

## NORDIC SUPERSTITION

(By Prof. W. K. Hancock)

It is a favorite idea of Bernard Shaw that the majority of mankind is just as superstitious as it ever was, although it is superstitious about different things. Science may possibly be more reasonable than theology, but there is little difference between accepting your catchwords from the man of science and accepting them from the priest.

We think of Einstein as the embodiment of human wisdom; our ancestors thought similarly of St. Thomas Aquinas. But, just as they had the crudest ideas of what Aquinas taught, so we have the foggiest notions of relativity. "Complexes" and "rationalisation," phrases which have filtered down to us from the psychologists, mean no more to us than "contrition" and "attrition" meant to the humble theological disputants of late mediaeval times.

The age of faith may have passed, but we still live in the age of credulity. Either we misunderstand and distort what the pioneers of thought tell us, or we are carried away by the pseudo-science of quacks.

### God's Noblest Creatures

Perhaps Bernard Shaw is too contemptuous of the common intelligence. Yet, if he is wrong, how are we to explain that extraordinarily popular superstition about Nordic man? We can account for it only by assuming that the majority of our species is prejudiced and irrational.

It is natural enough for large, fair-headed men to imagine that they are God's noblest creatures. It was natural enough for German historians to write tremendous books proving the superiority of Germans to Frenchmen. It was natural enough for the Americans to get tired of the vast influx of immigrants coming to them from central and southern Europe.

In each of these cases some sort of instinct gave birth to a prejudice. But in these days we will never own up to a prejudice. We pride ourselves on being fairminded and rational. So the prejudice has to be hidden under a theory.

The theory of Nordic man does famously in each of the cases mentioned, for it assures the large, fair fellow that he is nobler than the wiry, dark fellow; it satisfies the Germans that they are superior to the Frenchmen; it convinces the 100 per cent. American that he is made of finer clay than the Frenchman or Italian or Serb. Not that he wanted any convincing. He had inherited English Calvinism, with its insufferable doctrine that many are called and few are chosen; that the "elect" are gathered apart by God to assert His will in this world and enjoy His favor in the next.

### Anglo-Saxon Calvinism

The Nordic superstition in America is nothing more than Anglo-Saxon Calvinism expressed in racial terms. Mr. Lothrop Stoddard, the apostle of Nordic superiority, is one of the Pilgrim Fathers come to life again.

Of course, there is such a thing as the Nordic type; but the authorities do not quite agree as to what it stands for. Some of them determine it by color tests, others by hair texture, others by skull measurement. Some of them combine all these tests.

Mr. Stoddard is quite convinced that Nordic man is a pure type and the supreme achievement of Nature; Dixon thinks that he is a mixture of Asiatic, Negro, and Mediterranean types; Griffith Taylor (an eminent Australian whom unfortunately we are about to lose) thinks that he is a late form of Mediterranean man.

The ordinary American does not worry about any of these fine distinctions. He thinks that Nordic man— if, indeed, he is the climax of evolution—must be someone like himself. Probably he is akin to Imperial Wizard Evans, of the Ku-Klux-Klan, who boasted that he was "the most aver-

age man in America" and could "look God straight in the face." Anyone who can get lost in the American mass without attracting too much attention is near enough to Nordic. This means, roughly, anyone from the Northern and Protestant parts of Europe.

### Racial Map of Europe

If, however, we study a racial map of Europe it becomes evident that this popular superstition is supremely ridiculous. To confine ourselves merely to the British Isles, the Scotch, Welsh, Irish, and the men of Devon (Sir Francis Drake obviously belonged to the Mediterranean type) have very little Nordic in them. Sicilians are at least as Nordic as the Scotch. The English themselves are a glorious mixture. That probably accounts for their extraordinary vigor.

However, the fanatic for "Nordic purity" is not in the least perturbed at these complexities. Even if the English are a mixed lot, their great men have been always Nordic. Every great man must have been Nordic. They may not have looked it—Napoleon did not look it—but how otherwise could they have been great?

It is easy enough to laugh at the Americans, but usually we end by imitating them. Already in Australia we hear a great deal of this Nordic jargon. The time is coming when we, too, will strike an attitude and point out some great blonde he-man or go-getter and declaim:—

"Behold! my son, the Nordic man,  
And be as like him as you can."

