelvin's name was held through his compass, sounding wire, and tide calculator. Our debt to him in telegraphy and electrical meters and appliances eclipses that of Edison into insignificance. Yet he is seldom thought of as a master inventor, which he was." He was made a baron in 1892, and was the first man to receive the Order of Merit ten years later.

Local interest is added to the Kelvin centenary through the fact that Mr. B. P. Clark, chief mechanic in the workshop attached to the physics laboratory of the Adelaide University, worked for eight years in the laboratory of Kelvin and White, of Glasgow, the firm to which the great scientist belonged. Mr. Clark's father was for many years a partner. Lord Kelvin was often seen about the works, a venerable man with a long white beard, who walked with a limp.

Every year, said Mr. Clark, Lord Kelvin entertained his staff at a social, and always on the table was the original galvanometer, one of his first inventions. A romance attached to this instrument. It was said that he gained his second wife through its agency. Kelvin was a shy man, and at the time of his proposal he was in mid-Atlantic, helping to lay a cable, and his wife to be was in Ireland. He sent his proposal through in the Morse code, and his future wife signified her acceptance in a similar fashion.

Mr. Clark tells a good story of Kelvin in the days when he was Sir William Thompson. He was a notoriously poor lecturer, and his class at times got out of hand. Once when he was called away from Glasgow Professor Day relieved him. He was a better lecturer than Thompson, who soared over the heads of his students. Some wit, who appreciated the chance, wrote on the blackboard, "Work while the Day is yet here for the Knight cometh wherein no man shall work."

Kelvin was a man of wonderful mental acuity. While his assistants would be consulting their slide rules in working out a difficult calculation, he would have the answer at his own head.

One of Lord Kelvin's great inventions, said Mr. Clark, was a non-drip water-cock, which is still in use. It is said that his studies were disturbed by the dripping of a tap, and he immediately set to work to invent one which would not drip.

He was a very hard worker, who worked very long hours," added Mr. Clark, "and he always made a point of jotting down a new idea whenever it entered his head. He said ideas came to him while he was lying in bed at night, and he would jump out and make a note of them. He considered that his brain became clearer while he lay in bed."

Professor Kerr Grant, of the Adelaide University, has an interesting relic of Lord Kelvin in the shape of an old phonograph record of the great scientist's voice, taken during the meeting of the British Association at York in Feb-

ruary, 1881. The record is made on a sheet of tinfoil, and is probably among the first efforts at making records. This interesting memento came into Professor Grant's possession at the meeting of the British Association in Adelaide in 1914, when it was left on his table by an anonymous donor.

it is only the outside world experience which does that. The men who do the big things are born, so to speak, for the jobs, and are not necessarily University graduates. I think the professor will admit that his statements on this matter are barely half truths. It has not been my intention to decry University training. I have had sufficient to know that this would be absurd, but I do think statements which convey the idea that the University training is the "royal road" to the higher positions is equally absurd, and, as I believe Professor Fleming has pointed out in one of his London addresses, does more harm than good to the student.

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## BIRTH OF KANGAROOS. HAPHAZARD KILLING NOT DESIRABLE.

On the subject of the birth of kangaroos, "Old Bushwoman," who recently disputed the contention of Professor Wood-Jones that they were born in the usual manner, and not formed on the teat of the marsupial, and offered to give £100 to the Children's Hospital if he proves her wrong, has signified that she and her friends will be ready after tomorrow for any demonstration that Professor Wood-Jones would like to arrange. She, however, makes the proviso that the demonstration must be from a pregnant doe, and not from books on the subject.

When this was referred to the Professor, the difficulties attending the proviso were at once pointed out, for at this time of the year, the young are in the pouch. It was quite impossible, he said, to diagnose pregnancy in any marsupial as every bushman or bushwoman should know. It was, therefore, the mere matter of chance whether an embryo would be found in any specimen. Under these circumstances, he could not see that the course of providing a "pregnant kangaroo" should be thrust on him, for the haphazard killing and opening of females was a thing that no one should countenance.

"I should be delighted to show 'Old Bushwoman' or her friends a series of embryos of several species of marsupials taken from the uterus of the mother," added Professor Wood-Jones, "and I should also be pleased to give her an account (not from books) of the reproductive system, and the reproductive functions of the marsupials—things of which obviously she and her friends are quite ignorant. If her offer of £100 for the Children's Hospital were no mere boast, but were backed by a genuine desire for knowledge, I think that my acceptance should be sufficient without the promiscuous killing and opening of female kangaroos on the chance that they might be preg-

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## KANGAROOS.

From "BROAD VIEW":—As Professor Wood Jones has agreed to take up the challenge thrown down to him by "Old Bushwoman," I propose that if "Old Bushwoman" is as serious as she professes to be, Professor Wood-Jones should give a public demonstration in the Town Hall.

From "GIN":—Kangaroos are born in the ordinary way. The fore part of the kangaroo at birth is very well developed, the forelegs being bigger than the hind legs. The size at birth is only three-quarters of an inch. The mother places the foetus on the nipple with her lips, and the nipple swelling up inside the mouth holds it in position. The young kangaroo stays in the pouch in that position for three or four months before it is able to leave. It is not able to fend for itself until it is about five or six months old. It is impossible for the young to pass through the teat because its progress would be prevented by the milk strands.

[This correspondence is closed.]

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## A NOTED EXPLORER.

MR. STEFANSSON WELCOMED.  
 Mr. Stefansson, the Arctic explorer, says he hopes to find many of the supposed difficulties in the interior of Australia will disappear when the actual facts are known.

Famous explorers of the Arctic and Antarctic regions, Mr. V. Stefansson and Sir Douglas Mawson, met at a civic reception tendered to the former at the Adelaide Town Hall on Monday.

