

The "Register" August 4th 1898

The Register 6th August 1898

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Batchelor—That it is desirable that some provision be made for continuing the education of boys from the compulsory standard up to the University senior public examination by the establishment of secondary schools for boys, similar to the Advanced School for Girls, or other means. (July 20.)

Mr. PEAKE did not altogether agree with the wording of the motion, and would like to see it amended by striking out the words "Secondary schools for boys similar to the Advanced School for Girls," and inserting in lieu thereof "the extension of the State school system of education." He did not agree with Mr. Wood that the State had gone far enough in the matter of education. The system must be made to keep pace with the times. Higher education did not suit a man for hard work, as was shown in Cardinal Newman's book on University Teaching. It was not an uncommon thing for parents to say that their children had been educated because they had passed the compulsory standard. That standard should be regarded as the minimum and not the maximum. The heathen Japanese had taken a higher view of education than that. With more knowledge of history on the legal and constitutional sides he believed the relationships of citizens would be greatly improved. Grammar and arithmetic enabled people to think more straightly, and when we got them to think more straightly we got them to act more straightly. He was very pleased that the fifth-class fee had been abolished. It had had the effect of keeping children from school when they had arrived at the age of thirteen, and a great deal of harm had been done. The policy of the State should be to keep the children at school as long as possible. In England the standard was higher, as the law provided that children should remain at school until fourteen years of age—a year longer than the age at which we shut them out. A great deal of the work known as technical education was of no use when the children went out into the world because so much of it was done by machinery. He favoured the establishment of institutions to be supported by the State where trades and industrial sciences should be taught. But the children should go to those after their minds had been trained in the schools. It was the duty of the State to bridge over the gap between the State schools and the University. He would like to see the educational system so extended that it would be possible for a child to enter on a University course straight from the State schools. Unless the children of all had equal opportunities to fit themselves the children of the rich would alone enjoy the luxuries of professional life. Education was going to have a greater effect on national life. Everything was being carried on on a more scientific basis. He would like to see institutions similar to the School of Mines established throughout the larger towns of the country. He had read that it was owing to the spread of technical schools throughout England that the fear of Continental supremacy in manufactures had passed away. The Presbyterian minister at Narracoorte had taken a great interest in secondary education, and he was conferring a great boon on the young people of the district by a free night-school. He had not known any disinclination for work on the part of those lads. He wished to see the benefits of secondary education extended to the country. There was more need for it in the country than in the city. He hoped the proposal for the training of teachers by the University would be brought about. The supply for professional teachers was so much greater than the demand that the department should raise the standard. If that were done the provisional schools would be better equipped. He was credibly informed that some of the teachers could not pass an examination in the fifth form. He had observed a desire on the part of some of the teachers to do the most for the children, and not be content to do what they were called upon by the department to do. He was sorry the rule of promotion by seniority prevented the services of some of the most efficient men in the department being used to the greatest possible advantage. Expenditure on education was one of the best investments they could make. To every private school that could succeed in sending scholars to the University test examinations he would be prepared to see the Government give a bonus. But private schools could not do all that was required in this matter, and the State must step in, as the work was of the greatest necessity. As other nations had done, they must carry their educational system and their knowledge of science and art still further onward. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. HUTCHISON agreed with the greater part of Mr. Peake's address. It was ridiculous for Mr. Wood to declare that it was better that the working classes should be kept in comparative ignorance. (Mr. Wood—I never said that. It is absolutely false.) Education could be applied to all vocations. It was the parish schools system inaugurated by John Knox, and approved by Parliament as far back as 1615, that had made the Scotch people the most educated peasantry in the world. The School of Mines and the Agricultural School did splendid work, but did not fill up the void under consideration. It should not be required that the secondary schools should be self-supporting; the expense should not be taken into consideration in a matter of so great national importance. The great mass of our boys were growing up mere unthinking machines.

Mr. CALDWELL saw no necessity for the motion. Burns had said—

What's aw the jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns and stools,
If honest nature made ye fools
What saurs yer grammars;
Ye'd better be on up spades and shoals
And knappin' hammers.

