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FRESHERS' SOCIAL.

The annual initiation of the Freshers took place with the customary festivities. As the associations and customs of the native Australian continually engage the interest of the anthropologist, some account of this important rite will not be out of place.

The newly-arrived Fresher is first made to feel his insignificance by the long and technical reports and speeches of the old men of the tribe. It is the privilege and pleasure of these to discuss the finances, to make cautious and carefully veiled references to exterminating "borers" (thus discouraging discreditable practices), and generally to point out the modes of activity on the part of the newly arrived which are acceptable to the old men.

This over, the meeting assumes the more truly ritualistic character. It is usual to have some sort of impressive display by a magician or witch doctor. For some unaccountable reason this failed this year, but was compensated for by a remarkable exhibition of ritual dancing. The exact significance of this is not yet understood, but in some of its forms it is definitely related to the idea of "Whoopie." Then one of the younger men gives a sketch of his life and works. Mr. Dawe did this admirably. The proper importance and relative worth of the tribal activities are next pointed out by their relative high priests and exponents. Mr. Oate, Mr. Hayward, and Mr. Muecke explained and gesticulated about this. Singing, notably by Miss Hart, added to the rising pleasure and exhilaration of the Fresher, who was at length warned, strengthened and comforted, finally fed; considered after this ritual event no longer a stranger but a genuine member, able now himself to assist in the ritual dance which followed.

Although the "Ragge" is believed to have died of apathy on the part of the students, the Editors of "On Dit" think that at least part of the trouble was faulty organization. At any rate, we hope "On Dit" will live, and invite your co-operation and help to make it do so. Record your impressions, voice your ideas, support your paper! Contributions in Box B or in the Library.

MOTHERS AND BABIES.

About eight hundred able-bodied Adelaideans flocked to the Palais Royal on Friday night.

The dance was given in aid of the Mothers and Babies' Health Association. Mrs. J. Lavington Bonython was organizer, and the evening's undoubted success is another tribute to her talent for keeping a considerable number of people thoroughly amused and interested.

By standing on a chair, where the press was thickest, one could catch occasional glimpses of His Excellency the Governor, Lady Hore-Ruthven, the Lord Mayor, Bobby Mackay, and other well-known people.

Eleven debutantes—Joan Bruce, Joan Motteram, Pat. Seppelt, Jean McDonald, Adelaide Blades, Elizabeth Ind, Pat. Lloyd, Elizabeth Edwards, Beatrice Black, and Margaret Ferris—trooped forward in demure couples, to receive the vice-regal smile.

A carefully chosen body of beautiful girls pirouetted sveltly upon a platform, wearing the most attractive morning, afternoon and evening, parlour, bedroom, and bath costumes that the Adelaide firms could supply.

Miss Norah Stewart's pupils, in costumes delightfully suggestive of the fire-brigade—or, possibly, of a boiler factory—performed a graceful dance, symbolical of the Machine-Age.

The claret-cup, we mention with approval, was free.

Here, one supposes, a resumé of the dresses worn is expected, but our correspondent (an unobservant male), must plead his ignorance of the technicalities. Let it suffice to say that Mrs. J. L. Bonython looked particularly charming in a neo-Georgian frock of fine black lace georgette, beginning fairly close to the body, and founcing out simultaneously in all directions, as it neared the ground.

More than a fair sprinkling of Varsity people were present, including a goodly contingent from S. Mark's. We congratulate them on their support of so worthy a cause.

Mr. Robert Mellis Napier (apparently a member of the committee), when interviewed shortly before the dance, expressed the opinion that every student of the University should hold himself prepared to support the Mothers and Babies' Health Association in every possible way.

1 APR 1932
ADELAIDE

"ON DIT"

Editors:
C. R. BADGER K. L. LITCHFIELD C. G. KERR

*"And sometimes counsel takes
And sometimes tea"*

Vol. 1 April 15th, 1932 No. 1

EDITORIAL.

