

At the annual commemoration of the University of Adelaide on Wednesday, the Chancellor of the University (Sir George Murray) said his first duty was to convey to His Excellency the Governor (Sir Henry Galway) the thanks of the University for having honoured them with his presence. (Applause.) The fact that that was the fourth commemoration that His Excellency had attended reminded them that they might not see Sir Henry there again during his term of office. Although His Excellency's departure was not close at hand, they could not say the same of Lady Galway, and it was a matter of deep concern to them that she was about to leave South Australia. The announcement of her approaching departure had caused, he thought, genuine and sincere regret throughout the State (Hear, hear.) Since the war had begun the work which she had done here for the relief of distress in Belgium and France for the comfort of soldiers and sailors at the front, and for the care of sick and wounded, had been tremendous. (Hear, hear.) But it would not be by that that she would be longest remembered. If he was not mistaken, the greatest service she had rendered had been in becoming an interpreter for the women of South Australia of their innermost thoughts and feelings during this awful war, of their fortitude, their patience, their sense of duty, and their splendid patriotism. On all occasions when Lady Galway had been able to render help she had cheerfully done so. (Applause.) No scheme had been too large; no detail had been too small for her. The University also owed her a debt of gratitude which it could not repay. (Applause.) If they had the power to confer upon her some mark of distinction, he had no doubt it would be forthcoming to-day, but their statutes did not permit of that being done. They could only ask her to accept their thanks and their most sincere good wishes for her future happiness and welfare. (Applause.)

THE NATIONAL SPIRIT.

ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR MITCHELL.

A GLANCE BACK AT THE CONSCRIPTION REFERENDUM.

"The National Spirit" was the subject of a fine address delivered at the annual commemoration of the University of Adelaide on Wednesday by the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Mitchell), who dealt with the sacrifices made during the war; the reasons, viewed from the standpoint of philosophy, which led to the defeat of the referendum on conscription; and why men sacrificed themselves for the national welfare despite the result of the vote on that issue.

Professor Mitchell said:—On this occasion last year you heard what chemistry was doing in the way of destruction, and what it offers for construction again. This year it is the turn of philosophy; but what can it offer? It has always tried to embrace the ills of life, but they have always laughed at it; and, though their mad revel is well over, they have left us in poverty with our faces to the earth. This appears no day for wide vision, and philosophy has no other. But the vision any day would be idle if it did not present the things about us in a clearer light. When we look at the world as a whole it is finally to see what sense there is in it, what value, and it is the sense of value on which I am to address you. Let the thing of value be the nation; the active sense of its value is the national spirit. The force of the spirit, like every force, can be measured only by its fruit. The fruits of the national spirit are belief, feeling, and conduct. Something of its force can be gathered from all three. But it can be measured from conduct alone, and in proportion to the resistance that it has met and overcome. It is measured by the sacrifice. A prudent man sacrifices, but in the national spirit a man is not prudent. He works to his own hurt for a good that he will never see. Yet it pleases him to suffer. There are other instances. A student can willingly give up his place in the boat. A brother can give up his ambition. A soldier can make himself a scapegoat to save the regiment from disgrace. It pleases them because they identify themselves with the whole; with the crew, with the family, the regiment, the nation. Its task is their task, its welfare their welfare, its dishonor is their shame.

Individuality Expands.

This is not the morality of a mob or a flock where the members reflect one another like sheep; fear and flight, hope and pluck passing through them like a plague. In the national spirit, as in the family or the regimental spirit, a man does not lose his individuality, he expands it. He is not merely part of the whole, he takes the whole for his part; he carries its task, its welfare, its honor, and its shame. A man may deceive himself about the strength of his spirit in any cause. When there is no call for sacrifice he can only judge by the firmness of his belief, and the quality of his feeling. But these are only promises; they prove by service alone and service without sacrifice; and as in war so in peace, it is the sacrifice that measures the strength of the spirit; it is what we lay as if for nothing and lay on the altar. When the call came to prefer the horrors of war, and lists of the dead and wounded made it more and more insistent, everyone could see the magnitude of the sacrifice. Yet, and because of it, the country became the more unwilling to compel. Twice we decided to keep the sacrifice unjust. We thereby helped the prudent man to his best reason for slipping from the burden; but thereby also every man who stood to it was distinguished the more. (Applause.) We did not like to choose the scapegoat and like had long been all our reason. So we begged him to spare our feelings, to ignore the injustice; and we sent him with all our heart to the wilderness. When he used to go singing down the road in dungarees, and singing still in khaki when he left, we thought, or we pretended to think, that he somehow made his way; though how could he forget it? In the mud and misery of the trenches it was heavy enough; though we could forget it in the glory that he threw back on us. Already in the first year of the war I read a letter in which a soldier on furlough contrasted the utter loathing that men had for the life with the insensibility of the people at home. It was a mockery, he said, to read of his gay spirit; his humor, his gallant bearing, his contempt for the enemy. In those days the word "camouflage" was not yet common. Perhaps we were only proud of him, and not stupid. It was our bedside manner; but the conspiracy was against the patient, who knew perfectly well, and knew that we knew. We are dull, indeed, if we think a man without fear because he is fearless, and with small desire to live because he throws his life away. But in mental matters we are prone to take any justice for general. One sound can overwhelm another; so can a pain and grief; fear falls away in anger, and prudence in hate. And in battle, I suppose, there is this overwhelming; but the hours of mental stress are not the hours of excitement; they are when a man has to work against forces that he knows to the full. It is this that is general, and the only stress that is moral. You may sap or gas the enemy within you, but in general you are beaten when you rely on his weakening.

