

EURIPIDES.

LECTURE ON THE GREEK DRAMA.

The development of Greek drama and its relation to social problems, were dealt with by Bro. Purton, in a lecture delivered before the Classical Association at the University on Friday evening. Professor Darnley Naylor presided.

Bro. Purton said the modernity of Euripides was evidenced by the element of romance in his work, and his attitude to the problems of the day, and particularly in regard to the position of women in the Commonwealth. The three great Greek dramatists found the source of their work in the legendary lore and mythology of Greece, but they treated it with a great difference. A tragedy of Aeschylus was in point of fact an act of worship and submission to Zeus, the great law giver, leading men to wisdom, through the saving discipline of suffering. This was in sharp contrast to Homer's conception of Zeus, which Gladstone considered presented a picture of abandonment of personal morality and self-government to mere appetite. Tragedy really grew up as a department of religious ritual. Aeschylus introduced a thin thread of discourse and Sophocles increased the number of actors and added scenic properties to deepen his effects. In Sophocles was exemplified the Athenian ideal—moderation—for just as proportion was the chief merit of the Athenians in building and sculpture, moderation was typified in their literature. The Greeks lived rapidly, and kaleidoscopic changes occurred within a comparatively short space of time. By 421 B.C. the descent of Athens from her high national and artistic pinnacle was obvious. Euripides was the mouth-piece of the spirit of challenge to accepted beliefs which was a feature of the age, and he began the release of the Athenians from the tyranny of political and religious shibboleths. He was never the idol of the crowd, although he was a democrat, for he recognised the weakness of "government with the consent of the governed." "The Suppliants" was really a political pamphlet. His sympathy with the slaves, and the poor and oppressed, was a striking feature of his plays. His attitude to the great heroes of history was of particular interest. He had small respect for them, and his plays were full of discredited heroes. Jason, Agamemnon, and Achilles were of little value when he had finished with them. The Electra displayed his immense power as a dramatist. He was interested in the human element of his work, and he was not satisfied with the point of view of the older dramatists, but pursued his subject to its truly bitter end. He shows that revenge and cruelty were wrong, and if they were pursued at the instigation of the oracle of Apollo, then so much the worse for the people's belief in Apollo. In his treatment of Medea he showed how wonderfully interested he was in the woman's point of view. Her own home life was said to have been unhappy, but, at least, he appeared to have profited by his wife's teachings. In the Hippolytus he showed the more romantic side of love, but even there his relentless realism was manifest. Clearly he saw that the low ideal of woman common in Athens was a blot and a curse on Greek civilisation; and he was impressed by the danger to the State likely to result from the entire suppression of woman's wonderful energy for good or bad. In recognition of women's influence upon the life of the community he advocated an extension of education and culture among them. In politics he was, as had been said, a moderate democrat, who was not blind to the faults of the Athenian democracy. Democracy should have meant a fusion of all parties working to the common good. In practice Euripides saw that it unfortunately meant the domination of the State by its lowest and most ignorant classes, led by demagogues, who would "twist the people to their own game. If mischief is done, they easily cloak their faults and slip through the nets of justice." Euripides, however, was not a mere political pamphleteer, but was a poet of a high order, and his Coral odes abounded in passages of rare poetic value and beauty.

The address was enriched with quotations from the works of the great dramatist. Brother Purton was heartily thanked for his illuminating lecture.

THE SOLAR ECLIPSE.

Members of the solar eclipse expedition to Wallal, on the north-west coast of Western Australia, are due to arrive in Adelaide on Friday next. The personnel from overseas will include: Lick Observatory, California, Dr. W. W. Campbell and Mrs. Campbell and Dr. J. H. Moore; Toronto University Observatory, Professor C. A. Chant, Mrs. and Miss Chant; Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, Victoria, British Columbia, Dr. R. K. Young, Hector Observatory, Wellington, New Zealand—Dr. C. E. Adams and Mrs. Adams, Mr. J. B. O. Hosking, of the Melbourne, observatory, will also accompany the expedition. Lieutenant Commander H. L. Quick, R.A.N., will be in charge of transportation and of the Wallal camp, and will have the assistance of nine petty officers and men of the Royal Australian Navy. On arrival in Adelaide the visitors will be accorded a reception at the Town Hall by the Lord Mayor and subsequently the Commonwealth Club will entertain the gentlemen of the party at luncheon. On Friday afternoon next the visitors will be the guests of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor (Sir George Murray) at a garden party at Government House, and on Saturday afternoon they will be taken for a motor excursion in the Mount Lofty Ranges. At night Dr. Campbell (Director of the Lick Observatory) will lecture at the University on "Total Solar Eclipses." The party will entrain for Perth on August 14. In Perth they will be joined by Dr. R. J. Trumper (Lick Observatory), Professor A. D. Ross, and Messrs. Nossiter, Dwyer, Nunn, Matthews and Yeates (Perth Observatory), and Messrs. J. Hargreaves and G. S. Clerk-Maxwell (British astronomers). On August 20 they will embark on the steamer Charon for Broome, where the expedition will be joined by Dr. J. Evershed (of the Kodaikanal Observatory, Madras, India), and Mrs. Evershed, and tranship to the schooner Gwendoline for Wallal.

