

Registered 12.6.23

Professor Mackail

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EXTENSION LECTURES.

The following courses of lectures will be given in the Prince of Wales Theatre, University: Three by Professor Harvey Johnston on "Zoological problems in connection with Australian primary industries." (Illustrated with lantern slides). Tuesday evenings, June 19 and 26, and July 3. Three lectures by Professor Harold Davies on "The structure and growth of music." (a) Melody; (b) Polyphony; (c) Harmony. (Illustrated with lantern slides and phonographic records.) Tuesday evenings, July 10, 17, and 24. Three lectures by Professor Kerr Grant on "Matter, electricity and ether." (Illustrated by experiments). Tuesday evenings, July 31, August 7 and 14. Three lectures by Professor Coleman Phillipson on "The development of criminal trials." Tuesday evenings, September 4 and 18.

Herald 12.6.23

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION LECTURES.

The usual winter short courses of University lectures have now been arranged for 1923, and are as follows:—"Zoological Problems in connection with the Australian Primary Industries," three lantern lectures by Professor Harvey Johnston, on June 19 and 26 and July 3; "The Structure and Growth of Music," three lectures, (a) Melody, (b) Polyphony, and (c) Harmony, by Professor E. Harold Davies (illustrated with lantern slides and phonographic records), July 10, 17, and 24; "Matter, Electricity and Ether," three lectures with experiments, by Professor Kerr Grant, on July 31, August 7 and 14; "The Development of Criminal Trials," three lectures by Professor Coleman Phillipson, on September 4, 11, and 18. No literature course will be given this year owing to Prof. John Mackail's visit. The lectures will be held on Tuesday evenings, at the Prince of Wales Theatre, University. Season tickets for each course may be obtained from the University for 2/- and single tickets for 1/-.

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THE BACH SOCIETY.

This year the Adelaide Bach Society, founded by Professor Harold Davies in 1902, celebrates its coming of age. It is not generally known that there have never been any paid officers in this society. From the conductor downward the work has been done for pure love of music and the choral art. Many hundreds of pounds have been disbursed by the society; in fact, all its profits have been devoted either to charity or to assist musical students. This year, to mark the society's twenty-first birthday, the members are giving £100 to the talented young South Australian, Mr. John Bishop, who recently won an Elder scholarship at the Royal College of Music, and who is about to leave for London for his three years of study.

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UNIVERSITY EXTENSION LECTURES.

In three lectures to be delivered in the University on the evenings of June 19 and 26 and July 3. Professor Harvey Johnston proposes to deal with outstanding zoological problems connected with Australian primary production. In the first lecture the prickly pear pest, which is proving a serious menace to agriculture in eastern Australia, will be dealt with, special attention being paid to the experimental work now in progress in Queensland and New South Wales, where cactus insects and diseases introduced by Professor Johnston from America on behalf of the Commonwealth Prickly Pear Board, are now being propagated with a view to their liberation against the pest. The second lecture will be devoted to a consideration of the sheep blowfly problem, and the chemical and entomological methods by which it may be attacked. The third will deal with the "worm nodule" disease of cattle, which has so greatly depreciated the value of the Commonwealth meat export trade. The attempts to elucidate the life history of the parasite will be touched upon. It is also proposed to refer to the stomach worms of sheep.

THE FAME OF TENNYSON.

THIRD LECTURE BY DR. MACKAIL.

A large and deeply interested audience at the Brookman Hall, School of Mines, on Tuesday evening listened with appreciation to the third lecture of the series by Dr. J. M. MacKail, formerly professor of poetry at the University of Oxford, the subject being the genius of Tennyson. Sir George Murray (Chancellor of the University of Adelaide) presided, and was supported on the platform by the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Mitchell).

Dr. MacKail, who received an ovation on beginning his address, said there was no reason to offer any explanation, and still less, any apology for the choice of the subject. The name of Tennyson was for more reasons than one, familiar in South Australia. Indeed, it might be regarded as something more than a coincidence—he hoped as an illustrious omen—that among the Governors of this State there had been numbered a son of one Poet Laureate and a nephew of another. (Applause.) Apart, however, from any such peculiar or local reason, there was, he thought, special reason to study Tennyson at the present time, and to come, if they could, to some settled view in regard to his poetical quality and place in history and main current of English poetry.

