

Herald Jan 16.

### UNINHABITED ISLANDS

#### REPORT OF SCIENTIFIC EXPLORERS.

Members of the scientific party, which left Adelaide on the third instant for the investigation of the lonely Pearson Island in the Australian light, returned to Port by the s.s. Wookata late on Saturday evening.

The party consisted of Professor Wood Jones and two daughters, Professors T. G. B. Osborn and J. B. Cleland, and Messrs. Edgar R. Waite, T. D. Campbell and E. Eldridge.

Fine weather was generally experienced, but strong winds occasionally made conditions unpleasant. One day when members returned to camp, they found the tents blown down and various belongings scattered far and wide.

The Pearson group, which consists of some five islands, was discovered and named by Flinders, and since that time it has been only occasionally visited. Geologically it consists almost wholly of red granite, with occasional tracts of limestone. The three northern islands are virtually connected, but some more specific naming of the several components seems to be called for.

The party pitched camp on the middle of the three northern islands where the only available landing exists. As, however, the northern island provides the richest hunting ground, it became necessary to cross the tumultuous sea-sweet crop which divides them. To effect this, the pioneers of the party drove iron bars firmly among the rocks, to which stout ropes were stretched from shore to shore. By this means each member successively crossed and recrossed, but was subjected to severe buffeting by the breakers. The necessary appliances had been kindly supplied by Captain George Justice.

The group was pretty thoroughly explored, and valuable collections of both animals and plants were made.

#### —Animals.—

The hair seals were the first to demand attention, and there were many opportunities for the study of this interesting animal. One specimen was shot, as it was required for the Museum, and for the determination of the body temperature and the microscopic examination of the blood, the nature and situation of parasites, both external and internal, and the exact position in the alimentary canal of large pebbles nearly always found in seals. Many interesting observations on the life habits and a good series of photographs were obtained.

The next animals in evidence were rats, which were extremely numerous all over the islands. They are bluish-grey in color and have short bodies and long hair which give them a ball-like and fluffy appearance when sitting. They emerge from their retreats at night, and their chase over the granite slopes provided some physical exercise as they dodged from rock to rock. Very few, however, were caught in the chase, but the traps provided as many as were required for the purpose of study.

The boulders on the northernmost part of the group provide cover for small rock wallabies, which are peculiar to the island and have in consequence been named *Macrurus pearsoni*. They are remarkably agile and very inquisitive, and doubtless wonder what strange creature has appeared among them. No bats were seen, but bones of sheep confirmed a statement that these animals had been put ashore at some previous date.

#### —Birds.—

The usual sea birds people the coast, gulls, terns, whags, westerly shearwaters, and a few sea eagles, while little blue penguins come from the crannies of the rocks. Circling round the highest peak of the group (81 feet) were a pair of red tailed tropic birds. Flocks of little parakeets frequented the vegetation on the slopes, and crows watched the proceedings of the party with interest, but at a respectful distance. Among the smaller birds, silver-eyes, chickheads, red-capped robins, and swallows were commonly met with, but no introduced species of birds were obtained.

Continued.

#### —Lizards.—

Sitting on the rocks in the sun were many gorgeously-colored agamoids, which cocked their heads in a most ludicrous manner, and ran for cover when too closely admired. Snakes and geckoes abounded under stones or beneath the carcasses of massacred seals. There is no permanent water on the islands, consequently frogs do not exist, and it may be confidently said that snakes are absent. The mention of water recalls the fact that all water required had to be taken there, and a still was included in case of necessity which fortunately did not arise.

#### —Fishes.—

The high seas prevented much line work, but some rock fishes were taken, including brilliantly colored rock cod of several species, snook, sea carp, and others; the most appreciated in the culinary department being large blue groper, which formed a pleasant variation on the "bully-beef" menu. Some interesting little fishes preserved for further examination were taken in rock pools of which very few workable formations were found.

#### —Lower Forms.—

Splendid collections of insects, spiders, and other creatures were made, and though their precise determinations could not be made in the field, it is probable that several new species were taken.

#### —Vegetable Life.—

Fifty species of flowering plants were collected, including a grass, probably introduced with the sheep. A characteristic feature of the vegetation on the highest peaks of the islands is the dense forest of she-oaks, the ground beneath which is carpeted with mosses and ferns, doubtless most luxuriant in the wet season. Salt bush clothes several of the lower slopes. The colors of the vegetation on the limestone ridges near the sea excited much comment, the silver-grey of the salt bush mingled with the orange and reds of the pigface, the deep maroon and sage green of the smaller plants producing most harmonious combinations. A small collection of seaweeds was made, but the coast is unsuitable for much work on these interesting forms of plant life.

#### —A Thrilling Experience.—

Of the many experiences that fell to the lot of the party, that which will be most readily remembered was provided by the closing scene. The Wookata was due on Friday morning, but owing to big seas running as the result of a continuous easterly blow, it really became a question with those ashore if the party could be taken off. Though stores were packed, the water remaining in camp was carefully conserved, and tents were left standing until the vessel appeared. Manned by a sturdy crew, the whale boat was put off and anchored fore and aft some hundred yards from the shore in about five feet of water. The conveyance of passengers and stores from the beach to the boat proved most thrilling, huge waves drove back the carriers again and again, boxes and packages of various kinds were driven out of grasp and had to be recaptured from the turbulent waters, cameras and scientific instruments received special consideration, and were, for the most part landed in good condition, but clothing and other trifles were generally saturated. The ladies were carried shoulder high and by brawny Norsemen, but mere man had to shift for himself.