Good and Sufficient Reasons.

If that is so, if there is sacrifice even in prudence when a man is acting to his advantage, how much more when it is to his disadvantage? There was no rage or hate to make a man lose his head; fear was against him; and he knew the work of the years before him never so well as when he gave them away. That is our problem. The national spirit in a man had to feel the opposing forces at their height, and it had to rise above them without looking for their downfall. Everyone had his reason. There were many reasons. A Melbourne professor, who left his family and joined when conscription was lost, wrote to me that he had two good and sufficient reasons—one what the Germans had done for Belgium, the other what they had done for Shakespeare. (Laughter.) All the reasons were less cause than effect. The real cause was the spirit that found their value. For with other minds the very same reasons were all idle. A blind man does not see by sitting in the sun. How, then, to meet the problem, how account for the decision to go? If we like we can say of any decision that it is the result of the forces that have been roused in a man. There was nothing in him that this call did not rouse, and all in him pulled with the spirit or against it. In some men the spirit won with little effort and little regret; in others it lost with even less; and when the struggle was severe the forces were nearly equal and were meeting their match. That is an easy reading, but it leads to nothing except, say, the insoluble problem which condemns it—how a flood of irresistible argument may beat against an impenetrable wall. Our recruiters on the public platforms knew that problem well. They could throw a flood of light or argument, but what did it meet? Not other light and other argument, but an eye that would not see and a heart that would not yield. The reading into mental forces is easy, because it makes them all alike, but it fails for that reason. In a mind, as in nature, the forces are so different that they can be quite indifferent to the presence of one another. Take them when alike, however, so that they do concern one another, and still we

account for nothing. Consider how two conflicting opinions contend in you for your belief. It is you who ponder them, and their weight with you depends on their validity, not their value on their weight. Suppose at last that we raise the forces to life. For a living body has some of the power that is our fact; in it, too, the greater the obstacle the greater the force that may rise to meet it.

Turmoil of Desires.

Suppose, then, our man's mind a turmoil of living desires and passions, beliefs, ideals, doubts, prudence, and daring, hopes and fears, all ranged on two sides, supporting or in combat. But we have omitted the one essential, the man himself. He is not their field of battle; he takes a hand, he plays both hands; he does all the fighting that there is. Your right hand and your left can really pull against one another, but it is you alone who pull them both; and though your right be the stronger and the easier, the left can win as you like. So it is with a man's whole nature, and no matter what his habits, and his past. They impel him no farther than he wants to go, and because he wants. He acts according to his sense of value. That is always the force and in that proportion. Even the brutes do this; it is the characteristic of the mind. But not of life, nor anything lower. And that is why every metaphor and figure, every translation is bad. It is the value of the thing that has power with us. Our head, heart, and hand are merely factors and instruments. Always first there is a cause that we make ours, and then it becomes their cause too, producing reasons and emotions as it needs them. Before the war the cause of a country was always ours. We could point to our beliefs in it and our emotions, but they were a pleasure; and to our conduct, but it paid.

At every election we voted for the national good; but from no platform was a voter ever called on to sacrifice, but always to seek his own good, and thereby save the country. When, at last, therefore, he was invited to vote for his hurt, whether hurt to his sympathies or a sorer hurt, no wonder that he resented it in such numbers and so bitterly.

What is Patriotism?

The cause was given in many angry reasons. They only expounded the spirit that created them. And soon to some there came also the question, what, after all, is this patriotism if it lives on tears and blood? Are we chattels of the State or free men? No nation, no war; it is the national spirit that makes war; we renounce it. Thus it was easy to erect a rampart from which a man could protect the self-respect that he always values. The higher he built it the prouder he could be; he could look down on the rest of us. But not everyone could build so high. To most it remained a pleasure to be proud of their country as well as of themselves. They believed that they were voting for its good; which merely happened, as usual, to coincide with their comfort. The belief was not a lie; it was sincere, although an error. It was a lie in the soul. That is why no argument could pierce it, and why it found adequate reason of its own. Did not the Allies want wheat more than men? Was the sacred right to live a thing to vote away? Were we chattels of the State; was it not made for man, like the Sabbath; or was it still a superstition and his burden? A man can argue like that and yet be proud of his country. Of his two causes the stronger is clearly not the country, but himself. Where, however, is the selfish man who believes that he is selfish? You can meet his cousin, who calls himself prudent, and is sure that other men are like him, if they are practical men. But as a rule the selfish have no unhappy doubt about their heart, because their verdict is from a court that cannot but flatter them. My pride in my country proves that I value it, but I may value it because I value myself and it enhances me. That is not the value which love confers; love seeks to give, not to get; its object is end, not means; it welcomes a burden. Like every lover the patriot wants to be proud of his country, and he fears for it and hates its enemies. But his love does not spring from his pride, from fear, jealousy, or any other emotion; they all follow it.