Can We Afford a New Library?

Undoubtedly the new quarters of the library are an inestimable advantage. They have given a new comfort and dignity to what all must feel to be the real centre of the intellectual life of the University.

Yet a great and growing dissatisfaction has been expressed on the part of students looking this gift horse in the mouth.

The old library was certainly incommodious, cold in winter, close in summer. Its shelving and reading space was inadequate, and yet, in the opinion of many it served its purpose better than the handsome new structure in which the library is now housed.

The complaints are various; some reasonable, some perhaps not quite so reasonable, but "On Dit" exists to give expression to student opinion, and now for it.

The fact that a great number of books are now withdrawn from the view of the students is certainly regrettable. That matter, however, is almost inevitable; nearly all modern libraries are forced, by the exigencies of space, to adopt the "closed access" system. Is there, however, any real reason why the student should not be allowed access to the basement? In our opinion there is not. There may be technical difficulties about adequate supervision to be overcome, but these should surely not be insuperable.

The absence of adequate provision for reading magazines is another grievance, which has, however, been

robbed of its sting by the racks now provided in the library. But this does not allow students to consult back numbers and bound volumes without considerable and troublesome delay.

The worst fault of the new library, and that which leads us to conclude that we really cannot afford it, is that it is not open at night. This privilege we learned to appreciate in the old library, and are concerned no longer to enjoy. If in this respect the new library cannot give us the facilities which the old afforded, then "On Dit" advocates that the new building be used to supplement the resources of the Refectory, and that the old building be requisitioned for its former purpose.

We recognize the difficulties of living within our income, but surely the cost of opening the library in the evenings would not be so great as to outweigh the undoubted benefits of its extended use.

We think the test of our ability to afford a new library is that it should afford us the same facilities as the old, and reluctantly, sorrowfully we conclude, we cannot afford it!

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—Like the Forest of Arden, the Barr-Smith Library possesses no clock by which groaning students may detect the lazy foot of time.

At present, one has to be content with all kinds of approximations. For instance, when Miss Hone has warmed both feet sufficiently before the foot warmer, and is ready to de-

part, one knows it is time for an English lecture.

But other people are less reliable, and their exits may mean anything—from a special meeting of the S.C.M. to a sudden, whimsical desire to visit the Richmond.

Trusting that those in authority will take some definite steps toward the purchasing of a clock. I remain, Sir, yours, etc., PULEX.

Is Poverty the Cause or the Result of Crime?

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—May I have your co-operation and support in the proposal I wish to lay before the University? The present world is divided roughly between two contradictory opinions. On the one hand it is frequently said that poverty is richly deserved; that the poor are poor because they don't try sufficiently to be anything else—they are content with their squalor and ignorance—they don't want to be helped or educated. In striking opposition to this, on the other hand, we find a tendency in modern thought to excuse all crimes committed among the poor upon the grounds of poverty, and to impute their way of living to their conditions of life. Which of these is the true hypothesis? And do they necessarily exclude each other? Such questions can only be answered after an appeal to the relevant facts.

It is for this reason that the Social Service group of the S.C.M. is endeavouring to arrange for some original research work to be undertaken this year upon conditions of life among the poor. But it is not intended that this shall be undertaken merely out of intellectual curiosity; it is to provide material for a careful study of social conditions. The results of such a study will, if possible, be laid before the public in the daily press, and an attempt made to form public opinion, and to focus attention upon necessary reforms.

