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LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA.

INAUGURAL MEETING.

A LARGE GATHERING.

The inaugural meeting of the third bi-annual Convention of the Library Association of Australasia was held in the Elder Hall on Tuesday evening, and took the form of a conversazione. The gathering was one of the largest and most representative that have yet assembled in the Conservatorium Building, and every one present thoroughly enjoyed the excellent entertainment which the committee had provided. The guests were received by the President of the Association, the Right Hon. Sir Samuel Way, Bart. Among those who attended were His Excellency Lord Tennyson (Patron of the Association), and suite, the Mayor of Adelaide, Mr. A. W. Ware, the Rev. Dr. Paton, Vice-President; Sir Charles Todd, Professors Mitchell and Salmon, Dr. Rogers, and Messrs. T. Burgoyne, M.P., A. Buchanan, T. Gill, F. E. Melong, W. Russell, G. K. Soward, and W. J. Sowden, members of the Executive Committee; Mr. J. P. Morice, Treasurer; and Mr. J. R. G. Adams, Secretary of the Association. There were also present, besides the Minister of Education (Hon. E. L. Batchelor), many of the intercolonial and country delegates to the Conference; members of the Board of Governors, and Mr. R. Kay, General Director, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Public Library; representatives of the Council, Senate, and Professorial Staff of the University and the School of Mines. An excellent programme of instrumental and vocal selections, which had been specially arranged by Professor Ives, was carried out by students of the Elder Conservatorium, as aided by the Conservatorium orchestra. Songs were given by Miss Ethel Hanik and Messrs. C. Degenhardt and Moritz; Miss Gwendoline Pelly was heard to advantage in a violin solo; and a sextet entitled "Snow" was rendered by Misses Gordon, Joyce, Vingley, Bonnini, Otto, and Jarvis, with violin obbligato by Miss Nora K. Thomas and Master Eugene Alderman. Refreshments were served in the rooms in the basement of the building. The hall had been tastefully decorated by ladies connected with the School of Design, and the large and valuable collection of books and historical relics which was ranged around the hall proved an unending source of interest to the visitors. The business session of the Convention will be opened this morning, when the President will welcome the delegates and deliver an inaugural address. The members and associates will be entitled to attend and vote at all meetings of the Association.

It was a happy thought on the part of the committee to arrange for the exhibition on the opening night of a loan collection of old and rare books, original historical documents, manuscripts, engravings, and other relics, and the way in which the idea was carried out reflects the greatest credit upon the Secretary and his staff of assistants. The collection consisted of about 800 exhibits, which had been brought together from all parts of Australasia. Many of them would be irreplaceable in the event of loss, and are therefore of great value. The articles have been chronologically arranged under their different classifications, and, in addition to the printed catalogue, each exhibit has attached to it a printed label bearing a terse but comprehensive description, and explaining any special feature of interest. A notable feature of the exhibition is the large and valuable collection of old and rare books, many of them being of great historical interest, both to the scholar and the student of the art of printing. The first case which attracts the attention of visitors as they enter the hall contains a valuable collection of books issued from the Continental Press in the fifteenth century. Among these will be found a beautiful old digest printed in Gothic type, with initial letters inserted by hand, which bears the date 1482. The book is the property of the Chief Justice. Another volume which will attract attention is a rare Merula, forwarded by the Melbourne University Library, printed by Jensen in 1472, a special feature of which is a beautifully illuminated page. There is also on view a unique specimen of printing by Ratdolt. The volume, which is the property of the Public Library of Victoria, is an old Hungarian chronicle, which bears the date 1488. The great printer Koburger is represented by a Nuremberg chronicle and a volume of the decrees of Gratianus. These fine works are in excellent condition. Mr. T. W. Rowe, Librarian of the Wellington Public Library, also has on view a number of interesting and valuable books, among which may be mentioned an old Plutus, printed by Scinzeler, at Milan; a set of four books, printed in 1582-3, and bound in old limp vellum wrapper, containing ten volumes of Cicero's works; a volume of 151 engraved portraits dating back to the end of the sixteenth century; and several other highly interesting examples of the early printers' art. There are on view specimens of the work of most of the great printing firms of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including Aldi, of Venice; Colinaee, of Paris; Elzevirs, of Leyden and Amsterdam; Froben, of Basle; Sebastian Gryphius, of Leyden; the Juntas, of Venice; Henricus Petrus, of Basle; the Plantin Press, of Antwerp; Stephain, of Paris; and the Wecheli, of Frankfurt. These historic examples of the printer's art are so numerous that it is impossible even to enumerate them, but those who are interested in the development of printing will find ample material for comparison and admiration. Many of the volumes are beautifully illuminated and illustrated, and the majority of them, although yellow with age, are in excellent condition. Not the least interesting features of the collection are the old Bibles, English and foreign, of almost every conceivable size and design. Among others will be found the covers of an old "Chained Bible," probably of the early part of the sixteenth century. These consist of two cedar boards, with a chain attached, which were found in an old oak chest in the Church at Danda, Somersetshire. The first printed English New Testament, translated by William Tyndale; a Bible in German, known as "the Nurnberg Bible," which is incomplete, the title and first pages having been torn off; an old illuminated German translation printed in 1473; and

