

Register June 30/15

## MEDICAL ROMANCE.

### A THYROID STORY.

A course of three lectures on "Romance in Medicine" was commenced by Dr. J. C. Verco, before a large audience in the Prince of Wales Lecture Theatre, at the University last night. The subject of the first lecture was "The thyroid body." The doctor explained that the thyroid body, which was not confined to mankind, but was found in the lower animals, was situated in front of the neck. He traced the steps of scientific investigation of the thyroid. Individuals, he said, were found with enlarged thyroids, and a person without a thyroid body at all had been discovered. Enlarged thyroids were removed from suffering persons, but it was found that those who had undergone this operation fell into a state of ill-health. Felix Simon, in his generalization, indicated that such symptoms pointed to the fact that the thyroid body had a function to perform, whatever that function might be. The Clinical Society of London appointed a committee to investigate the whole matter. Victor Horsley made experiments with monkeys, and by vivisection it was proved that the ill-health was due to the loss of the thyroid. But relief was to come. Horsley suggested a remedy. An experiment was made, and it was found that a grafted thyroid could perform the rational function. Sheep's thyroids were grafted on to patients, and relief was given, but the thyroid without its natural surroundings wasted away, and the last state of the individual was worse than the first. This indicated to Mr. G. R. Murray that some substance was secreted by the thyroid. He suggested hypodermic administrations of thyroid extracts as a remedy. It was found that this method, employing the extract from sheep thyroids, was successful. In some cases abscesses were formed as the result of the injections, and the point arose as to how the extract could be otherwise introduced. Thyroid gland was minced and made into a sandwich, and a lady to whom it was administered was cured in three weeks. But this form was not convenient, and the next step was the preparation of an extract. The gland was ground into powder and compressed into tiny tablets, in which form it retained its curative properties in perpetuity. Thus the disease arising from deficient thyroid secretion could be cured. A person whose condition in former years would have meant early death, could to-day be completely cured. Did not this sound like a romance? The thyroid body was a gland which furnished an internal secretion, and this fact suggested a wider field of investigation. Experiments were made in connection with other ductless glands, and productions prompt and wonderful in their powers were obtained, symptoms of an opposite order resulting from too much secretion from the thyroid were known. In these cases the thyroid was enlarged, and the remedy was to remove a part of the gland or lessen its blood supplies. This had been done surgically. Could they find antidotal properties, surgical operations would not be necessary. With such a production the enlarged thyroid might be reduced. He wondered whether success lay in that direction. It rested with the medical students of the day to find out. In the course of his lecture Dr. Verco mentioned that thyroid troubles had produced dwarfs.

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## ROMANCE IN MEDICINE

LECTURE BY DR. J. C. VERCO.

There is no field of science in which there is wider scope for the human intelligence to have full play than that of medicine, and it is not surprising therefore that in a realm where so much is unknown and where there is so much room for speculation and mystery that there should also be an abundance of romance. Dr. J. C. Verco's attainments and research well entitle him to speak upon such a subject, and therefore there was a large attendance at the University last night to hear the first of the doctor's three lectures entitled "Romance in Medicine." He pointed out how many of the hidden secrets of medicine 40 years ago were now an open book, instancing particularly the knowledge which had been gained in regard to the nature and influences of the thyroid gland. He cited instances of various effects which were produced by enlarged thyroids, the lack of thyroids, and the removal of thyroids, and he demonstrated how the results of treatment amounted to a veritable romance. He dealt also with the functions of other glands, some of which were ductless and had special internal secretions. The lecturer dealt with this in a most interesting manner, and concluded with a dissertation on the visions of cure of organic disease by organo therapy. The next lecture will be delivered on July 6, when Dr. Verco will deal with the "Mosquitoes and Insect-borne Disease."

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## TEACHERS' CONGRESS.

### IMPORTANT DELIBERATIONS.

The twentieth annual conference of members of the South Australian Public School Teachers' Union was held at the Institute, North terrace, on Tuesday. There was a large attendance, and the Acting Mayor (Ald. Prosser) occupied the chair.

