

Advertiser 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1906

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THE TEACHING OF SCIENCE.

Some weeks ago it was pointed out in "The Advertiser" that students taking science subjects were heavily handicapped by the system of marking adopted by the University of Adelaide in respect to the higher public examination, in connection with which various scholarships are awarded each year. We also drew attention to the fact that candidates for the Angas engineering studentship, which is annually awarded at the Higher Public Examination, were compelled to take five subjects, for which the maximum possible marks were only 1,400 as against 2,000 marks for the five most liberally assessed subjects, so that it was practically impossible for a student competing for the "Angas" to be placed high on the general honors list. The University Council has taken action in the matter, and has decided after this year so to revise its system of marking as to put physics and chemistry into a higher scale, apportioning them 300 marks each instead of 200, while it has altered the list of compulsory subjects for the Angas Examination in such a way as to enable a competitor to obtain a maximum of 1,800 marks as compared with 2,000 obtainable by the students taking the five most liberally marked subjects. These changes, although they do not put the science and classical students on an absolute equality, will still be generally appreciated as a step in the right direction.

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Mr. H. W. Gartrell, B.A., B.Sc., the Angas scholar, writing about the middle of May to a friend, stated that he was still at Bodie, which is a little mining town about 160 miles from San Francisco. To get to it he had to travel 180 miles by rail at 10 cents a mile, and then 40 or 50 miles by stage coach. Altogether the journey cost him £8. He had stored most of his belongings in San Francisco, and they were right in the centre of the burnt area. Mr. T. B. Robertson, also formerly of Adelaide University, was in San Francisco at the time of the earthquake, but wrote that he was all right.

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AMUSEMENTS.

CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT.

It is not often that music lovers in Adelaide have the opportunity of hearing a string quartet of such a high degree of excellence as the one which performed at the Banqueting-room of the Town Hall on Thursday evening, under the direction of Herr H. Kugelberg. He has had considerable experience in Germany in arranging chamber music concerts, and the results achieved on the few occasions upon which he has undertaken work of this kind in Adelaide have denoted that he is an expert in one of the most artistic departments of musical interpretation. The quartet consisted of Miss Nora Kyffin Thomas, who has deservedly won for herself a position of distinction amongst the first violinists of Australia; Miss Elsie Cowell, who has on several occasions displayed ability of a high order for a young student; Miss Clarice Gmeiner (viola); and Herr Kugelberg (cello). The programme submitted was an ambitious one, but the uniform excellence which was maintained throughout entirely justified the choice of the several numbers. The beautiful quartet, "E flat major," op. 135, No. 1 (Schubert) was presented in masterly style. The delicacy of expression, the attention given to rhythm, the careful manner in which the figures of each of the four movements were illustrated, and taste with which the balance of parts was observed, made the number entirely exquisite. The poetry and charm of the "Adagio" were particularly impressive, and all parts were so well rendered that the entire work met with demonstrative marks of approval. The quartet "A major," op. 18, No. 5 (Beethoven), was from some points of view the masterpiece of the evening's performance. The great master makes large demands from those who would adequately interpret his writings, but the artists of the evening were equal to their task. Very fine was the "Allegro," with its perfect phrasing and the spirit with which the movement was invested was admirable. Quite charming was the rendering of the lovely "Menuetto" and the "Andante cantabile," with the pleasing variations, gave each of the artists an opportunity for individual work which was fully availed of. The final movement, "Allegro," was, like the other parts, rendered in a fashion worthy of the composition. A basket of two fanciful minuets, "A major" and "E flat minor," by L. Beethoven, and "Intermezzo," op. 152 (Cornelius Gurlitt), a melodious and poetical writing, made a thoroughly pleasing item, and the artists are to be congratulated on their treatment of the works. The instrumental numbers were interspersed with songs by Miss May Otto, who was heard to greater advantage than on any previous appearance since her return from Europe. Her selections were, "Who is Sylvia" (Fr. Schubert), "Sapphic ode" (Brahms), and "Menuet de Martini" (Weckerlin). An encore was imperatively demanded, and the young contralto responded with "It is best." Mr. A. H. Otto acted as pianoforte accompanist to the vocal items.

THE EDUCATION REPORT.

The report of the Education Department on its work for 1905 is generally satisfactory. It here and there room for improvement is shown—as, for example, in the matter of attendance—two things have to be remembered, first that we are dealing with the last year of the old system of administration, prior to its reorganisation under Mr. Williams; and, secondly, that by the legislation of last session Parliament has made provision for more regular as well as more frequent attendance. Last year there were more schools open and more teachers employed than was ever the case before, the 722 schools representing an increase of seven and the 1,420 teachers an increase of 88. In spite of these extended facilities, the net number of children instructed by the department fell from 60,879 in 1904 to 59,026 in 1905, and the average daily attendance from 42,234 to

41,807. Such a falling-off does not necessarily imply culpability on the part of parents or children, for a child may be exempted on account of ill-health or other cause, and, as a matter of fact, in every quarter but one the percentage of cases of "neglect" was lower last year than in the year before. Still, 188 convictions for non-compliance with the compulsory provisions of the Act are too many. By making its schools free the State does what it can to bring the means of instruction within reach of every child, and considering how vitally important education is, even from the bread-and-butter standpoint, it is more than a little surprising that there should still be parents who fail to appreciate the boon.