By this time Tennyson was far enough away from them to have taken shape, or, at least, to have begun to take shape, yet not so far from them that his world, his language, or the methods of his art had become unfamiliar through time and distance. The mass outline of him could now, perhaps, be grasped better than it could have been a generation ago, and better, possibly, than it might be two or three generations hence, for the mountain summit had risen above the obscure foothills and yet was not so remote as to be in a haze of distance. There could be no final judgment upon any artist, and with regard to all artists in every art, including that of poetry among others, the pendulum continued to swing. With Tennyson that swaying of the pendulum had been particularly noticeable. It swung backward and forward repeatedly in his own lifetime, which was unusually long, and since then there had been still more violent fluctuations of the esteem in which he had been held, and the judgment previously passed upon him. He had met with alternate idolatry and depreciation. That happened more or less to most great artists, according to a sort of periodic law.

In the general reaction against Victorianism, which set in towards the end of the 19th century, the reaction against Tennyson in particular was a marked feature. He was, beyond all others, the representative Victorian poet. He was English and Victorian-English both in his virtues and his defects. Beyond all other poets of his race and age he was the mouthpiece and interpreter of the contemporary world of thought, ideas, and imagination. A new age must have new poetry of its own, but a new age could only at its peril neglect the great poets of the past. Twelve or 15 years ago it became the fashion in England, and he supposed elsewhere also, not only—which was quite reasonable—to seek in poetry for things which Tennyson did not give, but also—which was unreasonable—to complain of Tennyson because he did not give those other things. The younger critics 15 or 20 years ago were very bold, and even said Tennyson was not a poet at all. That period of violent condemnation was passing, or had already passed. Tennyson was a poet, and he was a poet from first to last throughout his long life. (Applause.) His earliest publication was as far back as 1827. His last volume was in print at his death in 1892. Thus his period of production covered a space of no less than 65 years, a period perhaps unexampled, except in the case of Goethe, and not paralleled even by the long poetical life of Wordsworth.

Some of his finest and noblest work came towards the end of his life. They were much too apt to think of poetry as a thing belonging to youth. As far as that was true, they must remember that in human life there was a second youth, as well as a second childhood, for those who lived long enough, and who did not in the intervening years dry up or liquefy. The immense mass of Tennyson's work, going on and on, produced accumulative effect which, to some extent, might even be called hypnotic. Such as Tennyson was from the beginning, so he remained to the end, with something very simple and shy, but amazingly big about him, physically and intellectually. Tennyson's fame, it was true, was not what it was, but it was and would remain great. Historically he was the voice of a past age, and therefore his work would be of increasing historical interest. In his best poetry—and everybody ought to be judged by his best—he was as intensely and vitally alive as in the days of his greatest popularity. (Applause.) Much in his poetry and his manner was open to criticism, but in spite of the reservations to be made it remained true permanently that as a lyric and elegiac poet he was of supreme excellence, that his standard of excellence was something new in our language, and that his mastery of that language, both in melody of sound and accuracy of meaning, was amazing. (Applause.) He could put more quality and color in words which lay ready for all men to use than anyone else in English had been able to put. It was not by his faults, but by his glorious merits, that they must judge of Tennyson, admire him, and accept him. For all his whims and mannerisms Tennyson was throughout his life true to poetry, and poetry was true to him. Even in that almost stagnant period, the afternoon of his middle-later life, he every now and then broke out with a lyric in which the old perfection was repeated.

Dr. MacKail cited many wonderful passages of rare beauty and excellence from the major and minor works of Tennyson, and in conclusion said on various grounds and for more than one reason, as a master of metrical and verbal felicity, as an interpreter of Nature with far more than photographic accuracy, as an articulate voice of an age whose greatness they were now only beginning to realise, he was towering up in the distance as one who had given a new music to the English language and put new music into their lives. The place of Tennyson, he thought they might say, was among the English classics, and among the poets whose beauties were the heritage of the whole English-speaking world. Whether here by the long wash of Australasian seas or in that island "vapor-swathed in meadows ever green," which Tennyson considered as home, and which he loved so deeply and passionately, it was fitting that England, in the person of herself and the Dominions, her children, should return that love. (Applause.)

At the conclusion of the lecture Professor Darnley Naylor, on behalf of the University and the audience, expressed the highest appreciation to Dr. MacKail. Alluding particularly to the address on Virgil, he was glad indeed that so distinguished a lecturer had done something to help "the poor, dying classics." (Laughter.) If they were cut off from the sources of their own literature, that literature was likely to suffer. Dr. MacKail was entitled to their heartiest thanks, and it was to be hoped that in his progress through Australia he would find increasing evidence of interest in something besides football matches, and of something being read in addition to Mr. Garvice and Nat Gould. (Applause.)