#### —Influence of School Life.—

In his opening address Ald. Prosser said he had heard the expression at the last annual conference that one of the disadvantages of the teaching profession was the fact that the effect of the work was seldom seen. It was difficult to judge, owing to the factors which intervened between schooldays and mature life, what resulted from the efforts of the teacher. The brave lads who had fought so gallantly on the cliffs of Gallipoli had shown the value of two of the lessons taught in their schools—character and initiative. He trusted the names of the heroes who had gone to the front would be perpetuated by the erection of tablets to their memory to be placed on the school walls. (Cheers.) To return to actual education, he thought he would be able to congratulate them soon if the recommendations of the Education Commission should bear fruit in a new Education Act. One suggestion which, if adopted, would prove a great advantage was the substitution of the Victorian system of school committees for Boards of Advice. Much of the isolation associated with the life of the school teacher would be abolished when parents realized the trials connected with the profession, and were brought into closer touch through the agency of local school committees. (Hear, hear.) Before declaring the conference open he reminded them that the success of the Commonwealth depended upon the moulding and training they gave the brains of the little ones entrusted to them, and in proportion to the improvement in their methods they may look for a wiser and more intelligent generation to follow. (Hear, hear.)

#### —Victorian Progress.—

Mr. C. R. Long (Inspector of Schools in Victoria) delivered an interesting address on the progress of education in that State, which was profusely illustrated with

lantern slides. He dealt with the history of his subject from the date of inauguration 79 years ago, when the first wooden school was erected a hundred yards from the present site of the Spencer Street Station in Melbourne, to the present day, with its 2,300 State institutions. He also referred to the work of the national board, which was responsible for the erection of many schools from the lean-to and slab-but type to the neat and extensive free-stone buildings. The board was, however, superseded by the provisions of the Education Act of 1872 when free, secular, and compulsory education was established. The speaker traced the varying fortunes of the movement through the prosperous periods of the eighties, and the succeeding decade of financial stringency, to the time when the influence of the Education Commission, whose sittings extended over a long period, during which the most minute details were thoroughly dealt with, was enjoyed. He also outlined the good work which the Premier (Sir Alexander Peacock) and the Victorian Director (Mr. Frank Tate) had done for education in the sister State. This was followed by an instructive reference to the internal working of various systems in Victoria, and the more modern introductions into schools there, which was highly appreciated by the teachers.

#### —Boards of Advice in Disfavour.—

The President, in his annual address, said, in view of the sadness which, through the disasters of the war had fallen on them, the executive of the union had decided, on this occasion, to forego the social functions which in past years had taken a prominent place in the programme, and to devote their time and thoughts to those matters which claimed the interest and attention to all who were concerned in the educational welfare of the children of South Australia. (Hear, hear.) He expressed the hope that the new Eden Bill would provide for the substitution of school committees for School Boards of Advice, as had been done in Victoria. These committees provided all manner of attractions and improvements for the schools, which were all paid for by money which they raised.

#### —Classification of Teachers.—

For some years the executive of the union, supported by teachers in conference, had pressed for the appointment of classification and promotion appeal, and curriculum boards. A promise had been given that these boards would be established. If the personnel and powers of the boards were properly provided for, the teachers of South Australia would be greatly benefited, and would feel more contented. The general feeling of the South Australian teachers is in favour of the establishment of a board of classification and promoting, consisting of three members, as in the Victorian scheme, namely, an officer of the department, a teacher who for obvious reasons must be in class 1, and an independent outsider who should be Chairman. The lastnamed should possess a judicial mind, and some knowledge of educational methods. (Hear, hear.) The board should be appointed for a fixed term, say three years, and should be safeguarded from outside interference in other ways. With regard to the board of appeal, it was felt that an independent outsider, one accustomed to weigh evidence, should be appointed. It was almost needless to say that but for the strain imposed on both teachers and children, the demand for the creation of a board to deal with the revision of the curriculum might not have been so insistent. Teachers felt not that they should have the responsibility of forming the curriculum, but that their opinions should receive consideration. With regard to the personnel of the board,