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ADDRESS TO SIR JAMES
GEORGE FRAZER ON THE
OCCASION OF THE FOUNDA-
TION, IN HIS HONOUR, OF
THE FRAZER LECTURESHIP
IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
IN THE UNIVERSITIES OF
OXFORD, CAMBRIDGE,
GLASGOW AND LIVERPOOL

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ADDRESS

TO

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LL.D., D.C.L., Litt.D.,

on the occasion of the foundation,

in his honour,

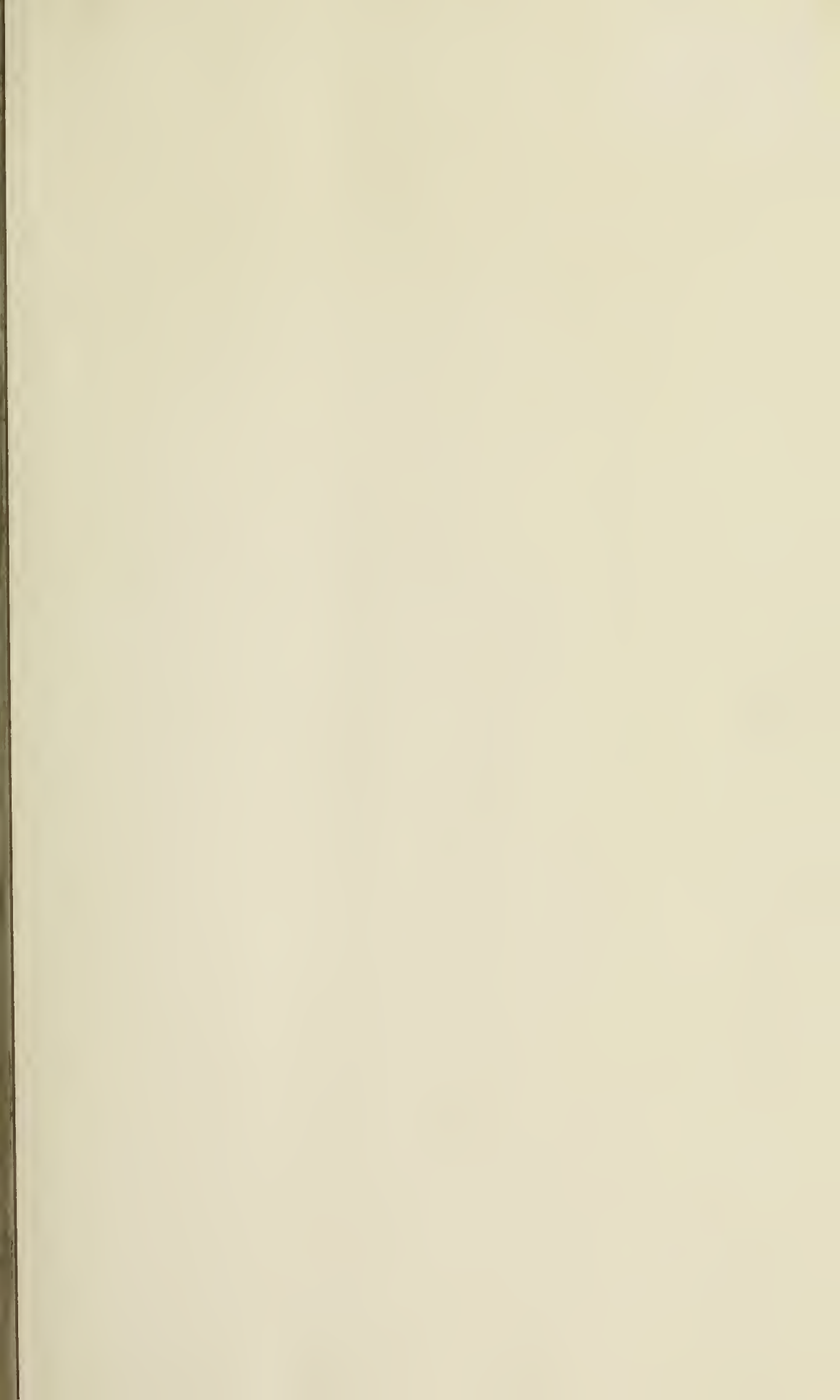
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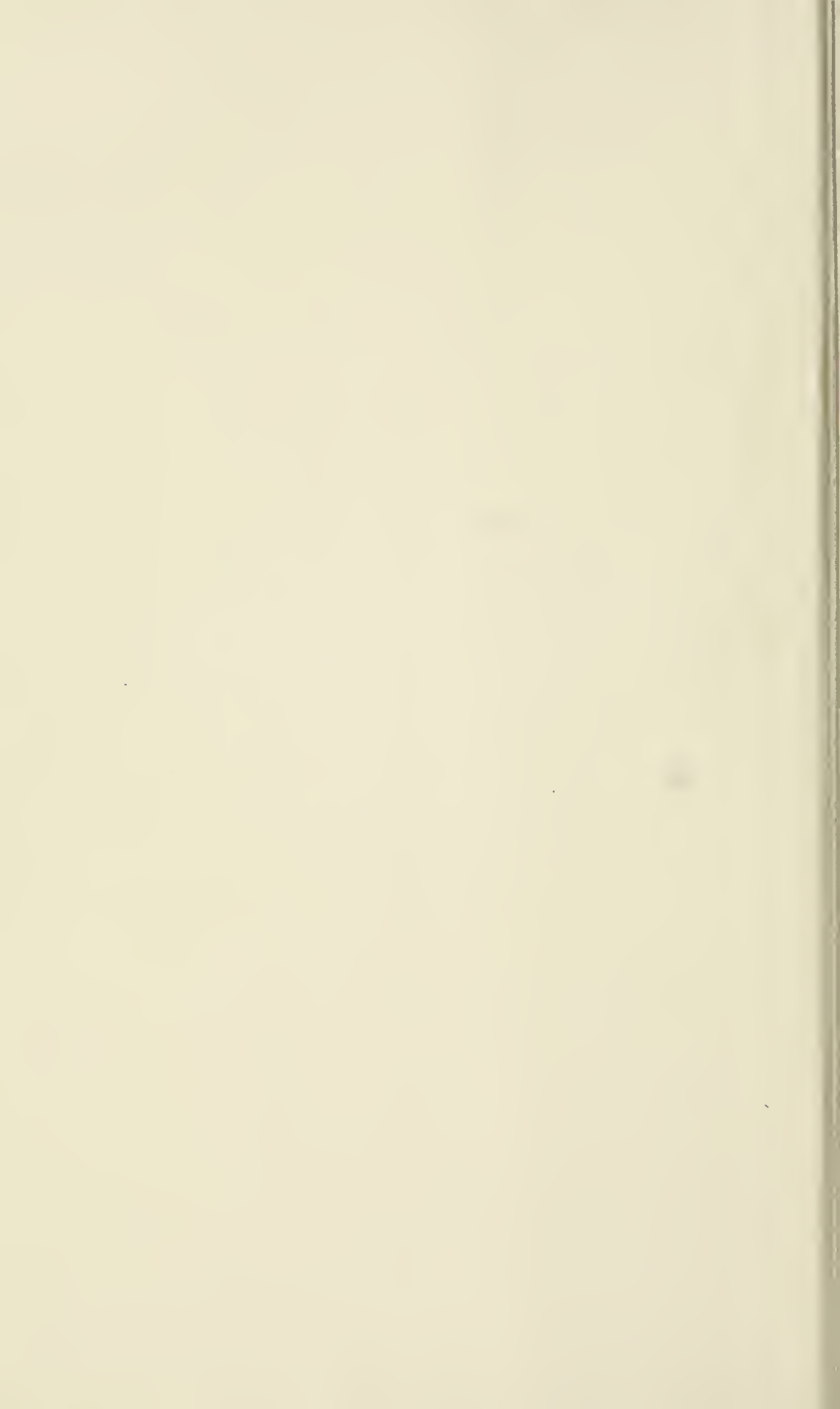
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in Social Anthropology

