Register 12.5.25

GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

The War Memorial.

By Rev. A. C. Stevens, M.A.

Few people realize the capital value of the grounds on which Government House is built. If they were cut up and put into business allotments, the amount which the sum of the allotments would fetch would make a Monte Cristo pale with excitement.

It will be noted that the War Memorial Committee scheme is willing to receive the grounds from the Government, "without comment," on a question as to whether it is right and proper for the grounds to be handed over. This may well be. It is a thorny question. The public has not taken overmuch interest in the celebrated controversy over the wall, and because of the wall has not realized the immensity of the grounds behind the wall.

The widening of King William road and the widening of the City Bridge are essential to the future of our fair city. There can be no objection to the dedication of the wonderful site at the corner where the guardhouse stands, or the frontage towards Parliament House to some work of art and beauty which shall form a shrine of noble remembrance on the part of South Australia in connection with the Great War. The question arises, what is to be done with the remainder of this priceless piece of property? Without saying anything derogatory to the object for which the committee is working, one may yet advance the question whether it is the best wisdom to turn the property into vistas of lawns, walks, and shrubberies. Surely it is not the highest tribute even to the fallen to make idle so rich a piece of civic capital, for it must be remembered that in the Botanic Gardens, the squares, the North terrace gardens, the vicinity of the Rotunda and the Torrens, as well as the park lands, Adelaide has already a disproportionately large area devoted to gardens and walks and playgrounds.

Buildings Instead of Parks.

Visioning the future, one sees in North terrace a wonderful avenue. Some day the new Railway Station will be complete. Some day the unfinished Parliament House will complete the western approach to the War Memorial corner. Beyond the lacuna which the present Government House grounds occasion begins the splendid row devoted to cultured requirements—the Libraries, Museum, Art Gallery, University, School of Mines, and Exhibition, followed by the Hospital buildings, a vista of which we need not to be ashamed. Why should not the remembrance of the Great War and the peace which followed be kept by extending the scheme already laid down by our civic forefathers, and by filling in the gap at present occasioned by the Government House grounds with stately buildings which shall at once serve the city needs and be a remembrance of the fallen? For instance, if there is one thing which the city needs badly, it is a new town hall. Where better could one be built, and what could be more in keeping than a Memorial Hall for the citizens of the State, where all our civic music and artistic performances and speeches of visiting statesmen could be staged?

University and a Memorial College.

Another crying and clamant need of the city is more and better equipment for the University plant. To what use can we put the present buildings known as Government House? The University has laid down a programme of residential colleges in connection with the higher education of its citizens. The best that such universities as those of Oxford and Cambridge can give cannot be given without the residential system. The present system gives opportunities for denominations to found residential colleges, of which St. Marks' is an example. Might not returned men and their descendants have a college, backed up by the State, or might there not be some system of Government bursaries which would assist the poorer type of students to get advantages in education which are entirely restricted to the comparatively rich under the present scheme. Government House would make a splendid nucleus for University residential traditions and associations. Then, again, along the line of suggestions for the cultural forms of remembrance in keeping with the rest of North terrace, surely there is room for extending our galleries of art and literature and the Museum. Why not embody a war museum of weapons and mementoes of the great conflict, with a wing devoted to war literature and art and the technological side of its romantic story? Hundreds of returned men would probably help with trophies, which otherwise will die out from public notice. Such a programme may seem ambitious; but it would be worthy of the great object to be commemorated. It would be a reproductive investment worthy of the future of our country. And some such programme is the only thing which would justify Adelaide in adding to the already large portion of ground held off the business market which is forcing the occupied portions of the city to become a wilderness of modern skyscrapers.

Register 12.5.25

THE GOLD STANDARD.

LECTURE BY DR. H. HEATON.

Dr. H. Heaton delivered a lecture titled "The gold standard, the case for and against" before a meeting of the Adelaide University Commerce Students' Association in the Public Library lecture room, North terrace, on Monday evening. Mr. H. C. Bressler (Vice-President) occupied the chair. There was a large attendance.