It is often argued that it is not the task of the student to undertake any social work; his task is to study—to prepare himself for his profession. No doubt this is to a certain extent true. But he has a higher task; it is his duty also to prepare himself for his citizenship—to learn to direct his studies in the service of the community. The proposal here put forward, it is hoped, will provide an opportunity for this. Too much of the

social work of the past has been undertaken without intelligent guidance. Take many of the hostels for the unemployed conducted by private individuals. Instead of lightening the burden of the unemployed, they merely lighten the burden of the Government; instead of benefiting the poor, they benefit the taxpayer. A communist would go further, and declare that they exist merely to dope the people—to make them content with the present social system. Whether this is true or not, the fact remains that if our present civilization is to continue, drastic changes must be made to the structure of society. Social service must be conducted not with a view to patching up the evils of the present system, but to removing their cause; not for the purpose of relieving squalor and misery, but of making these impossible. Of course it may be that the poor will prove incapable of being helped, and if such is the case our democratic system of government will have to be changed. Democracy can only exist when the people are enlightened. But it is our duty to see that they are.

Membership of the Social Service group does not imply, and in the past has not necessarily meant, participation in the other activities of the S.C.M. May I request, through your columns, Mr. Editor, that anyone interested in this work will communicate with the Secretary of the Social Service Committee, Box S, front office. Yours sincerely, JOHN ALLISON.

Protests.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Men's Union, 6th April, in the Refectory, a letter of protest was received from the Women's Union against the closing of the Barr Smith Library at 6 p.m. daily. It was unanimously decided that the Men's Union support the protest.

We understand the Literary and Debating Society, the Commerce Students' Association, the Men's Arts Association, and other bodies support the protest.

Boxing and Wrestling Club.

A new club, with the above name, was formed on April 8th. Secretary, Mr. E. S. Wyett. Those interested in these noble arts are pressed to communicate with the Secretary.

MEN'S UNION DEBATE.

Chaos at Night.

At the first meeting of the Union Club, held in the Refectory, Wednesday, April 6th, Mr. Hayward read a report which succinctly set forth the activities of the past year. Some sorrow was expressed over the fact that these most interesting and valuable meetings were not as largely attended as possible. The well known fact that undergraduates are not sufficiently interested in the fascinating squabbles of contemporary politics was referred to and their attitude of aloofness castigated. Hopes were expressed for a brighter future.

The main event of the evening was a debate on the thesis that "Complete Freedom of Speech is in the best interests of the Community." The thesis maintained by Messrs. Badger, Oate, and Allen, and impugned by Messrs. Hunter, Connelly, and Bleby. Mr. Kiernan judged and saw fair play.

Mr. Badger began by plunging both subject and audience in a well of metaphysical subtleties, from which it was quickly recovered by the practical Mr. Hunter. Mr. Badger maintained, with force, though without effect on the subsequent course of the argument, that the case for Free Speech rested upon a view of the State, and outlined a theory of the State which, he held, supported his contention for free speech. Mr. Hunter would have none of it, and withdrawing from abstract theory, showed the dire consequence of allowing pernicious, immoral, irreligious, and revolutionary enthusiasts to have their unfettered say. Mr. Oate bravely attacked this slur on their intentions. He had caught from Mr. Hunter the words rebellion and chaos. He would, and did, deal with rebellion, but he would leave Mr. Badger to deal with chaos. From the remaining speakers came much that was vigorous and sound. Excursions into the origin and present status of the law of libel and slander from Mr. Bleby were well received, but shown scarcely relevant by Mr. Allen. Mr. Connelly said something, but your reporter gathered that he was irrelevantly combating the irrelevancies of his opponents.

In the final duel, Mr. Hunter summed up the arguments for his side, and Mr. Badger dealt effectively, in a way, but with little result, with the chaos so kindly assigned him by his team.

The debate was awarded to the law students, Free Speech having been shown a dangerous and pernicious thing.

But Mr. Greenland added a word, in a style peculiar to himself, and branded by after-speakers as both ineffable and inimitable. Both epithets we think are right. With singular modesty he refrained from deciding the point at issue, lavished praise and blame on each side equally, exhibited a desire to have both freedom and not freedom. Mr. Hayward spoke on the subject, and rightly pointed out that it was the word "complete" in the motion which obstructed the efforts of the Arts men, and entailed upon them herculean but unsuccessful intellectual effort.

Supper followed, and a good deal of free speech.