Professor Strong, in supporting the vote of thanks, which was carried by acclamation, said he hoped Dr. MacKail would find it possible to pay more than his present visit to Australia.

In responding Dr. MacKail said, whether or not he would be able to return, he desired to express his strong sense of the great kindness and hospitality which had been accorded him in Adelaide. It would be a great source of satisfaction to him if he thought he could help them, however little, to keep the lamp of culture burning more and more brightly, so that it would come about that the Australia of the future would be a country with motives of life continually heightened, her conduct of life enlarged, and the joy and happiness of life increased, for that was the end, after all, of education, which all art had in view. (Applause.)

A NIGHT WITH TENNYSON.

PROFESSOR MACKAIL'S EDUCATIONAL LECTURE.

The Brookman Hall at the Adelaide School of Mines was well attended on Tuesday evening for the final lecture of the series on poetry, delivered by Professor J. W. MacKail. The Chancellor of the University (Sir George Murray) presided, and was supported by the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Mitchell).

Professor MacKail said there was no reason to offer an explanation, and still less an apology, for the subject of his lecture—"Tennyson." The name was familiar in Adelaide, indeed, it had been regarded as something more than a curious coincidence that among the Governors of the State there had been a son of one Poet Laureate and a nephew of another. He thought there was a special reason for studying Tennyson now in order that they might come to some settled view as to his poetical quality and place in history. The mass outline of him could now perhaps be grasped better than it could have been a generation ago, and better, possibly, than it might be in two generations hence. The mountain summit had now risen above the obscure foothills, but was not yet so remote as to be in a haze of distance. There could be no final judgment upon any artist when, with regard to all artists in every art, the pendulum continued to swing. With Tennyson that swaying had been very noticeable, and there had been some violent fluctuations of the esteem in which he had been held and the judgment superficially passed upon him. He had met with alternating idolatry and depreciation. The reaction against Tennyson in the nineteenth century was a marked tendency, but beyond all other poets of his day he was the mouthpiece and interpretation of the contemporary world of thought, ideas, and imagination. A younger generation a few years ago said that Tennyson was not a poet at all, but that period of depreciation was passing, or had already passed. Tennyson was a poet from first to last throughout his long life.

Tennyson's earliest publication, proceeded the speaker, was as far back as 1827. His last volume was written in 1892. They were much too apt to think of poetry as a thing belonging to youth. In human life there was a second youth as well as a second childhood, for those who lived long enough and did not, in the intervening years dry up or liquefy. (Laughter.) If Milton had died at 50 he would be known now as one who wrote some wonderful poetry in his youth, and then went all to pieces. That was worth bearing in mind. Tennyson followed a group of great poets who died young. The throne of English poetry was, in fact, vacant when Tennyson stepped into it. So long as he lived, no one thought of dethroning him. The immense mass of his work produced an accumulative effect which might even be called hypnotic. In that matter there was a strange analogy between that of Tennyson and Queen Victoria, and it made his position as the Victorian poet the more striking. Both in their different spheres opened a new age, with the advantage of youth on their side. Both passed through a long middle period of unpopularity, but both went on their own way regardless of that, and misunderstanding, and finally conquered it fully by the strength of their continuous pull on the common average feeling, and both at their death became what might be called national institutions. Tennyson was Poet-Laureate for 42 years. It came to him by a lucky accident—but then he was always lucky. Five years before he was appointed to that position he had a similar stroke of luck, when a pension of £200 was secured for him. As he was at the beginning, so he remained—very simple and shy, but there was something amazingly big about him, both physically and intellectually. When he was at Cambridge the undergraduates idolized him. He was to them a god. He never flattered or advertised. That dislike affected not only his life, but his poetry very definitely. Much of his best poetry was lost irreparably because he was too indolent to write it down, and yet he was a remarkably good man at business. He drove hard bargains, and no publisher ever got the better of him. He always refused to have any other occupation than poetry, even when he was poor, and he not only made fame, but fortune.

Continuing, Prof. MacKail said Tennyson was one of a remarkable family of 12 children, many of whom were queer, as he was. His father suffered from melancholia and died when the poet was a little boy. His mother was equally remarkable and lived to a great age. She was inno-