a copy of the first edition of the Geneva edition of 1560. Lovers of poetry will be interested to find an incomplete copy of Chaucer's poems, printed in 1532; Brandt's "Ship of Fools," published in 1570; Donne's poems, first edition, published in 1633; the first edition of Milton's collected poems, and a second edition of "Paradise Lost," published in 1645 and 1674 respectively; and a first edition of Gray's poems. Other branches of literature are also well represented among the books of English origin, but it would require several pages of "The Register" to refer to them all in detail. But, as the collection will be on view every day this week, lovers of books will have an opportunity of inspecting them at their leisure.

A large amount of space has been devoted to documents relating to the colonization of this province and the other Australasian Colonies, and this section of the exhibition will well repay a close inspection. Many of the documents are original manuscripts, some of which bear the autograph signatures of men whose names subsequently became household words in Australia. The large collection of letters, original and holograph, relating to the early history of the Australian Colonies, are also worthy of more than passing notice. There are also a number of letters of historic and personal interest, many of which were written long before Australia became a British possession. Among the many forgotten projects which are recalled to memory by the documents is the scheme formulated about the end of 1839 for establishing an Irish emigration community in South Australia. The prospectus, a copy of which has been lent by Mr. P. E. Hoare, was signed by "Robert R. Torrens," as Hon. Secretary. Among other documents which will no doubt attract the attention of many visitors may be mentioned the original "Bateman deeds," and the journal and last letter of Mr. William J. Wills; also a letter written by Mr. R. G. Bowen to Mr. Lawton, of Cape Colony, in reference to the shipment of some of the first vines imported into South Australia. There is also a manuscript copy of Bingham Hutchinson's journal of the voyage of H.M.S. Buffalo to South Australia, July 13 to December 28, 1830, which has been lent by the Corporation of Glenelg. To South Australians, however, few of the documents will be of more interest than the original diary kept by John McDouall Stuart during his exploring expedition to the Barrier Ranges in 1860-1. The small, neat, almost copperplate handwriting is as distinct as it was forty years ago, notwithstanding that it was written with lead-pencil. Among the many literary relics which have been collected may be mentioned a M.S. poem, "To Bronte," by Hartley Coleridge, and a M.S. sheet, written by Charles Dickens. Special interest also attaches to the original warrant, signed by Lord Breadalbane, and bearing the Queen's seal, appointing the late Lord Tennyson Poet Laureate. The document, which bears the date of November 19, 1850, has been lent by Lord Tennyson. Only a few feet from the case which contains this warrant may be seen the original M.S. of the poem written by Lord Tennyson in acknowledgment of the honour conferred upon him.

There is also on view a large and exceedingly interesting collection of photographs, including a collection of portraits of the

first twenty Premiers of South Australia, who held office from 1856 to 1899. There are also a large number of sketches and engravings, illustrative of the early Australian settlements, many of them being originals. An exhibit which will repay careful inspection is the collection of articles prepared for the Perth Public Library to show the degree of perfection attained in bookmaking in all its branches at the end of the nineteenth century. One of the most interesting mechanical relics in the hall is the old Stanhope press, the property of the proprietors of "The Register," which was used to print the first public documents and the first newspaper published in South Australia. This primitive piece of mechanism was then looked upon as an up-to-date printing-press; it furnishes a striking illustration of the progress which has been made during the last half-century in printing appliances.

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THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA.

By the Melbourne express on Tuesday morning there arrived in Adelaide six Victorian delegates to the Adelaide meeting of the Library Association of Australasia, which opens on Wednesday morning. The names of the gentlemen are the Hon. Edward Langton, President; Mr. E. L. Armstrong, M.A., LL.B., Librarian, and Mr. A. W. Brazier, M.A., of the Public Library of Victoria; Mr. E. A. Bronby, M.A., Librarian of the Melbourne University Library; Dr. Hardy, President of the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute; and Mr. Taylor, President of the Kilmore Mechanics' Institute. Professor Morris, M.A., of Victoria, also came over by the express, but left the train at Mount Lofty, with Professor Bensley, of the Adelaide University, who returned from a trip to Victoria. The visitors were met at the station by the Chief Justice, Major Taylor, and Mr. J. R. G. Adams, the Secretary of the Association. The Rev. John Reid, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of Victoria, who is also a delegate to the meeting, arrived in Adelaide on Monday. The Secretary of the Association, Mr. J. R. G. Adams, and his staff of assistants had a busy day on Tuesday making final arrangements for the conversazione, which was held in the Elder Hall in the evening. Between 700 and 800 guests responded to the invitations issued by the committee of the Association, and the entertainment was an unqualified success. The members will meet in the Elder Hall this morning, and after the delegates have signed the roll the Right Hon. Sir Samuel Way, Bart., will deliver an inaugural address and formally declare the conference open.