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## SUCCESS OF STUDENT

### COOPER TO PROFESSOR

#### "No Parallel in University"

When addressing members of the Constitutional Club on university life Prof. R. W. Chapman (Acting Vice-Chancellor of the Adelaide University) said that many lads from humble homes had risen to the top of the tree.

He cited a South Australian who is now a professor in the United States of America. This is Prof. Richard Daniel Kleemann, D.Sc., who was born at Rowland's Flat, near Lyndoch, 53 years ago. He is Professor of Physics at Schenectady University (New York State).

It is 17 years since he left South Australia. Relatives of Prof. Kleemann still live at Rowland's Flat.

Dr. Kleemann was the eldest son of Mr. and the late Mrs. D. Kleemann, of Rowland's Flat. He was educated at a small country school, and after leaving school helped his father on the farm. He always showed a great liking for books, and used to do a great deal of drawing of ships, locomotives, and other engines. He used to experiment and make models.

#### University Studies

At the age of 18 years he started to learn the coopering trade. He worked as a cooper at Yahumba wine cellars, Angaston, for two years, and for five years at Chateau Tanunda.

When 25 years of age he went to the University of Adelaide, where he studied for five years. He had previously written to Prof. Sir William Bragg, who became interested in his work, and advised him to come to the University if possible.

In 1905 he went to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and in 1911 he visited his parents at Rowland's Flat, but left again to return to Cambridge after six months' holiday. He left Cambridge in 1914 for Union College, Schenectady, New York, where he still is. Seven years later he again visited South Australia, and spent a few months with his parents, brothers, and sisters.

#### Tribute by Chancellor

When he obtained the degree of bachelor of science at the Adelaide University in 1905 Sir Samuel Way (Chancellor) said:—"As an illustration of what self-reliance and enthusiasm for one's work will do, the career of Mr. Kleemann has no parallel in the history of the University. Mr. Kleemann was in the country, and, having a bent for mathematics, he used to write to Sir William Bragg, and send him examples of his work. Prof. Bragg became interested, and advised him if possible to come to the University. Mr. Kleemann saved as well as he could to secure money for his education."

In 1904 Dr. Kleemann was awarded a research bursary by the commissioners of the exhibition of 1851. This was followed by the award in 1905 of a travelling scholarship, with which he proceeded to Cam-

bridge. This scholarship is usually tenable for two years, but in exceptional cases for a third year. Dr. Kleemann was one of the few who has held it for three years. He obtained his doctor of science degree at the University of Adelaide in 1908.

In Adelaide Dr. Kleemann was closely associated with Prof. Bragg in radiium research work, which secured world-wide recognition among scientists. At Cambridge he was awarded several valuable scholarships for research, and he was for some time a demonstrator in physics. He has published many papers containing reports of his investigations.

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## GEOLOGICAL RESEARCH.

### PROFESSOR SIR EDGEWORTH DAVID'S VISIT.

#### FOSSILS IN QUARTZITE.

Professor Sir Edgeworth David left for Sydney on Sunday evening after having spent a week with Professor W. Howchin, of Adelaide, in research in connection with the recently discovered fossils in the hills near Adelaide.

When interviewed on Sunday Sir Edgeworth said they had re-examined a good deal of the country between Mitcham and Teatree Gully. "At the latter place we discovered a number of fossils at a new locality in a bed of quartzite," he said. "This is the first time we have found fossils in quartzite and they were very numerous at that locality. At the old Beaumont quarries the Rev. P. C. Eckersley, who was assisting us in the search, discovered some of the best specimens which have been found up to the present time."

Sir Edgeworth considered that a substantial advance had been made as a result of his present visit in the way of securing better specimens than had hitherto been brought to light. The fossils found at the Beaumont quarries and at the bed of limestone at Devil's Elbow, on the Glen Osmond road, were, he said, of relatively large size, some of the specimens being quite six inches in length, belonging partly to what seemed to be a primitive type of annelid or sand-worm, while others were suggestive of forms allied to crustacea and possibly the crayfish. It would, however, probably need at least a generation of geological workers in that field before a sufficiently large number of more or less perfect fossils were discovered, such as would permit of tracing out the ancestry of the comparatively rich fossil fauna found in Cambrian rocks, the latter having been, up to the date of the recent discoveries of those fossils, the oldest known rocks in the world to contain large and varied fauna.