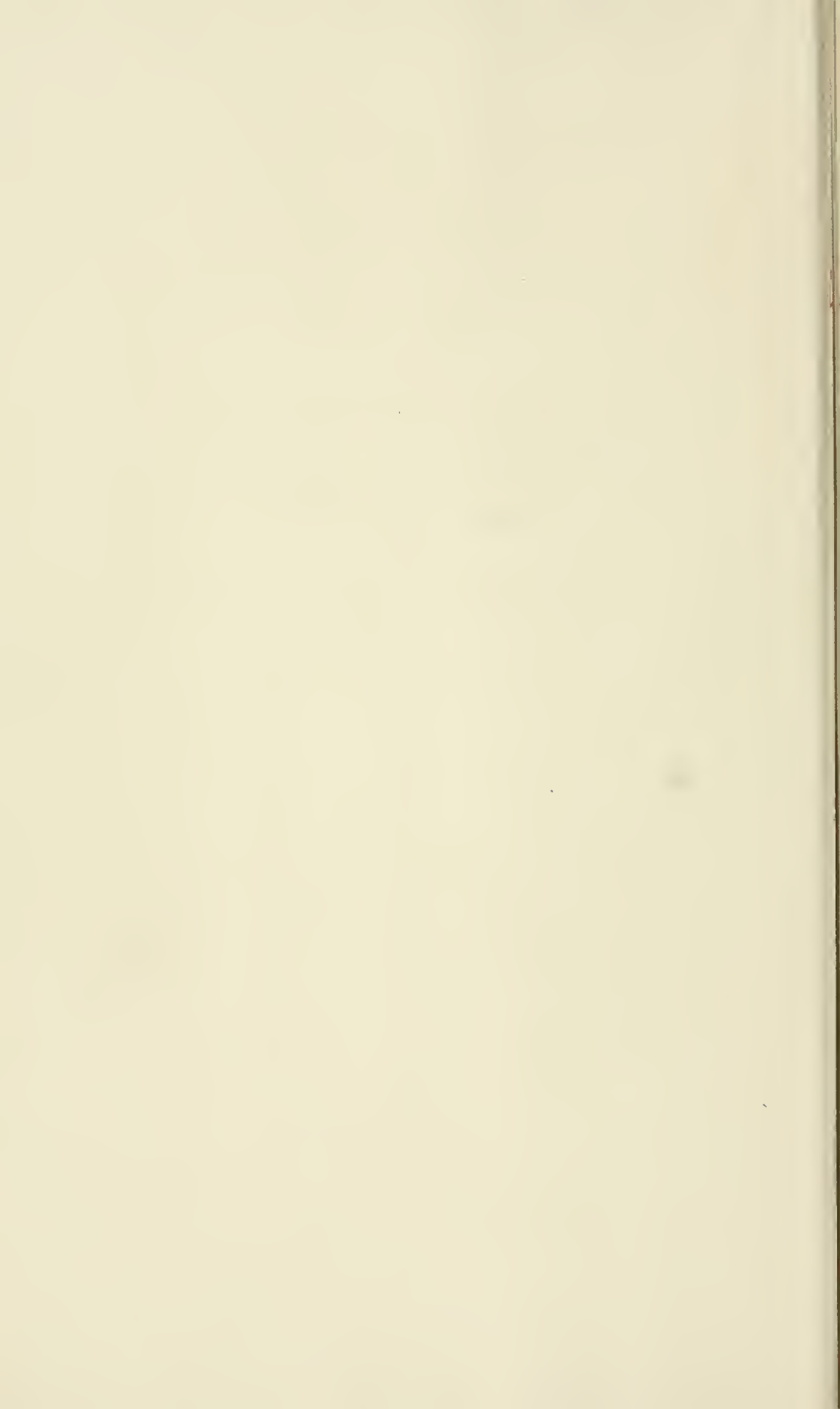
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