What Was the Inspiration?

Our men have seen that the cities and the villages, the farms, the rivers, the trees of other countries are handsomer than ours; has it mattered? Has it ever mattered that a native soil was a bog, or moor, or mountain? The barrenest lands have ever bred the hardest patriots. (Applause.) And if not in the face and favor of the country, was it pride in our free institutions that inspired? Did any fear for them bring courage to the heart of any man? Only to a heart already fond. There was fear of shame and dishonor, but no fear of having to learn German, or to accommodate the enemy in any other way. The national, like the family, spirit is love and not pride. And in the family,

as in the nation, it doses the grounds of pride. It is best in the humble and not in the proud. It serves most where the need is most, and is most willing to sacrifice when there can be no return. It is eager to see beauty and every other value in its object, and so it does barest pride; and far from its offspring being always a support, it is always a danger. Many a tragedy follows when the pride falls to disappointment. In father, in lover, in patriot, everywhere love fails only to sorrow when it is disappointed, and love thrives in sorrow. But when pride is disappointed it turns to anger, and can bring love down to indifference. For there is always some selfishness in pride, and in love there is none. The referendum on conscription did not separate us into the selfish and the unselfish; nor did the call even so divide the men who were eligible. For one had more to contend with in himself than another, and the cause of self was not the only other cause at stake. Family, occupation, religion, even party, are causes which in themselves are disinterested.

Where Selfishness Enters.

But the best cause can be debased. And though few men are unhappy enough to be selfish in everything, when selfishness enters at all it does tend to infect all values and debase them. But is it an infection? Is selfishness a disease, or is it merely an arrested development? Perhaps the common view, if there is one, has been that we are born selfish, and have to learn unselfishness; that at first we are devoted to one cause, which is our self, and that the others grow from it by the pressure of our upbringing; that we thus adorn ourselves with unselfishness, but in times of stress that we come back to the beast; that self-preservation is the first law of our nature, and remains the final one. Before the war we often read that human nature is the same all the world over. Do you remember where? Was it not always by way of comment on conduct that was mean? Yet our men were recruited to a hateful life, to the chance of blindness and paralysis, of being a burden, and to so great a chance of mutilation and death; and theirs was human nature. We still read all about the town, "Be a man and enlist." To enlist was to choose those things. We wrote a fine view of human nature on the boardings; but if it is selfish to begin with, what kind of upbringing could invert it so completely? This was a favorite puzzle to our forefathers. In the eighteenth century they were always insisting that man is benevolent or sympathetic by nature as well as selfish. They were replying to Hobbes, who had said in some detail that we are still selfish at our best, never getting the length of giving something for nothing, but always banking, always prudent, always putting our coin to usury and knowing that we do so. They could reply that at least we do not know, and that we feel self-sacrificing. But a cynical writer would always come to say that at our best, if we are not prudent, we are dupes; and he would show the trick that had fooled us. It was that of the old recruiting sergeant smacking the yokel on the back.

An Old Satire.

A satire on it by Law of "The Serious Call" says there was a time when men went on all fours; and the first lawmakers saw how useful he would be to them if they might have the use of his hands for their drudgery. "The difficulty was how to raise him up. But some philosophers found that, though he crept on the ground, yet he was made up of pride, and that if flattery took hold of it he might easily be set on his legs. Making use of this bewitching engine, they extolled the excellence of his shape above other animals, and told him what a groveling thing it was to creep on all fours." So "they wheedled him into the dignity and honor of standing upright." To the men of the 18th century the dignity and honor of dying for us were unreasonable. Even Bishop Butler said so, though he was writing to prove the rule of duty to be unbending. "When we sit down in a cool hour," he says, we cannot see our duty "till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or, at least, not contrary to it." And in the end the thinking gentlemen of that pleasant age anchored on two harmonies, one in human nature, the other in the nature of the world. To love to be upright and kindly, that is pleasant living and "original joy," whereas guilt lives unpleasantly in fear, and malice in bitterness. Such was the harmony that a man who cares well for others, cares well thereby for himself. And the harmony in the world was greater still; for there the man who cares well for himself cares thereby well for others. It was on this comfort that political economy was founded and that politics came to anchor. In the