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INTER-UNIVERSITY SPORTS.

Ten inter-university contests are held annually among the universities of Australia. Eight of these are competed in by men students, and two by women. This year five of the contests have already been decided. Sydney defeated Melbourne and Adelaide in cricket; Queensland won the boat race from Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide; Melbourne the athletics from Sydney, Adelaide, Queensland, and Western Australia; Sydney the tennis from Melbourne and Adelaide; and Melbourne the women's tennis. During the coming vacation (August 12-28) the remaining five contests will be decided. The football will be played between Melbourne and Adelaide in Adelaide on August 17; the lacrosse between the same universities in Adelaide on August 22; the men's hockey between Melbourne and Sydney, in Sydney on August 23; the rifle shooting between Sydney, Adelaide, and Melbourne, in Melbourne, on August 24 and 25; and the women's hockey in Melbourne on August 26. In this contest Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Queensland universities will all take part.

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THE INTERPRETATION OF LIFE.

From ARTHUR WHEATON:—"Citizen" states that the contest between those who love truth better than dogma, and those who place dogma before truth, will probably continue as long as there are dogmatics. All broad-minded men must love the former; truth, conformity to reality or fact, which must and will prevail. Dogmatic theology, the essential doctrines of Christianity, have absolutely no proof, entirely depending upon authority. Take the origin of man. He is either the outcome of a development from the lower animals, or, as authority states, he came into existence through Divine creation. These are absolutely the opposite of each other. The doctrine of creation is almost as old as thinking man. The evolutionary doctrine belongs in effect to our own generation. The former is not open to evidence; the latter depends solely upon evidence. The former is based upon authority; the latter upon investigation; the former can merely be asserted, it cannot be argued; whilst the doctrine of evolution, on the contrary, founded as it must be on ascertained facts, is fully open to argument for its acceptance, on the strength and validity of evidence in its favor. As to the demand made upon Professor Bradford Robertson, that he shall state his belief in a substantial soul; well if the professor is able to substantiate that he will indeed be a marvel, but being a lover of truth, he is too much of a sub-

stantial and total man to be dictated to by any dogmatist.

From W. MARTIN GORMLIE:—As a humble student of philosophy I have followed Professor Bradford's course of lectures on this subject with great interest, but, with Father Denny, I fail to see that he has brought forward any new light on the life problem. His last lecture, that on "Animism" particularly, is most halting and confusing in its terminology. Mr. Denny seems to think he scores a point against the professor, however, when he says that no branch of physical science has ever thrown "the faintest gleam of light on the real nature of life, its origin, or its future;" and that no scientific man can say when life first appeared on this planet. But who has done any of these things? Have the antiquated speculations of the Middle Age schoolmen done so? To infer such a thing is surely to trade upon our credulity. I think we may take as an axiom that where science in its investigations fails, no religious cult can do more than exploit our ignorance, and retire gracefully after science has successfully solved the problem. "Science," as Sir Ray Lancaster has truly said, "cannot and does not seek to explain existence nor the laws of Nature. It ascertains those laws and shows their operation. The phenomena of life are shown by science to be a part of the general operation of those laws, just as much as are the other phenomena of Nature. We do not hope to explain the origin of those laws, nor the beginning of life." It would thus appear that the common phrases used by the exponents of theology, such as "the presence of God" and "the existence of God," have no meaning except the simple fact that we use these terms to indicate our total ignorance as to the "beginning" of the universe and our incapacity to explain the inexplicable.

From "INTERESTED":—I have read the Rev. R. P. Denny's letter carefully, and think "Citizen's" comments quite unfair. He calls it a contest between truth and dogma. Dogma means religious doctrine. The Rev. R. P. Denny expressly says his proofs are drawn from experience and reason alone. Moreover, he implies no threat, as "Citizen" says he does. His words are:—"Some of my parishioners, young students at the University, may have to attend his lectures. So the matter is of vital interest to them and to me." "Citizen" suggests "theological hatred" on the part of the reverend gentleman. I thought his letter very courteous in tone and fair and reasonable. It was based on philosophy—human reasoning—and the only hatred, theological or otherwise, I have observed is in "Citizen's" letter, which certainly seems to me to have a touch of malice. As Professor Robertson, quite on his own responsibility came forward as a public lecturer on life it is only reasonable for anyone to ask what his interpretation really is, since he does not seem to have made it clear; and without some well-defined statement about the nature of the soul, no interpretation can give satisfaction. "Citizen's" letter is a herring across the path to take public attention away from the real issue.