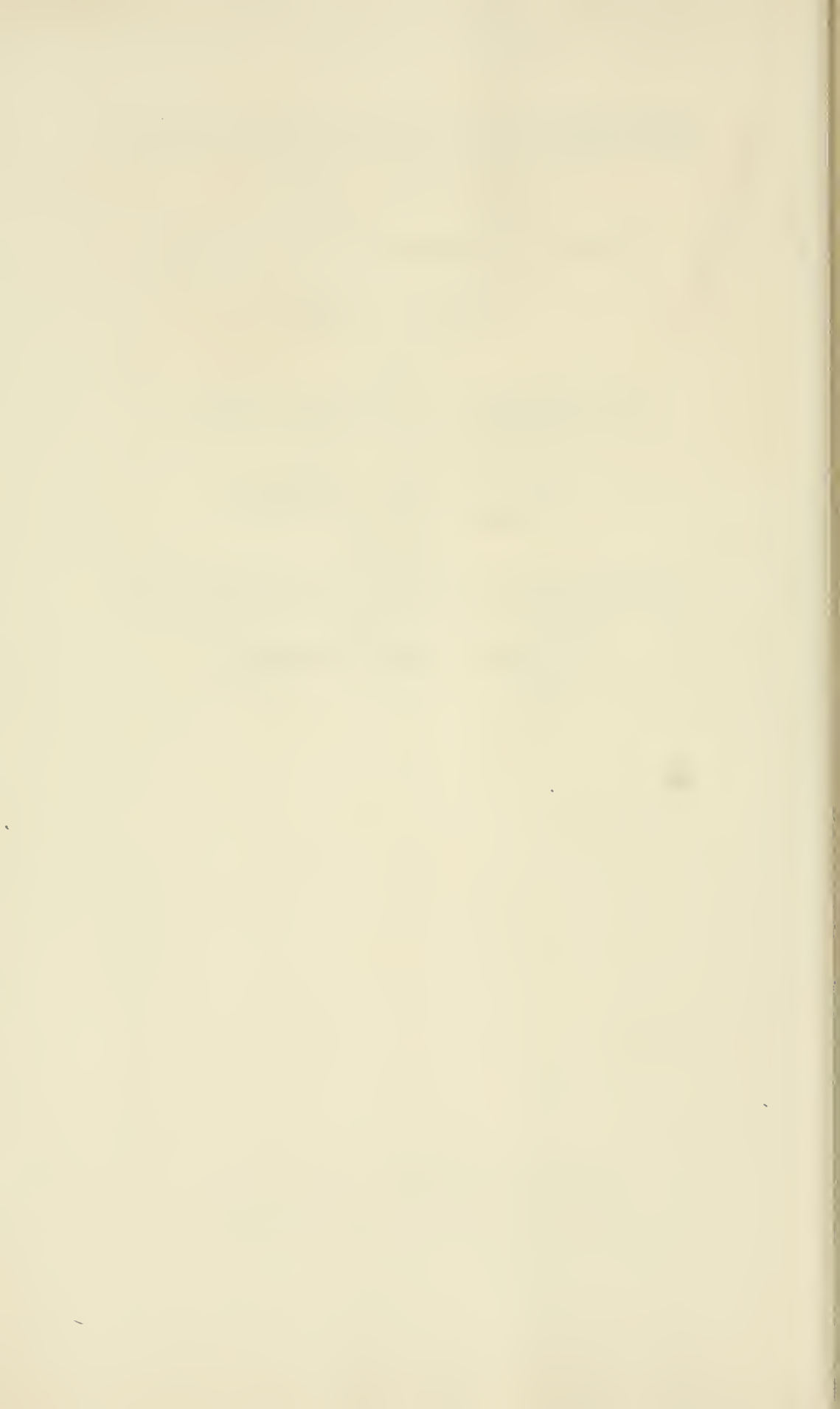