Arrived on board the Wookata, Captain W. F. Lee and his officers made everyone as comfortable as possible, provided dry clothing and generally attended to the welfare of their passengers.

The Pearson Island Group enjoys the protection of the Legislature, being proclaimed an animal sanctuary, but the Minister of Industry was good enough to issue a special permit for the scientific investigation of the islands.

Special mention must be made of the generosity of Sir George Murray (the Chief Justice), who paid the transport charges of the entire party, and thereby rendered the investigation possible. The collections will be worked out by specialists in the various branches of science represented, and the results will be published by the Royal Society of South Australia.

### "THE STAGE IRISHMAN"

ADDRESS BY DR. HEATON.

At the Mount Lofty Summer School of the Workers' Educational Association a lecture on "The Stage Irishman—Past and Present" was delivered on the balcony of Holiday House on Monday morning by the President (Dr. Heaton). The speaker prefaced his remarks by stating that there was a tendency to think in types with which we became so familiar by the art of the cartoonist that we did not stop to consider whether the picture was true or not. For instance, did the well-figure of "John Bull" really typify the English race as a whole? The commercial stage gave the public what it wanted in stock stage types, and hence we found what was accepted as the "typical Irishman" talking, thinking, and acting in a jig, darning everybody to tread on the tail of his coat, generally generous, drunk and thriftless, speaking with a joke and a tear in "badads," "barorraa," and "the top of the morning," with a joke and a tear and an average of two "bulls" per minute—a sloppy, sentimental hero when he was not the butt of the whole cast as the comic relief. This picture had been delightfully criticized by Shaw in "John Bull's Other Island"—and, indeed the sketch was no more true than was "The Sentimental Bloke" a representative Australian. However, with Synge and his contemporaries had arisen a new school of Irish dramatists, whose work was based on folklore and studies of peasant life. The latter had actually been howled off the stage in Dublin by the people themselves, for they were so used to the usual picture that they did not recognize the true one when they saw it.

As the counterpart of the Nationalist movement had come about the Irish literary renaissance during the eighties and early nineties a rebirth of culture as well as economics. At this period the educated Irish had begun to get back to their own country and study more of its past, together with the present outlook. The teaching of Gaelic had led to the discovery of the ancient civilisation. When the Goths, Saxons, and other wild races had invaded England and France, all which stood for early Christianity and civilisation, was swept away, excepting Ireland, from which solitary outpost the tide afterwards flowed back to Western Europe. This period was being unearthed in ancient manuscripts and literature by enthusiasts of the last 30 or 40 years, and modern playwrights and poets drew extensively on its dances and folklore. Yeats and Synge were the leading Irish dramatists today, their work dealing either with folklore or with the heart-dome stories of the peasants. The plots of some of the latter might be described as impossible, but were really no more so than in the case of some of Shakespeare's plays. The dramatists were doing their bit in preserving the records of the life of Ireland to-day, finding much good and much bad, and by their sometimes brutal frankness in depicting the latter, getting themselves accused of disloyalty to their country. There was no such thing as the "typical Irishman," and the characters in the new plays were shown as people impelled by all kinds of mixed motives.

There had been a tendency to ascribe the characteristic of laziness to the Irish, but it could not be denied that the natural conditions of the country and the poverty of the peasants—who often had to make farms out of patches of stones to gain a living—made extreme industry a necessity. With a century and a half of brooding over political wrongs there was a subconscious tendency which played a prominent part in the Irish character, even as the past ghastly struggles between capital and labor were largely responsible for our present social unrest. It took a long time for grievances to be forgotten, and the Irishman had so many real ones that there was no need to manufacture them—as he had sometimes been accused of doing. The parts of the Irish plays which had hurt the people were those which gave a miserly, grasping character to the small farmer, but this class of peasant proprietor, who had been springing up in the last 30 or 40 years with the cutting up of the big estates—was the backbone of the country, with so little capital that he had to sweat himself and others to make ends meet. George Birmingham had painted rather cruel pictures of life in a Connaught village, where the people quarrelled and reviled one another, only uniting on anything when it was a matter of trying to get something out of the Government. The modern stage Irishman was a man like most men, streaked with good and bad and the new picture was much more lovable and human than the old.

Advertiser Jan 18

Dr. J. McKellar Stewart, who has been appointed Professor of Philosophy at the Adelaide University, is expected to arrive about the end of February to take up



Professor J. McKellar Stewart.

his duties at the beginning of next term. He was formerly associate professor of philosophy at the University of Melbourne.

Register Jan 16.

### THE LATE MISS ELIZABETH JACKSON.

From E. S. HUGHES:—I note that in your biographical notice of this distinguished scholar—who early death we must all deeply deplore—you state she won the "John Lorenzo Young scholarship for research in 1918." Miss Jackson won in that year the John Lorenzo Young scholarship "in political economy," founded by the late John Harvey Finlayson, of Register fame, in honour of Mr. Young, his master—a fine tribute to the latter's memory. The other, properly known as the "John L. Young scholarship for research," was founded by the old scholars generally, the second name being purposely noted by initial only as our favourite designation for our esteemed master—"Jno. L." Thus the difference in the two names.

Advertiser Jan 17



Miss Elizabeth Jackson, whose death was announced in "The Advertiser" yesterday.