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THE SOLAR ECLIPSE

TESTING EINSTEIN'S THEORY.

VISITING SCIENTISTS WELCOMED.

Sydney, August 6.

Among the passengers by the steamer Tahiti, which arrived yesterday, were Dr. W. Campbell, director of the Lick Observatory research department at the University of California, and Mrs. Campbell, Dr. J. H. Moore, also of the Lick Observatory, and Mr. C. E. Adams, of the Hector Observatory, Wellington, New Zealand. The scientists are members of the solar eclipse expedition, which is on its way to Western Australia, where it is expected the eclipse of the sun on September 21 next will be best observed. The party were met by the Commonwealth Meteorologist (Mr. H. A. Hunt), Lieutenant-Commander H. L. Quick, R.A.N., in charge of transport, and Professor Sir Edgeworth David.

Dr. Campbell said the expedition hoped to determine very accurately the relative positions of the sun and the moon. They had with them a wonderful collection of instruments, worth thousands of pounds, for testing Einstein's theory, and its effect on the position of the stars as affected

by the sun's gravitation. These instruments included many cameras, also five spectroscopes for analysing the light on the solar corona, which could be done only at a total eclipse, and for testing physical and chemical elements.

Men renowned in all branches of science gathered at the Royal Society's rooms last night to welcome Dr. Campbell and Dr. Moore and Dr. and Mrs. Adams. Sir William Cullen, Chancellor of the University, in offering greetings to the visitors, expressed sorrow that eclipses and similar phenomena did not occur more frequently, for it was only on such occasions that Australian scientists had a chance to meet fellow-idealists from other parts of the world.

Mr. C. Sussmilch, president of the Royal Society, made reference to the fact that Australia's origin was strangely connected with astronomy, inasmuch as Captain Cook originally started out on his memorable voyage in order to observe the transit of Venus, and sighted Australia instead.

Professor Cooke (Government Astronomer), Mr. G. A. Waterhouse (president of the Linnean Society), and Mr. W. F. Gale, of the Royal British Astronomical Association, made supporting remarks of welcome.

Dr. Campbell, in reply, thanked the assembly, for his colleagues as well as himself, for the splendid consideration evidenced by the Australian people. It spoke volumes for the tendency of Australia towards the ideal when such perfect facilities were offered, not only to resident astronomical enthusiasts, but to visitors from overseas. During the last half-century astronomy had made undreamed-of progress. That progress came from the universal acceptance of astronomy as the ideal science. In America research and observations had been made possible by the generous interest of wealthy men who, while not actively engaged in the science themselves, strove to clear every obstacle from the path of those who were. Regarding the Einstein theory, Dr. Campbell deplored the absence of a concise definition of exactly what the theory really was. Many students had failed to discover that definition, and he was not prepared to claim the light of knowledge when other splendidly capable men were still wandering in the dark. However, if the forthcoming eclipse gave definite proof of the theory of relativity and the divergence of star light rays, even if the results only confirmed the tremendously valuable observations of British observers of the 1919 solar eclipse, then the journey across the world would not have been in vain, and the world would be richer in scientific knowledge.

In a subsequent interview Dr. Campbell admitted that the deductions of Einstein had been confirmed by the observations of the 1919 eclipse. Einstein was of the opinion that rays of light passing close to a larger mass such as the sun, and thus through an intense gravitational field, should be deflected from their straight path. He said the stars, by whose light the theory could alone be tested, could not be seen when near the sun under ordinary conditions, but became photographically visible during total eclipses. He expressed confidence that the photographs to be taken at Wallal on September 21, when compared with those Dr. Trumper recently made at Hawaii, would produce the most valuable evidence. Nevertheless, he said, it remained to be seen whether the displacement of the star images would conform exactly to the amounts specified by Professor Einstein. This test would be one of extreme delicacy. It was impossible to photograph stars very close to the sun, as they were hidden by the glare of the solar corona, and those farther away were subject to less displacement. The photograph that would be secured by means of a 45 ft. camera, to be operated by Dr. and Mrs. Adams, should show the lunar body at a size of about 4 1/2 in. in diameter.

This will be the seventh eclipse expedition Dr. Campbell has accompanied, others being to India in 1898, Georgia 1900, Spain 1905, Tahiti 1908, Russia 1914 (where the party had a narrow escape owing to the outbreak of war), and Washington in 1918. He also hopes to see an eclipse visible from Mexico in September, 1923. The party left for Melbourne to-night, where they will remain two days before proceeding to Adelaide, where a further three days will be spent.

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Mr. H. I. Coombs, the 1920 Rhodes scholar, who is pursuing his studies at Magdalen College, Oxford, is making excellent progress. In a letter to his father, Mr. J. G. Coombs, of Goodwood, he states that he has secured his B.Sc. degree.