

Registered Dec. 24th 07.

Advertiser Jan. 29th 1908.

The Cambridge University calendar for 1907, which is just to hand, shows that during the last academical year, in addition to being placed Fifth Wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos, Mr. J. R. Wilton, of Adelaide, obtained the Bachelor of Arts degree, a major scholarship in mathematics in Trinity College, the Jeston Exhibition, the Mathison Prize, and a prize for the mathematical tripos. He was also "highly commended" by the examiners for the Sheepshanks Astronomical Exhibition, one of the other students bracketed as equal with him being Mr. G. N. Watson, the Senior Wrangler for 1907.

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THE RHODES SCHOLARSHIP.

This is the last day for receiving applications for the South Australian Rhodes Scholarship for the current year. Candidates have to be over 19 years of age, and under 25 years of age in October next, the date on which they are to enter at one of the colleges of the University of Oxford. The scholarship is worth £300 annually, and is tenable for three years, and the choice is made by a selection committee, of which the Governor, the Chief Justice, and the Chancellor of the University are ex-officio members, the other members being leading graduates of the same institution. The basis on which the choice is made is "leadership." To entitle him to the position a candidate is expected to be a good scholar, an athlete, a man popular with his fellows, and one who is likely to make his mark in the world. Four scholars have already gone to Oxford from South Australia under the terms of the scholarship, and two at least have entered into engagements which will prevent them from returning to this State for some time to come. Mr. N. W. Jolly, the first to take the award, secured first-class honors in physics and a first-class in forestry at Oxford, and is now a member of the Indian Civil Service, having been appointed to a position in the Forest Department at Rangoon, Burmah. Mr. R. L. Robinson, who was the second scholar, last year won the Burdett-Coutts Scholarship at Oxford for geology, which is worth £110 yearly. He, too, has passed the examination for the Indian Civil Service, and will enter the Forestry Department in that Empire. Mr. Walter Reynell, the third scholar, is studying medicine. He has won his "half blue" for tennis. Dr. W. Ray, who was awarded the scholarship last year, had taken his degrees in medicine and surgery before he left Adelaide, and he is now pursuing scientific research studies at Oxford. Whoever is chosen as the result of the present competition will leave Adelaide about July next to enter the particular college at which he decides to reside when the Michaelmas term begins at Oxford University on October 10 next. Copies of the application and the testimonials of each candidate are sent to each member of the Selection Committee, and they meet to interview the applicants and to announce their decision about the end of February. The Governor is chairman of the committee, and Mr. C. R. Hodge is the secretary.

THE TEACHING OF ASTRONOMY.

THE APPOINTMENT OF A PROFESSOR.

At a meeting of the council of the University on Friday the Chancellor referred to the transfer of the Meteorological Department to the Federal authorities in Victoria and stated that he had been in communication with the State Government in regard to the University making use of the Observatory, with the possible appointment of a professor of astronomy. He had also been in communication with Sir Charles Todd and Professor Bragg on the subject. The following letter from Professor Bragg was read:—

"Of the three questions which you put to me I will take the first that which relates to the provision of astronomical teaching at other universities. In order to be able to answer this, I looked through the book of universities, 'Minerva.' I found there were chairs of astronomy at the universities which I first turned up, e.g., Berlin, Lausanne, and Cracow. Then I thought that these and the English chairs might be considered as owing their existence to tradition, so I left Europe and tried America. I took the first ten states of the Union which came into my head. I found astronomy was taught at eight of them, viz., Kansas, New Jersey, Michigan, Indiana, California, Washington, Virginia, and Ohio, but I could not find that it was taught in Vermont or Illinois. I did not try any more; that seemed enough.

"As regards finances. I think we could manage with a minimum of one professor of astronomy and mathematics at £500 a year and house (the Observatory); one assistant, at £200 a year; and a cadet at, say, £30 a year and free education at the University. Then, perhaps, £100 a year should be allowed for the maintenance of buildings, the provision of literature, and apparatus, and petty expenses. Total, £830 a year, as against the present outlay of £1,300 a year, approximately. The University should be glad to contribute a little of this, say, £100 a year, since the new arrangement would materially reduce the difficulty as regards the crowding of all mathematics and physics into the subjects of one chair.

"Now, as to the general point. In a certain limited practical sense the teaching of astronomy would be of use only if we were to become a nation of navigators, and the instruments would only be used to keep the time of the colony. But in a wider, and yet equally practical, sense the value of astronomical teaching is almost unique. It deals with such wonders and grandeurs that it is a valuable moral discipline, most healthy for a man's soul. This is truly practical; if we did not consider it so we might as well close our museums, galleries, and churches, and put up the park lands and gardens for building lots.

"If astronomy were made a teaching subject at the University the interest to the public would be greatly increased. It would be the business of the University to make it so; and we should succeed without the least difficulty. For if we appointed some brilliant young student of mathematical physics he could do more than teach, he could go in for research in a way which has been absolutely impossible hitherto. And there are many problems of astronomy and solar physics for the solution of which Adelaide presents ideal conditions. It is only fair to add that this University of Adelaide has fully maintained the traditional university attitude towards research. Every professor has made important contributions to human knowledge. It is but the bare truth to say that there are thousands of students all over the world who know the University of Adelaide on account of the work which has been or is being carried out there. I think everyone understands what it means when this can be said of a University. It must be remembered that research workers are like explorers and prospectors in a new country and of the same absolute necessity. It would be pure folly to try and do without them.

"There is one special point to which I must refer. No subject could be of more value than astronomy to school teachers in training as a degree subject; it would fill their minds with ideas with which they could fascinate their children, very much to the advantage of both teachers and taught."