A slight rise in the cost of education per child necessarily follows a lower average attendance, and last year the amount was £3 11/4, against £3 9/12 in 1904. Would it be possible to obtain as good teaching as the Education Department gives for twice or thrice that sum if there were no free education and each parent were left to find the necessary schooling for his children wherever he could? It is quite certain that it would not. The £149,183 spent on education last year represents an increase of £3,152, but, if comparison with the experience of other States shows anything, it is the extreme moderation of our expenditure on public instruction. The report of Mr. Andrew Scott, Superintendent of the University Training College, justifies, as it was sure to do, the experiment of putting teachers of both sexes in the way of a University education. The passes in degree subjects secured by students compare well with the entries, proving that they appreciate the title of "B.A." well enough, in the majority of cases, to work hard for it. Still, the number of failures among those who have done well in their Senior examination shows that between Senior and University work there is a gulf that cannot be bridged unless the University course is in some subjects modified, or pupils are prepared for it by a high school or other means not now existing. Of course, as Mr. Scott shrewdly observes, a man or woman may make a very able teacher and yet not be capable of doing "regular University work." Freedom from nervousness, the knack acquired from familiarity with past examinations, a dozen causes, in fact, may explain the success, as their absence may explain the failure in examinations, of students equally equipped in point of knowledge and ability. Last year's admissions to the University Training College numbered 36, representing a larger number than had been admitted during any previous year, and going far, as Mr. Scott remarks, to indemnify the State for the departure to other fields of young and promising students.

The Minister's report is enriched, as usual, by the documents in which the various inspectors sum up the year's work in the schools, enabling an insight to be gained into the condition of primary education, and showing the weak points where greater attention is necessary. The reports would be valuable if they did nothing more than stimulate the interest of teachers in their work and keep them from falling into perfunctory habits. The inspectors seem to be agreed as to the need for Nature study, which, as Inspector Smyth remarks, has an important effect in developing the power not merely of observation but of reflection also. That authority goes so far as to suggest that during one or two quarters the teachers would be well advised to substitute Nature study in all its branches for manual work; while Mr. Scott regrets

that the University has not yet seen fit to include in its course such subjects as botany, biology, &c. We have yet to see what effect the new regulations with regard to attendance will have upon truancy, which is a bad thing for the State, and (what is not, perhaps, sufficiently considered) a source of discouragement to the teacher, who, of course, cannot do as well with children who are away half the time as with those in regular attendance. The teachers will gain in common with the State by the change in the new Act in the direction of increasing the number of days on which children must be present, and they will gain still more when Inspector Burgan's hope is realised and there is no exemption from attendance at all. Our educational system, however, will not be what it should be till, as the same authority strongly urges, the school-going age is raised to 15 at least for children who are not usefully employed. There is a growing conviction that the equipment in the way of knowledge necessary for the battle of life is not provided by education up to the compulsory standard, and that it may have to be supplemented, as Inspector Martin suggests, by continuation schools, where the young who now too frequently waste their time in the streets may acquire the training necessary to earn a livelihood.

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Mr. N. W. Jolly, B.Sc., who two years ago was selected as the first South Australian Rhodes scholar, has cabed to his brother that as a result of the recent examinations at Oxford University he was awarded first-class honors in physics. Mr. Jolly is an old Prince Alfred College boy, and when he graduated at Adelaide University in 1901 he obtained second-class honors in both mathematics and physics.

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THE EDUCATION REPORT.

The report for 1905 of the Minister controlling Education was on Thursday presented to Parliament. It was statutorily due more than three months ago, but probably the delay may be connected with the recent change in the management. That alteration, which took place this year, and is therefore beyond the scope of the records, affects the appreciation of its value. Still, many of the results are significant. The cost of education, interest omitted, was £149,183, an increase of £3,152; and, two years excepted, the total is the largest shown. At the same time the number of children instructed—59,026—exhibited a decrease of 1,853, and was the lowest aggregate for 10 years. The teaching staff—1,420—was, however, augmented by 88; but this addition is not quite so formidable as it looks. Under a regulation passed last October it was decided to make an allowance for needlework tuition, and this line swells the staff figures by 104. Taking the regularly and fully employed teachers, there was actually a decrease of 16. There were 12 more male instructors and 28 fewer of the other sex. Even now the latter are more than two to one, the relative figures being 887 and 422. As bearing upon the question raised at the Teachers' Congress by two eloquent lady teachers, it is noteworthy that more than one-half of the male instructors are head teachers (246), while only 28 females enjoy a similar distinction. No fewer than 358 of the 887 women and girls are engaged in provisional schools, and there are 150 girl monitors. Provisional male teachers number 61, and boy monitors 61. The chief service of women teachers is as assistants, among 319 of whom they count 203. The attendance of children under the compulsory clause improved last year, and probably better percentages will be obtained under the new regime.

The Minister's dry statement of statistical conclusions is unrelieved by any educational comment, or practical comparison, or note of appreciation.