ADDRESS to *Sir James George Frazer*,
LL.D., D.C.L., Litt.D.,
on the occasion of the foundation,
in his honour,
of the
FRAZER LECTURESHIP
in Social Anthropology
in the
Universities of Oxford, Cambridge,
Glasgow, and Liverpool.

ANNO DOMINI MCMXXI



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THE friends and admirers who have united to found in your honour an annual lectureship in Social Anthropology, a science requiring no such link to connect it with your name, are not altogether content to set up their monument and withdraw in silence. They feel, and they hope that you will understand, the wish to approach more nearly an author whose works have bound to him in familiarity and affection even those to whom he is not personally known, and to indulge, by this short address, an emotion warmer than mere intellectual gratitude.

The Golden Bough, compared by Virgil to the mistletoe but now revealing some affinity to the banyan, has not only waxed a great tree but has spread to a spacious and hospitable forest, whose king receives homage in many tongues from a multitude resorting thither for its fruit or timber or refreshing shade. There they find learning mated with literature, labour disguised in ease, and a museum of dark and uncouth superstitions invested with the charm of a truly sympathetic magic. There you have gathered together, for the admonition of a proud and oblivious race, the scattered and fading relics of its foolish childhood, whether withdrawn from our view among savage folk and in distant countries, or lying unnoticed at our doors. The forgotten milestones of the road which man has travelled, the mazes and blind alleys of his appointed

progress through time, are illuminated by your art and genius, and the strangest of remote and ancient things are brought near to the minds and hearts of your contemporaries.

They return you thanks for all that they have received at your hands, and they wish you years of life and continuance of strength to crown with new sheaves that rich and various harvest of discoveries which has already rewarded your untiring industry and your single-hearted quest of truth.

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW STUDENTS:—

I AM deeply sensible of the honour you have done me by founding in my name a Lectureship of Social Anthropology at four great Universities. Such an honour is usually reserved till the world can judge more fully and impartially of a man's work than it is possible to do in his lifetime. I can only hope that, if posterity should concern itself with my writings, it will not reverse the verdict which you have passed upon them. In any case you have erected a monument which will no doubt survive him whom you desire to commemorate, and will carry on his work when he himself has long been mingled with the common dust. It is my earnest wish that the lectureship should be used solely for the disinterested pursuit of truth, and not for the dissemination and propagation of any theories or opinions of mine. As you know, I have never sought to formulate a system or to found a school, being too conscious of the narrow limits of my knowledge and abilities to attempt anything so ambitious. I have been content to investigate a few problems in the history of man; but I am well aware, and I have endeavoured to keep my readers constantly aware, of the extreme uncertainty of all the solutions which I have ventured to offer of these problems, always remembering that the study of man's mental evolution,

like the study of the physical universe in which he appears to exist as an insignificant particle, is still only in its inception, and that the views which we of the present day take of that evolution, as of that universe, are necessarily but temporary and provisional, destined with the progress of knowledge to be superseded by truer and more comprehensive views in the future. To that progress I trust that the lectureship which you have founded may in some measure contribute. At the least, it will be a monument of your generosity, if not of my fame: it will serve to show to those who come after us that in an age when the world was torn into hostile camps and exhausted by internecine conflict, scholars could still meet on common ground, above the clash of arms, in the serene air and untroubled light where truth is sought by her votaries. Whatever else comes of it, the approbation of so many of my contemporaries will act as a spur to my industry: it will encourage me to labour yet a while for the advancement of knowledge, that so I may the better deserve the honour which you have conferred upon me.

J. G. Frazer.

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30 APRIL 1921.