S.C.M.

Student Movement Conferences have always borne a reputation for freedom of thought: for that is surely the true way of progress. On this occasion, however, we are to commence with no assumptions at all as to the nature and importance of any particular religion. The fundamental method of approach to the search for a way of life is surely an impartial examination of the nature of the human spirit and the Universe its home. This is the way to answer the questions: "Is man self-sufficient?" "Is a religion necessary?" The consequences of a life lived without a faith in the ruling power of good, which lies at the heart of things, is all too obvious to-day. Tariffs, armaments, debt burdens, all are traceable to the poverty of the texture of the world social order, which is, of course, a kind of summary of the mode of life of the individuals who compose society.

We can have a science that is truly religious, and a religion that is truly scientific.

Conference at Mount Lofty, Anzac Week-end, April 22-25. Applications close Monday, April 18th.

"THE FOUNTAIN OF KNOWLEDGE."

An Allegory.

There was once a rich merchant who, waxing old, bethought himself how he might best benefit the youth of his city, and he went to the Great Ones that abode in the Seat of Learning and said: "Lo! I will give unto you 20,000 shekels wherewith ye may establish a Fountain of Wisdom, that all that bathe therein may abound in knowledge".

And they thanked him, saying, "Happy are our sons and our daughters that will gain much knowledge through thy bounty!"

And the Fountain was established, and many bathed therein.

And in the course of years the merchant was gathered to his fathers, but the Fountain remained. And it happened that the son of the merchant, passing that way, bethought himself how he might add to his father's bounty, and he went also to the Great Ones that abode in the Seat of Learning and said, "Lo! I will give unto you 30,000 shekels, wherewith to build a Temple, wherein the Fountain of Wisdom may be housed in a manner befitting the gift of my father."

Whereupon they thanked him, saying, "Worthy son of a worthy father, the thanks of our sons and our daughters go unto you for your bounty."

And it came to pass that the Temple was built and the Fountain housed therein.

Now one night a wise man from a far country passed by and found the Temple closed, and he said to those that stood around, "Is not this the Temple which containeth the Fountain of Wisdom?" And they replied, "Yes; observe the artistic portico." He answered, "I observe it, but why is not the Temple open, that all may bathe in the Fountain?" They replied, "The Temple is closed at sunset for the Great Ones aver that it costeth three or perhaps four shekels a week to maintain an acolyte to attend those that bathe by night—and the oil for the lamps is perhaps as much again. But observe the magnificent entrance!"

"I observe it," replied the wise one, "I observe also that it is closed. Of what value is the Fountain when one may not bathe?" They answered him wonderingly, "Will it not last the longer? And as to bathing, is there not the Public Fountain nearby? But observe . . ."

But the wise one had gone.

WOMEN FRESHERS' WELCOME.

"A Group of Noble Dames."

On Friday, March 11th, the Women's Union welcomed all women Freshers at tea in the Refectory. It was an excellent tea, thanks to the efforts of the Committee, with the help of the ever-present Refectory staff. Everybody was very elegant and polite, and listened carefully to all the speakers had to say about the Union, and the Student Christian Movement, and the Sports Association. Please note, you societies, that the Women's Union has some very able speakers. Bring them out to address you, and debate against you; their eloquence and power and logic will startle you!

The latter part of the evening was spent in singing "Gaudeamus," etc., pitched in impossibly high keys. The equally strenuous pleasure was indulged in of straining ear and brain to find out what "The Man in the Bowler Hat" was all about. The play was brilliantly produced, in full costume, and with very few lapses or mistakes. But the audience may have been a little hazy at times about the meaning of it (the cast certainly were at times). However, what was not understood was forgiven, and altogether it was very amusing. In fact, the welcome was a 'ooze success.

Book List.

The Editors propose to devote a little space to a list of books for the University student.

Flexner, A. Universities: American, English, and German.

Rowse, A. L. Politics and the Younger Generation.

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