Bald. Bald. Bald. Bald. 65

on each of two afternoons. He thought the Saturday class should continue until 12.30 p.m. He could see difficulties being raised by parents that they would lose the benefit of the children's help, and there were also considerations of music and other lessons, and visits to the dentist and doctor. But, after all, he did not know that the help which children rendered their parents on Saturday mornings was as much as had been stated. Many of such jobs could be done on other days of the week. The wealthy people—by that he meant the skilled artisans—seemed to be able to dispense with one working day in the week. (Laughter.)

Home Life Influence.

On the question of the home life influence, concluded the lecturer, the father, the elder brother, and the sister were usually away on Saturday mornings, and there were better opportunities for the scholars to obtain influence on other days when all the members of the family were at home. Another consideration was that Friday evenings became a problem. That was the children's picture and dancing night. Many, however, did not consider those forms of recreation altogether beneficial. The argument against the long train journeys to school on Saturday mornings might be overcome by the children remaining at the school as week-end boarders. He was against a pupil undertaking a long train journey every day. He was in favour of six days' labour, as against five days with the work rushed through. By having the pupils until lunch time on Saturday they would also be enabled to have greater facilities for the use of the playground on their free afternoons. He did not think that watching league matches was altogether desirable for young children, on account of the excitement that was created. He would prefer to see them trying to play a game themselves, or take a walk into the country. The scheme that he had outlined had been tried by at least one school in Adelaide and also by schools in Victoria. (Applause.)

Chairman Against Home Work.

The Chairman spoke emphatically on the question of homework. He said he did not believe in it, and he was sure that the pupils were none the worse for dispensing with it when they went up for examinations. The remarks of Mr. Bickersteth were bristling with suggestions, but he could not agree with the idea as to the method of overcoming the difficulty. He thought there was a lot of waste time in their school and college systems. That could be overcome without trouble. Saturday morning was the period for organized sports games at the high schools, and the teachers willingly gave their time. He agreed that some scholars spent too much time in train travelling, which was not beneficial for them. The subjects could be more effectively dealt with if properly arranged under the existing system.

A general discussion followed.

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"TEACHING OF ENGLISH."

Interesting Lectures.

Valuable advice on the teaching of English was given by Mr. R. C. Bald, M.A. (assistant lecturer in English at the Adelaide University), and Mr. E. Allen, M.A. (Master of English Literature at the Adelaide High School), at the evening session of the conference of the Educational Society of South Australia at the Institutes lecture room on Monday at the conclusion of the proceedings. Miss M. E. Patchell (of Methodist Ladies' College) presided.

Best Introduction to Life.

Mr. Bald said the teaching of spoken English was most effectively achieved by a course of phonetics for teachers. In the department of speech training through reading and recitation, the essential object of teaching was that the child should understand the meaning of every word, the flow of phrase and phrase, and the logical sequence of thought. Reading, first of all, had to be intelligent and clear rather than sentimental. He stressed that point because the whole of English verse and its melodies depended upon it. Prosody was impossible without being able to read poetry in natural tones. Prosody was simply a matter of placing the stress in the right place. The lecturer referred to the interest that dramatic readings gave to the study. Proceeding, he said it was one of the most important functions of the teachers to encourage discussions on the topics which were contained in the matter being taught. That system would be most successful on plays and novels and not on the more abstract thoughts expressed in some poems. Obviously the more the class did the better it kept up the interest of each pupil, and relieved the teacher. In the consideration of written English one of the most difficult tasks of the teacher was to have the child write clear and correct English, and that could be surmounted on the principle that every teacher should be a teacher of English. Grammar, the lecturer characterized as a means, not an end. Its teaching on the more formal side would always be necessary to some extent, especially as an avenue to the study of Latin and other languages. Touching the matter of composition, Mr. Bald advised that good results could be obtained by setting the class to write a short paragraph on some theme. Constant practice in that was very helpful in improving writing and style. In the matter of choice of subjects, it was usually better to aim at those which developed the powers of observation rather than imagination. Accuracy, simplicity, and cogency were absolutely necessary. He made a plea for the inclusion of more English in the timetable. The success of a teacher depended largely on the degree to which he had taught his pupils to do without him. He advised the use of libraries, which he characterized as the literary man's laboratory. If literature taught one thing it was sincerity. It demonstrated that if anything was not real it was false, and could not stand the judgment of the world. Literature was the best introduction that the classroom could give to life as a whole. In the works of the more philosophical writers the pupil was initiated to theories of life, and there literature went hand in hand with religion, and in many cases could do just as much. Secondly it introduced them to men and women and put before them diverse character, and when they pondered on them they got some foretaste of the diversity of life that came after the classroom and of the way in which the world might reverse its judgments. (Applause.)

Independence of Thought.