In introducing the subject, Dr. Heaton said the recent decisions of the British Empire to revert to the gold standard were apparently being received with mixed feelings. It was undoubtedly a leap in the dark. For, although the Empire was going back, after 10 years, to a currency system it had formerly used, the world's political and economic conditions had been so vitally challenged since 1914, that one might well wonder whether the movement was wise or timely. The gold standard was based upon the fact that gold was acceptable in every part of the world, that there was a sufficient supply of it, but that the volume could not be increased too quickly. Under a gold standard the currency unit was worth a certain weight of gold, but all forms of currency, whether metal or paper, were convertible into gold. Free minting was allowed, and most important of all, free export. Hence the currencies of gold standard countries bore a definite relation to each other, and the fact kept variations of exchange rates within narrow limits, since a wide variation would be made by the shipment of gold. Further, the general price level in all countries was roughly similar, and that level moved in the same direction at the same time in different countries. The outstanding advantages of the gold standard as seen before the war were that people had faith in it, that they knew exactly where they stood, and although the currency was far from perfect, people were now understanding it better, and learning how to handle it more efficiently. That psychological fact of acceptability was of special importance to-day, in view of the complete chaos into which large sections of the world's monetary systems were plunged when gold was abandoned.

Limitations of Gold.

Another advantage, continued the speaker, was the limitation of the quantity of new gold which could be produced each year, and consequently to the total quantity of currency, and the movement in the general price levels. Where men could easily increase the money supply, there was an inevitable big increase in price level. At the same time gold coinage involved the wasteful use of precious metal, and the purchasing power of gold varied largely from generation to generation. In brief, the gold standard was not a standard. Still, after the experience of the war years, with their violent price and exchange fluctuations, people preferred the bad gold standard to any paper system. The chief fears raised by the recent decision were whether England would be able to maintain the pre-war parity between sterling and the dollar; and whether there would be enough gold to meet requirements. Another fear was caused by Britain's narrow margin between her international debits and credits, for if the debits exceeded the credits she would be compelled to export gold. That danger had apparently been met by an arrangement for loans from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. For Australia, a return to gold raised problems which had to be faced by the reorganized Commonwealth Bank. At present Australia was receiving gold rather than sending it away, but a big slump in export prices would alter the position. Meanwhile the bank if it were wise would endeavour to work out a policy of control, both of quantity of money and of credit facilities, and in that way it would be able to prevent the violent fluctuations between good and bad trade, which has occurred in the period from 1919 to 1921.

Mail 9.5.25.

Professor C. W. Mitchell, of the Adelaide University, who has been on a visit to Great Britain, returned by the Orsova today. The purpose of his visit was to deliver the Gifford lectures at Aberdeen University during February and March. These comprised a series dealing with philosophy, and were entitled "The Place of Mind in the World." Professor Mitchell will revisit Aberdeen next year to deliver further Gifford lectures.

News. 12.5.25

Mr. F. W. Eardley (registrar of the University of Adelaide) has resumed his duties after having been in Sydney at the conference of the Australian Music Examination Board.

Advertiser 13.5.25.

TRAGEDY IN LITERATURE.

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR COLEMAN PHILLIPSON.

"The conception of tragedy in dramatic literature" was the theme of an interesting lecture which was delivered before the Poetry Society by Professor Coleman Phillipson on Tuesday evening. After introductory observations regarding the necessity for occasional self-questioning and moral stocktaking, and the importance for that purpose of religion, art, and literature, the lecturer pointed out that the highest of the fine arts was poetic tragedy. There were, he said, three types of tragedy—the classical, the romantic, and the realistic; the greatest of all was the Shakespearean, and that might be taken as the basis for showing the two main aspects of tragedy—first, the action as a conflict, producing suffering and calamities, by reason of the interaction of character and environment, and secondly, the consequent emotional response.

Proceeding, the professor said the action was not an imitation, but a creation. It revealed the heart and soul of mankind in certain poignant circumstances; it concerned itself but little with grotesque passions and abnormal horrors, which was a subject rather for pathology than for art. Dramatic motive was more important than spectacular display. The conflicting forces were as varied and numerous as the motives, impulses, and purposes of life. In Shakespeare the forces and the struggles were more personal to the protagonists; in Greek tragedy, the forces assumed more of a universal character—thus, Prometheus exhibited a superhuman conflict between arbitrary right and benevolent wisdom; Antigone, a collision between Divine law and human law. Besides the external conflict there was often an inner conflict in the hero's mind, of which "Hamlet" was a striking example. The Shakespearean hero was usually a person of "high degree," whose struggle led to his and others' destruction. He possessed exceptional endowments, but was actuated by some predominant trait which deranged the equilibrium of his life. He was neither an angel of goodness nor a monster of evil. Thus such symbols of evil as Oswald and Regan were sacred, tragic figures; also the struggle and death of the martyr had not tragic significance, because his unfaltering devotion to his idea and his ready acceptance of his fate made him triumph, he was raised aloft, and aroused reverential wonder, not tragic pity and fear.