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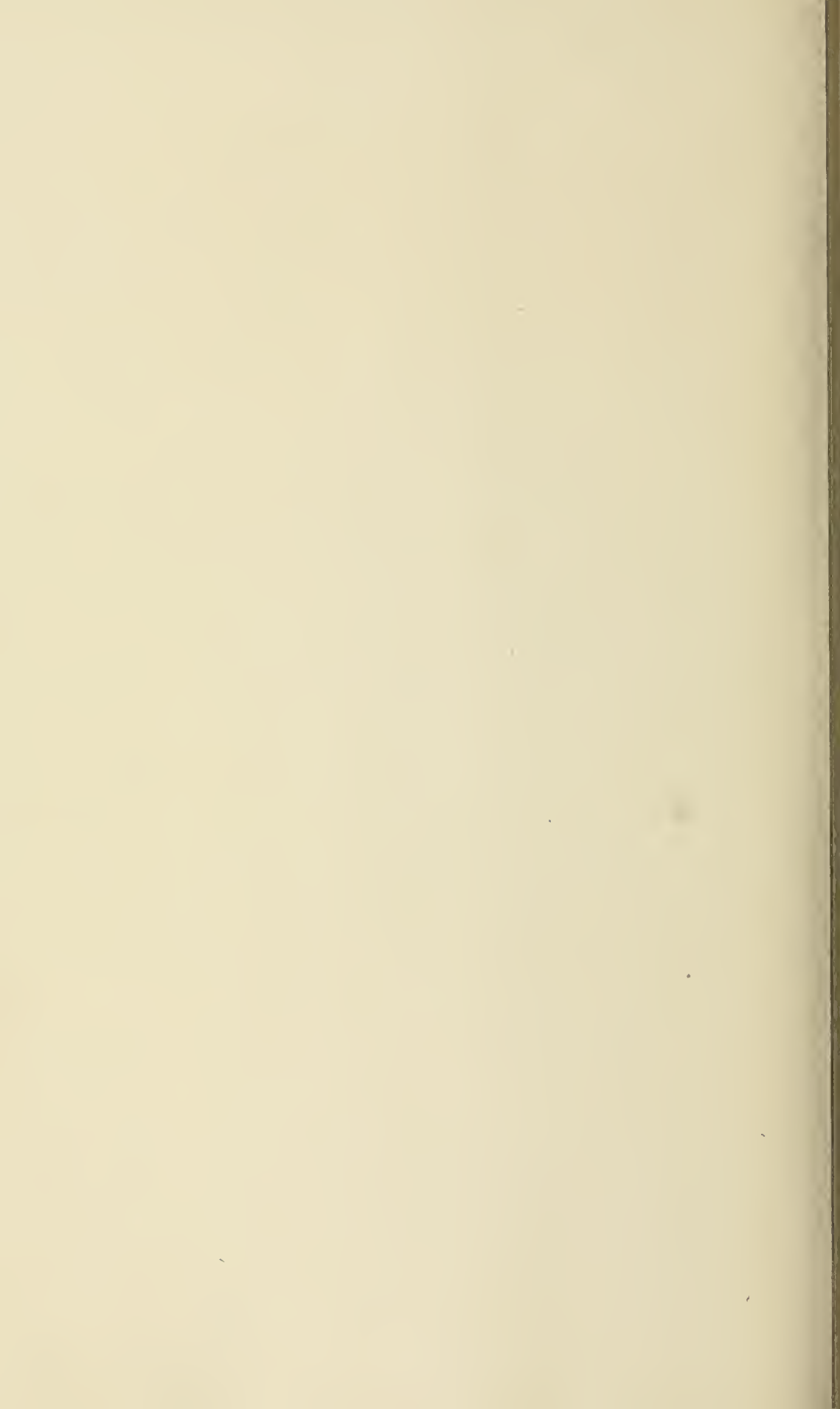
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