"A point of special interest in connection with the working out of these fossils," said the scientist, "is the establishing of the geological age of the wonderful evidences of past glacial action recorded by Professor Howchin in the first case from the Sturt gorge near Adelaide, and since then traced by him with wonderful patience and ability throughout the whole extent of the Mount Lofty and Flinders Ranges up to the neighborhood of Lake Eyre. Professor J. W. Gregory, president of the Geological Society of London, referred in a recent letter to this discovery of Professor Howchin's as being of by far the most extensive and best authenticated development of very ancient glacial deposits that has yet been found in any part of the world."

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### VICTORIA-SQUARE RAILINGS.

The markets and parks committee of the Adelaide City Council reported to a meeting of the council on Monday afternoon that it had considered a letter from the University of Adelaide, in which it was asked if the City Council would consider handing the railings of Victoria-square over to the University, on the understanding that the material should be used to replace the existing galvanized-iron fence on the boundary of the University land facing Victoria Drive, and for future extension of its boundary. It was further proposed that the cost of taking down the railing and removal should be borne by the University. The committee referred the matter to a sub-committee, comprising the chairman (Councillor Cain), Alderman McEwin, and Councillor Lundie, to consider the matter in conjunction with a report which was being prepared on the remodelling of the square and submit a recommendation to the committee.

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VICTORIA SQUARE RAILS

## WILL THEY BE REMOVED?

### Request From University

For several years objection has been taken to the iron railings surrounding Victoria square, but chiefly because of the expense involved in their removal Adelaide City Council has taken no action.

A letter has been received from the University of Adelaide requesting the council to hand the railings to the University, on the understanding that the material should be used to replace the existing galvanized iron fence on the boundary of the University land facing Victoria Drive, and for the future extension of its boundary.

It is further proposed that the cost of taking down and removing the railing should be borne by the University.

At its meeting today the council appointed a special committee, comprised of Cr. J. R. Cain (chairman), Ald. G. McEwin, and Cr. F. W. Lundie, to consider the request in conjunction with a report which is being prepared on the remodelling of the square.

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## UNIVERSITIES CONFERENCE.

### SITTINGS OPENED.

Melbourne, August 20.

Consideration was given to pensions schemes, the tenure of chairs, and the prospects for the establishment of a diploma of public administration by the conference of the Universities of Australia, which opened to-day. Sir J. Macfarland presided.

The outstanding features of the lengthy agenda of the conference, which will resume its sittings this morning, are a move to secure uniformity of surgical degrees, improvements in mining and metallurgical education, the method of dealing with applications for posts in Crown Colonies, as a result of Major Furse's mission to the several Universities, the preferment of University graduates in certain appointments in the Federal Public Service and the consideration of means whereby particulars of University appointments available in the British Empire may be communicated to Australian Universities.

A large number of domestic topics are being discussed, including the dates of terms and vacations for 1929, University finances, the question of conferring B.Sc. degrees in Forestry, the Forestry School at Canberra, and the position of students generally at the Federal Capital.

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### VICTORIA SQUARE FENCE.

Another opportunity has been presented for the removal of the iron railings which surround Victoria square. The markets and parks committee reported to the Adelaide City Council on Monday that the University authorities had asked whether the corporation would consider handing the railings to them on condition that they were used to replace the galvanized iron fence which faced the Victoria drive boundary and for a future extension of that boundary. The University would defray the cost of dismantling the railing. The committee also reported that it had referred the matter to Ald. McEwin, Cr. Cain, and Cr. Lundie to consider in conjunction with a report on the remodelling of the square.

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### MUSICAL CAPS AND GOWNS.

In the current issue of The Australian Musical Journal there is appreciative reference to The Register correspondence on this subject. The editor, in an article headed "Draperies that Carry No Distinction," writes:—"It pleases me to find the London Cap and Gown Stores being pointedly attacked by Mr. Howard and others in Adelaide." He drily adds:—"Completely dumb are the agents, travelling peddlers, or whatever they may be, who scatter largesse of meaningless millinery and coy chunks of the alphabet." He regrets that certain leading teachers "succumb to the wishes of uninformed or persistent parents" by preparing pupils for such things.

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### ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH.

Professors J. B. Cleland, H. H. Woolford, and A. K. Macbeth, and Drs. T. D. Campbell, R. H. Pullaine, and A. Moore, of the Adelaide University, and Mr. N. Tindale, of the Museum, are at present at the Koonibba Mission, on Eyre Peninsula, studying the lives and habits of full-blooded aborigines. Dr. E. Harold Davies is also with the party with the object of making phonographic records of native songs and tunes.