Mr. Wood was quite right when he said that education would not make a first-class artisan. There was no community which had done more to foster educational requirements than this colony, and we could not afford to extend the system as suggested. We had scarcely had a surplus since the introduction of free education. The working man did not want it; he wanted bread, not a stone. He knew a man who received a first-class University education along with Bismarck, and who was now in the colony struggling for a living by growing mangles. (Mr. Jenkins—Ah, but see what Bismarck did.) The man who had taken the highest positions in society

were not those who came from Universities. The leaders of the bar in this colony were not those who graduated in Universities. (Mr. Grainger—Nor first-class poets either. Laughter.) He believed in more responsibility being placed upon the parents to educate their children. We could not afford the experiment.

Mr. McDONALD would like to know what the mover really wanted. Did he want free schools for boys on the same principle as the Advanced School for Girls? (Mr. Grainger—He wants free education right up to the University.) He had given no idea of what it would cost, and he wanted something definite on that point. Our boys and girls would compare favourably with those of the other colonies, and the State was doing its fair share towards educating them. The Agricultural School was a complete failure. He would sooner send boys to a farm where they would learn something. The schoolmaster at Willunga was teaching his boys just as much as was to be learnt at the Agricultural School. The fifth class should be extended to every school of over thirty. Up to the present time the education system had been a success, and the motions proposed tended to overburden it, and therefore he would oppose them.

Sir JOHN DOWNER disagreed with Mr. Hutchison's remarks concerning the education of the Scotch people. They had depended upon no one, and that was the history of Scotland. The country had

produced people who had educated themselves, and it had been forced upon them. (Mr. Hutchison—It was authorized by Parliament.) Where did they have in Scotland a proposal such as the present? We had free education—education which went with limitations to a very high grade—which would make men most excellent scholars for all purposes of this life. It enabled them to read well, write well, and think well, to know all about the countries of the world, and all the literature of the world, whether foreign or their own. Science was open to all who had any capacity for learning. He looked upon a boy leaving school as not having finished his education, but just beginning it. All the rest depended upon himself. What did they want? What was secondary education? Did they want Latin and Greek? (Mr. Hutchison—To take them on to the University.) The whole world was divided on the subject. A great deal of time, it was contended, was wasted by learning dead languages. Did they want their boys to learn to read Homer and Virgil in the original instead of the translation? Would they include music, painting, and all fine arts? (Mr. Grainger—They want a preparatory school for the University.) His education had been mostly done by himself, and the education of any one very much good was largely done by himself. It was no use trying to force learning. The University was open now, and they could get in for practically nothing. South Australia gave the most educational advantages to be possessed in any part of the world. We should not emasculate the people altogether. The Advanced School for Girls had had the effect of destroying private schools. (No. Mr. Holder—It had the effect of raising them to a higher level.) These particular kind of schools were too expensive for all classes. We had gone far enough in giving education free. University fees were small. (Mr. Kingston—A bridge is wanted between the State Schools and the University.) At what age and for how long would the boys be put to and kept at the school. They ought to be beginning to earn their own living at thirteen or fourteen. He would like the University to be open to every one, and would go so far as to let them go without the payment of a fee. By the passing of the motion another onerous burden would be placed on the people.

Mr. BUTLER secured the adjournment of the debate to August 31.

FIFTH-CLASS FEES.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Giles—"That so much of the new education regulation as relates to fees after passing the compulsory standard be disallowed." (July 13, 14, 20.)

Mr. CASTINE accused the Ministry of raising by a side-wind the standard of education, already sufficiently high. He intended to vote against it. (Mr. Butler—You have been a long time making up your mind.) He had not twisted about like Mr. Butler, who, since he had got on to the Treasury benches, in order to please a certain section of the community had changed his opinions. The Minister had prostituted his education principles. (Mr. Butler—The thing was working badly.) The children should be made to be perfectly independent, and to complete their education in the schoolhouse of the world. Children should not be admitted into the State schools until they were six years of age. Directly they gave the Government authority to extend the standard up to the fifth class then they would be asked to give a similar power as to secondary education, and later on they would have free education right up to the University. The proposed system would flood the educational labour market with children who would be above the principle of starting where their fathers started. Misery and ruin would follow this educational craze. The teaching of fancy work induced the children in after years not to fancy work. (Hear, hear and laughter.) He preached economy, and could not advocate an unnecessary luxury.

Mr. DARLING secured the adjournment of the debate until September 21.

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION LECTURES.