the Library and reading-rooms. This will be followed by a paper on "Bookbinding in Public Libraries," which will be delivered by Mr. J. S. Baltye (Librarian of the Victoria Public Library, Perth). "The theory and practice of library classification," by Mr. A. W. Brozier (Public Library of Victoria); "How the Public Libraries of Australasia may be made most useful to students," by Professor Douglas, of the Adelaide University; "The Public Lending Library of Victoria," by Mr. R. D. Beys (of the Public Library of Victoria); and "What local literature should we preserve in a Public Library," by Mr. J. R. G. Adams (Librarian of the South Australian Public Library), are the titles of papers which also appear on the programme for this morning's session. At 12.15 p.m. there will be an inspection of the Parliamentary Library on the invitation of Sir Richard Baker. Two papers, "Newspaper reading-rooms," by Mr. A. Neville, of Melbourne, and "Notes on early stamped leather bindings," by the Rev. F. G. Masters, will occupy the afternoon session, after which the members will be present at Lady Way's garden party. In the evening "Australian authors and libraries" will be dealt with by Professor Morris, and Mr. T. Gill will follow with a paper on South Australian Library statistics. The evening session will conclude with an address by Mr. P. McM. Glynn.

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PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA.

THE CONVENTION OPENED.

INTERESTING PAPERS.

The meetings of the Public Library Association of Australasia were opened on Wednesday morning by the President of the Association, Right Hon. Sir Samuel Way, Bart. There was a good attendance of delegates and associates of the Association. The following are the names of the delegates who signed the roll and the institutions which they represent:—Right Hon. Sir S. J. Way, Bart., President of the Association, and representative of the South Australian Public Library; the Hon. E. Langton (President), Professor E. E. Morris (Vice-President), and the Rev. John Reid, M.A., and Messrs. E. L. Armstrong, M.A., and A. W. Brazier, M.A., representatives of the Melbourne Public Library; Dr. Leeper, M.A., LL.D., University, Melbourne; Dr. C. H. Hardy, Mechanics' Institute, Ballarat; Messrs. J. W. Sayers and J. C. Taylor, Mechanics' Institute, Geelong; John Taylor, Mechanics' Institute, Kilmore, Victoria; E. H. Bromby, University of Melbourne; M. J. Elwood, Public Library, Broken Hill; J. S. Baltye, Public Library of Perth; Dr. Paton, Vice-President of the Association, and Robert J. Cline, Adelaide University Library; Thomas Burgoyne, M.P., representative of the South Australian Institutes on the Public Library Board; William Russell, representative of the South Australian Institutes on the Public Library Board; the Rev. Canon Samwell, Port Adelaide Institute; Dr. E. L. Archer, Moonta Institute; F. G. Melong, Port Adelaide Public Library; Thomas Goode, Goolwa Institute; H. H. Taylor, Cockburn Institute; W. Russell, Port Adelaide Institute; S. E. Walker, Truro Institute; J. G. O. Tepper, South Australian Museum Library; A. Buchanan, Supreme Court Library; W. Davey, Barra Institute; E. H. Coombe, Gawler Institute; J. Bensley, Gawler; Professor Mitchell, and Mr. T. Gill, Adelaide Public Library; Mrs. R. Atkinson, Glenelg Institute; Miss H. T. Playford, Mitcham Institute; J. R. G. Adams, Secretary of Association, and representatives of the Public Library of South Australia; Thomas Rowe, Wellington Public Library, New Zealand.

ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE.

The Right Hon. S. J. Way welcomed the delegates from the other colonies. He said their presence on that occasion uplifted the gathering from a local or provincial character, and invested it with federal dignity. As they were nearing the end of the century he had endeavoured to secure information to lay before them a statement of the increase of libraries throughout the world during the past hundred years, but he found it was altogether impracticable to find the material for anything like a complete statement. He had also essayed to secure information as to the libraries of Australia, and he found the complete materials were inaccessible. He had therefore decided to say a few words with respect to the foundation and the present position of the Public Library in Adelaide and the present state and development of the Public Library movements in England and America so far as it was applicable to Australian conditions. He ventured to suggest that it would be proper for the Association before it separated to make arrangements for a complete balance-sheet of the Library assets of the Federated States before the proclamation of the Commonwealth. Dr. Norton at the Sydney meeting had claimed that the Public Library of Sydney was the oldest in Australia, and that it dated back to 1828. The Government initiated the Public Library as a Public Library in 1829, but Dr. Norton claimed that the foundation of the Library must date from the foundation of the Australian Subscription Library, which by purchase became the Public Library. On the same principle the Public Library of South Australia dated back to 1834, and it was second in seniority to all the Public Libraries in Australia. South Australia was founded on the Wakefield system. The discovery by Captain Sturt of the Murray in 1831 gave the direction for those who were advocating a new colony in the southern world. The agitation was carried on for three years, and the Act was passed in 1834.