In welcoming Mr. Stefansson, the Lord Mayor (Mr. C. R. J. Glover) said the people of Adelaide extended a particularly warm welcome to him. They were deeply interested in Polar exploration, as the distinguished Antarctic explorer (Sir Douglas Mawson) was a resident of this city. The Polar regions had always exercised a remarkable fascination for explorers. He understood Mr. Stefansson proposed to vary his adventures in the Arctic by penetrating into the interior of Australia.

The Attorney-General (Hon. W. J. Denny) said the citizens of Adelaide felt it an honor that Mr. Stefansson had decided to visit what had been aptly described as the city of culture. In addition to the arts, the people of Adelaide took a great interest in expeditions of discovery. The Government were nothing if not practical, and beside placing the whole of the Geological Department at the disposal of the visitor, they had given him every facility for travelling. Any reasonable request from him would be granted. He hoped the explorer would remember that South Australia had something to its credit in that, under the guidance of Sir Charles Todd, it constructed the overland telegraph line. The work accomplished by Mr. Stefansson in the Arctic north was a counterpart of that done in the south by Sir Douglas Mawson. (Hear, hear.)

Councillor George McEwin also welcomed the guest.

Sir Douglas Mawson said one of the outstanding features of Mr. Stefansson's work was that it started a new era in Polar exploration. He had discarded old methods and adopted new, which had led to better results. Instead of relying on the food carried from the base camp, Mr. Stefansson depended on finding food by the way. Others had thought of doing that, but he was the first to carry out the idea, and it was an heroic thing to do. (Applause.)

Mr. Stefansson, who was cordially received, said he had been embarrassed by the kindness shown him everywhere since he landed in Australia. He thought in one respect his journey into the interior of Australia might resemble his experiences in the Arctic regions. There he had found most of the fancied difficulties that had frightened people were non-existent, and he was hoping that the difficulties he had been told existed in the interior of this continent might be largely imaginary. That had proved to be the case in many other countries. It was with gratitude that he came to South Australia, for it was on Captain George Wilkins that his own success at one time hinged. (Cheers.)

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 UNIVERSITY MEN AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.

From E. S. RUSK:—Anyone who is privileged to know Professor Chapman will readily agree that he does not often make rash statements, and it is therefore with considerable surprise that I have read his statements before the Rotary Club concerning University students and the public service. There are, we know, some respectable positions which call for special technical training in matters appertaining thereto, but for the learned professor to imply that only University graduates are qualified for such positions is, I think, bordering on an absurdity. I have had enough experience in civil and mining engineering and travelled sufficiently to know that the University has been a bogn to civilisation so far as scientific research is concerned, in spite of the lamentable and miserable support accorded it in the past, but surely no one with "outside" experience believes that a graduate of a university is necessarily the man for the higher positions of the future or present, either public or private. If that ever becomes so, heaven help our public service and industries. The University trains men to think—not to do things;

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## INSULIN. ITS USE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

### DIABETIC PATIENTS REALISE BENEFITS.

According to Adelaide medical men, the use of insulin for the treatment of diabetes is increasing by leaps and bounds, and some measures will have to be taken to devise a system whereby patients can be treated in their own homes.

From the comparatively small figure of £10 per month the cost of the insulin for the treatment of diabetes being used by the Adelaide Hospital has risen to £70 per month, and it is anticipated that this figure will be considerably exceeded next year. It is thought that the value of the insulin used in South Australia at the moment is nearly £1,000 per annum, but the heaviest expense is borne by the Adelaide Hospital. The number of patients under the treatment is rapidly increasing as the benefits to be derived from the injections become known.

Diabetes is a common disease and is caused through the failure of the tissues to metabolise carbo-hydrates, due to a deficiency in the internal secretion of the pancreas, and is traced by the amount of sugar in the blood. Doctors who are treating diabetic patients, both in the hospitals and privately, declare themselves well satisfied with the results obtained from insulin, which, they say, has done all that has been claimed for it. Prior to the discovery of insulin by the young Canadian, Dr. Banting, no effective treatment for the disease was known, and it was not an unusual occurrence to see scores of patients attending the hospital daily in search of relief, of which little could be given. Insulin is not a cure, but a palliative, and assists in prolonging life when regulated injections are made, the injection reducing the amount of sugar in the blood, thus permitting the digestive organs to function normally.

Insulin is extracted from the pancreas of cattle and other animals. It is a clear solution and is free of toxic impurities. A pound of pancreas will produce 100 to 125 clinical units of insulin, which costs the South Australian Government about 13d per unit. From six to 80 units per day are required to keep a patient in health, but at the moment no patient attending the Adelaide Hospital is receiving more than 40 units per day. There is no limit to the size of the doses provided the patient is given enough carbo-hydrates to burn. Most doctors in Adelaide are skilled in the use of insulin, and the success in treatment is increasing each month, but the point has been raised whether there are sufficient laboratory facilities for the investigation of diabetes to provide the average practitioner with the necessary data for its use. Insulin does not kill a germ, but adds to the blood something which is not present there in sufficient quantities. For this reason the amount of insulin injected must be carefully regulated. Patients are generally admitted to a hospital for observation, so that the amount of sugar in their blood may be definitely ascertained, calculations made regarding the amount to be added in meals, the quantity likely to be absorbed in exercise, and other important data compiled. Once these facts are known the patient is able to become an out-patient.

The increasing number of patients to be treated under such a plan has caused congestion at the hospital, and the question arises whether provision should not be made for the treatment of the poorer patients in their own homes, instead of forcing them to attend the hospital for treatment. Once the question of dieting