The second of the winter course of lectures was delivered on Friday evening by Mr. K. G. Blackmore, the subject being "The Normans in Europe." There was a large attendance of students and others in the Chemistry Lecture-room. The lecturer explained that this being the first of a series of historical lectures it would be to some extent inaugural, and deal with general rather than particular details. The keynote to a right understanding of history was a recognition of the unity and continuity of history, and the sweeping away of the arbitrary divisions of "ancient" and "modern." For instance, by a quotation from one of the historical appendices in Dr. Arnold's edition of Thucydides, he illustrated a wonderful parallelism between the relations of the great Dorian power Sparta and its subject race and that between the Normans and the English. A survey was made of the history of Britain before the Norman invasion, showing what effects the Norman occupation had and the nature of the English conquest of Britain. The kinship of Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, and Northmen was brought out, and the absorption of the Norman race in the lands of its settlement. The nature of English, or rather Teutonic, kingship combining popular election with royal descent, was set forth, and the fact that William I. based his claim to the crown of England not on conquest, but on legal right. The very opposite views of the Norman character were given, one by Geoffrey Malaterra, the other by the great historian Dr. Stubbs. The difference between the Norman settlement in England and that in Sicily was explained, and some striking resemblance between the Norman rule and that of the English in India were dwelt upon. The object of the lecturer was, as he said, not to give "tips" for future examinations, but, if possible, to create an historical instinct, and show that the history of that comparatively remote period was a story of living personages actuated by the same motives and ambitions as those of to-day, and that English history is realistic for 1,400 years, no part of which can be neglected.

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From *
E. Harold Davies

THE ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.

To the Editor.

Sir—In reference to the memorial presented to the University Council on Friday last Professor Ives has submitted a report which, we are assured, furnishes "a complete and satisfactory answer to the complaints of the local teachers." At best it wears a plausible face, and doubtless many who read it will feel as satisfied as the council do; but, none the less, the arguments used are specious, and the main contention of the memorial remains untouched. It may be well, in passing, to note the initial error with which Professor Ives sets out. He says:—"Briefly stated, the signatories find that the successful inauguration of the Conservatorium has interfered with their private interests." Speaking for myself and, I believe, for most of the other signatories, he is entirely mistaken in this. We protest from no immediate sense of personal injury, but on the far higher ground of right principle. Let it be repeated, Sir Thomas Elder's bequest is being utilised to promote a class of education which is beneath the legitimate sphere of university work, and which properly belongs to competent teachers outside. We contend that it should more properly have been applied in furnishing musical advantages not already available to students. Professor Ives's ingenious plea for undertaking primary education will not bear a moment's analysis. The prevalence of bad habits, wrong methods, and vitiated musical tastes among students, which we all deplore, is due to the existence of a large class of unqualified teachers who seek a livelihood by giving lessons at the most nominal charges. The Conservatorium, with its comparatively high fees, will not—cannot possibly—remedy this evil, for which the better class of private teachers must be held blameless. The professor's further attempt to justify the institution of an elementary division by referring to the practice of the Royal College and the Royal Academy is equally futile, seeing these are not University schools and cannot at all be regarded as affording a precedent for University usage. Again, in vindication of the adoption of a low standard of entrance examination, Professor Ives affirms that the "Senior Public" is not insisted upon as essential to attendance at University lectures and classes (except in the case of students seeking degrees). Be it so, but this does not affect the petitioners' argument, inasmuch as it does not in other faculties involve any lowering of the standard of instruction given. We still claim, and it cannot be denied, that the University exists solely for the highest branches of study, and any departure from this is a departure from its best traditions. By its present determination to give junior and elementary instruction in the art of music the council is not only lowering the prestige of the University, but is at the same time entering into an unfair competition with efficient agencies already existing. Moreover, to be logical, if such zeal is being shown for laying a sound foundation in the principles of music the council should certainly embark on similar enterprises in every other department. Finally, it may be admitted that no exception is taken to the foundation of a practical School of Music at the University, and Sir John Stainer's desire for such a school in connection with Oxford, which Professor Ives mentions, is altogether commendable. Can we, however, by any stretch of imagination, picture the professor of that ancient University undertaking the instruction of boys and girls in the elements of the art of playing? Our minds recoil at the thought.—I am, &c.,

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