Professor Phillipson went on to say that the motive force of that conflict was the interaction of character and circumstance. As Heraclitus said, "Man's character is his destiny." The catastrophe did not befall the hero unaccountably, or by reason of some crude and blind fatalism; it was due rather to some fatal defect or flaw in his make-up, intellectual or moral, or both—some excess or intemperance, which unbalances him, thus vindicating the universal law of the mean. In Hamlet the excess was in his circumstances, one of thought, protracted indulgence in ideal scruple; it was a trivial defect indeed, but it was the weak link in the chain. In Macbeth, it was "vaulting ambition;" in Lear, fatuous caprice and blind choice; in Othello, inordinate jealous suspicion, and so on. Tragedy was concerned with life, not with moral or metaphorical doctrines; still, the poet could not eliminate ethical considerations in the portrayal of his character and in the expression of his own outlook; otherwise his work would not be true to life, and would possess little interest. Indeed, the great writer of tragedy was a seer, a prophet, who unfolded a new revelation of life's pilgrimage, and therein exhibited the inviolable sovereignty of universal law. The spectacle of a tragic conflict and its disastrous issue appealed to their deeper being, and aroused pity, sympathy, admiration, as well as fear, awe, and wonder, thus effecting a purgation of their mind, heart, and spirit. Selfish impulses were thereby restrained, and their sense of brotherhood was enlarged. They deplored the folly, the violence, the passion of Lear, Macbeth, Othello; but readily said, "Ye are my brethren." The calamities they witnessed did not cause depression or despair, for they saw them illumined by admirable qualities, whose fragrance survived. The waste of human power and intelligence and the destruction of the good and evil alike seemed a mystery; but their attitude was acquiescence and trust, for they had an intuition of eternal justice and cosmic order, and so could attain to a state of exaltation and ecstacy. They realized that strength, desire, passion, and will had in them glorious potentialities, but when separated from love they were transformed into demons of evil. At bottom, then, tragedy consisted in a conflict between necessity and the heart of man, and what was the ultimate signifiance of that conflict time alone would reveal. There was a famous problem propounded in ancient times—"What is the strongest thing, what is the wisest, and what is the greatest?" To which the answer was given—"The strongest thing is necessity, the wisest is time, and the greatest is the heart of man."

Register 12.5.25

THE CONSERVATORIUM ORCHESTRA AND GOVERNMENT AID.

From STEPHEN PARSONS:—I notice from a telegram in The Register of May 11 that the New South Wales Ministry has approved of a grant of £3,000 per annum being made to the Sydney Conservatorium Orchestra. This leads one to ask to what extent the Adelaide Conservatorium Orchestra is financially assisted by our own State Government? I am under the impression that not one penny does our Conservatorium Orchestra or any other musical organization receive from the State purse. As regards municipal aid, the same may be said. The citizens have a Town Hall, which contains a valuable organ, which they have the right to hear from time to time, but have seldom the opportunity for the simple reason that the City Organist does not receive remuneration for his services. Some time ago I communicated with the City Councils of Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane, and received prompt and courteous replies from their respective Town Clerks, who gave full information as to the remuneration paid to the city organist and the number of free recitals given to the public. In each case programmes were forwarded to me, giving the nature of music supplied. The remuneration to the Sydney organist was handsome; that paid by Melbourne was very considerable, and even Brisbane (a corporation, I suppose, not as important as ours), paid their organist a very liberal salary, in return for which he had to give a weekly organ recital to the citizens. This contrasts very strongly to the niggardly action of our corporation, which evidently considers that the honour attached to the position of City Organist amply repays any professional man who undertakes to dispense the compulsory municipal official programme, which appears to consist of an occasional performance of "God save the King," "The song of Australia," and "See the conquering hero comes" (if and when required!) For any performances beyond this the citizens have to rely on the generosity and kindly feelings of the City Organist, for which he will receive no remuneration.

Advertiser 13.5.25

ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.

The second chamber music recital by the Elder Conservatorium string quartet will be held next Monday evening. The programme, though comparatively short, will be of exceptional interest, including a Haydn quartet, and the magnificent quintet in F minor of Brahms, with Mr. William Silver at the piano. Miss Hilda Gill will also sing a bracket of Brahms's songs. It is intended to alter the seating arrangements of the Elder Hall for the concert, in order to secure a better acoustical effect. The performers will occupy a raised platform in the centre of the floor. To make this experiment possible the director asks season ticket holders to forego their usual seats. No chairs will be numbered, but ample provision will be made in reserved blocks both for season ticket holders and for those who purchase single tickets, which are now obtainable at S. Marshall & Son's, Gawler-place.