Mr. Allen said it was universally accepted that they must respect more the individual who should even now be adjusting himself to the environment of the natural, the social, and the moral world. It was not so much what they did for the boy as what they could get the boy to do for himself. In forcing children to conform to certain arbitrary rules they crushed what later they most desired to foster—namely, an independence of thought and a self-conscious adaptation to the needs of society. They distorted the minds of their pupils to make them fit a Procrustean bed of the present age instead of developing those qualities with which nature had endowed them. The ideal specialist teacher of the future would be a psychologist and a man of the world. Instead of retailing secondhand goods, he would be the inspirer of creative work. Their chief means of getting knowledge in schools was the reading of books and the consideration of things. Every class should save its own library, which should cater for all tastes. In addition to fiction, history, and poetry there should be books on natural science, not dull uninspired textbooks which only swelled the profits of publishers, but real live books, written by eminent scientists, in which the boys might learn the living grammar of the universe, without which no man could hope to read in its full significance the epic of his spiritual existence. First, they must have romantic tales—fiction and modern exploration. He stressed the importance of encouraging the creative side of the study of English. Referring to the question of examination, the lecturer said that the fact was, as Professor Adams had affirmed that external examinations formed the dead hand that tradition placed upon all attempts to get out of the rut of established educational custom. Nothing of vital importance could be done in the way of reforming educational methods until that incubus had been removed. Why could not they grant certificates to boys in approved schools, as was done in Victoria, without holding an external examination. That was what they must aim for instead of wasting their energy criticising the questions set for "leaving" English. None of them would willingly return to the old dominion of parsing, paraphrasing, figures of speech, note digests, and word mongering generally. They all admitted that the type of questions set last year marked a decided advance on anything they had previously had, and aimed at what they were all trying to do—namely induce the pupil to read and criticise for himself. That the aim would exceed the grasp of the average boy of 16 years was only to be expected. He had tried his best to develop the power of independent thought in his boys; and where they had had time, say a week, to read, discuss, and reflect about a question, they had turned out some astonishingly fine work. In the last terminal exam., when they met with questions similar to those discussed in class, their answers were admirable; but when confronted with a new type of question altogether most of the boys were inarticulate. Only three out of 22 boys were capable of saying anything at all on the question of what, in their opinion, constituted a great novel, and how far "The Master of Ballantrae" approached or fell short of that standard. Had they been allowed a few days to discuss the question with him in class and reflect, he felt sure their answers would have been satisfactory. His point was that only the brilliant boy could in half an hour answer an examination question which had not been touched upon in class, and that in an effort to cover too much ground in the way of criticism to satisfy the examiner, the boys were missing the poetic experiences and attempting something beyond them. Much of the boys' best efforts during the year were useless from an examination point of view. He was doubtful whether English literature could be "marked" at all. They only discouraged the art of writing and self-expression by insisting on ready-made answers to artificial subjects. Literature was not a matter of grammar and decoration, but a method of expression. To read poetry was to come in contact not with a pattern, but with a personality. They might even go so far as to say, with the Master of Balliol, that education consisted in all that remained when one had forgotten everything that one had been taught. (Applause.)

Dr. H. T. Postle (Principal of the Presbyterian Girls' College) moved a vote of thanks to the secretary, Mr. Gordon Wood, for his painstaking work devoted to the organization of the conference. The motion was carried with applause.

Mr. Watts, in reply, said he had been more than repaid by the interest taken in the conference.

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ELDER CONSERVATORIUM

STUDENTS' ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

There was a large attendance at the students' orchestral concert given in the Elder Hall, last night. A programme of well-arranged and wisely-chosen works was conducted by Mr. W. R. Foote, who obtained from the large number of earnest students a decidedly good result. Miss Gwen Moss, who is making rapid progress as a violinist, was entrusted with the leadership. Since the corresponding concert of last season, a big improvement has been made. Mr. Foote has insisted upon close attention to rhythm, and the application of the right spirit to contemporary composers. One heard operatic contrasts; the old-world charm of Haydn and the classicism of Beethoven. As it is from such efforts as these that the orchestral players of the future are expected to form their judgment and perfect their worth, all that can be done to encourage them at this stage should be forthcoming.

From the opening number it was apparent that the students had rehearsed their parts well, and therefore were ready for the directions of the conductor. They began with the "Fest March," from the fourth scene of the second act of Wagner's "Tannhauser," and gained the approbation of the audience immediately. Sullivan's airs from "Iolanthe" were clearly described in a spirited performance, which appealed to a large majority of music lovers. That Haydn "Menuett" had received special care in the matter of simple charm of interpretation, and the suggestion of old-world dance movement was well kept in mind. The "Oberon" overture distinctly portrays the action of Weber's opera, and provides grateful passages for strings and wood wind. At this hearing the strings were particularly happy in the "Allegro" movement. Elliott's series of pieces for orchestra, described as "ballet music," proved to be full of pleasant contrasts in rhythm and striking melodies. The conductor secured a quick response to his demand for rubato and clearness of attack in this effective composition by a present-day English composer. Part of Beethoven's "Symphony, No. 2" gave evidence of the serious intent of this young orchestra. The work was really too difficult for the less experienced members, but there is no other way to become conversant with such demands and from this standpoint the orchestra accomplished a great deal.

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SCIENCE CONGRESS 1924.

Adelaide Meeting.

All arrangements are in train for the great biennial congress promoted by the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, which this year is to be held at Adelaide, during the last week in August. These congresses are held by the association with the hearty co-operation of the scientific societies and institutions throughout Australia and New Zealand. The meetings have been held at various capital centres within the Commonwealth and New Zealand during the past 36 years, the last centre visited being Wellington, New Zealand, in January, 1923. The success which has attended the efforts of the association in the past and which prompts the expectation of a still more successful meeting this year is undoubtedly due, primarily, to the general popular appreciation of the intrinsic value, and the practical application, of the work of science in our midst. That this idea has not been lost sight of by successive State, Dominion, and Commonwealth Governments is evidenced by the large measure of support which has been accorded the activities of the Australasian Association throughout its whole career. This support has been given by the Governments concerned in the form of special leave to certain of their expert officers taking part in the deliberations of the congress, by railway concessions, and by the printing of the valuable volume of the proceedings.

The association is a highly representative one, embracing practically all scientific activities, and ranging all the way from discussions on the conservation of public health to the most abstruse physical and biological research. The association is governed by a general council, comprising delegates from all scientific bodies, together with the regular office bearers. The general public may become members upon payment of £1 subscription. This entitles them to all privileges and concessions, and to the volume of the proceedings. Lady and student associates pay 10/ for membership. A vicegal reception, a presidential reception, and other important social events, together with interesting and instructive excursions, have been arranged. Special features of the meeting will be the inaugural address by the incoming President, the general discussions of important scientific problems and the popular lectures. The retiring President is Sir George H. Knibbs and the President elect is Major-Gen. Sir John Monash.

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SHAKESPEARE'S CONTEMPORARIES.

SPENSER AND THE SONNETEERS.

Professor A. T. Strong delivered his second of three extension lectures at the University of Adelaide on Tuesday, on the subject of "Great writers of the age of Shakespeare." Having dealt in his first lecture with the general spirit of the age, he referred on this occasion to the lyric and narrative poets of that day. His concluding lecture will have reference to the drama and prose of the period. He pointed out that the poetry, drama, and imaginative prose of Shakespeare's day were expressions of the mighty force of the renaissance, and that the master impulse of that vast intellectual upheaval was a passionate desire to penetrate, as deeply as might be, into the meaning of life. On the intellectual side, one of the finest expressions of that desire was the poetry of Edmund Spenser. He had a soul as strenuous and sublime as Marlowe, but far more steady and calm. Beside Marlowe's red star his genius had a moonlike glory, well reflected in Wordsworth's famous lines upon him. Spenser, undoubtedly, ranked as the greatest English poet since Chaucer. Both the Puritanical and Platonic impulses of his day took a strong hold upon his sensitive and impressionable nature, and in certain of his poems he expressed the Platonic theory of ideas and a conception of God at the Master Craftsman. A more personal influence affected him through his sojourn in the household of the Earl of Leicester, which brought him into touch with Leicester's nephew, Sir Philip Sydney. The glamour of a great ambition greatly pursued invested the personality of Leicester. All the chivalry of the past age, all the accomplishment of the present, all the glowing promise of the future incarnated in Sydney, and by both men was the sensitive young poet attracted, but especially by Sydney, in whom he saw nobility of soul united with charm and genius. Henceforth Sydney, both before and after his heroic death, was a constant theme of Spencer's praise, and his character profoundly influenced his conception of the "Faerie Queene."

Disciples of Spencer.

The lecturer referred to "Shepherd's Calendar," and gave readings from some of Spencer's minor poems, passing on to a detailed discussion of the "Faerie Queene." This was, he said, in part, a poem written to the glory of a dying ideal; and furthermore, homage was paid in that great poem to the glory of Elizabeth. Professor Strong emphasized the royal sweep and ease with which Spenser handled the great nine-line stanza of his own invention, and the exquisite imagination which ran through the whole poem and constantly suffused its scenes and images with perfect beauty. The lecturer then referred to certain other poets who were proud to proclaim themselves Spenser's disciples, and who showed the influence of that discipleship in their work—William Browne of Tavistock, Giles, and Phineas Fletcher. He described and illustrated the poems of Samuel Daniel and Michael Drayton. The latter, he showed, besides being a patriotic poet, was a great lover of Nature, and in many of his lyrics showed his appreciation also of flowers and of fairies.