

Register May 15-08

### AN ARTS ASSOCIATION.

The University Arts Association, which was inaugurated last year with a dinner, has already held two successful meetings. These have been somewhat on the lines of the Oxford Union, of London, through which many of England's greatest politicians have graduated. The principal features were debates on "The philosophy of Browning in his 'Rabbi Ben Ezra'" and "Should Greek be compulsory for the arts course?" The discussion on the latter subject afforded an opportunity to the undergraduates to express their views in the presence of their professors without feeling that they risked being "ploughed" for their unorthodoxy. The membership of the association contains the names of about 70 graduates and undergraduates in arts, and it is expected that before long the members will number 100. The organization has under consideration the formation of a general students' council, which it is believed will prove an important factor in the corporate life of the Adelaide University.

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### UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS.

On the recommendation of the Public Examinations Board of the University of Adelaide (says the "Education Gazette") evening scholarships for the year 1908 have been awarded as under:—

Arts Course.—Edward Mead Bagot, John Stewart Blackburn, John Wesley Blacket, Gertrude Mary Boyer, Thomas George Barrett Brown, Alfred George Carne, Verna Loveday Churchward, Samuel Raymond Baron Cornish, Arthur Benjamin Ellis, Mabel Phyllis Hardy, Irene Pearl Harry, Dora Ingamels, Sarah Elizabeth Jackson, Doris Egerton Jones, Carl Oscar Lundberg, Peter Patrick Maclaren, Theodora Ryder Padman, Ralph Horwood Pynnter, Miriam Athalie Powell, Susan Frances Gwendoline Stevens, Frederick John Harold Steward, Myrtle Amy Martha Tuck, and Marjorie Walker.

Science Course.—Alan Halstead Haselgrove and Frank Harold Kollasche.

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### TEACHER AND PUPIL.

#### Empire Day.

Arrangements are being completed for the celebration of Empire Day throughout the State. The big demonstration of the League of the Empire, South Australian Branch, will be held in the Town Hall on Tuesday next, under the patronage and in the presence of his Excellency the Governor. It is confidently anticipated that the building will be packed, and a capital programme has been prepared. The celebration in the schools will take place on Monday, May 25. On that day the ordinary school programme will be suspended, and a syllabus of special work substituted, dealing with the extent of the Empire, the variety of races it contains, its wide commerce and variety of industries, its navy and merchant fleet, communication between its ports, the significance of the flag, heroic deeds in war and exploration, the abolition of slavery, accounts of great men especially connected with the gradual extension of the Empire, how Australia is connected with the Empire, and the King as head of the nation. Schools will close at noon, but the day will not rank as a holiday, so that all children present in the morning will be marked as if in attendance all day.

#### "Direct" Method of Language Teaching.

Most educationists are agreed, writes the Sydney "Daily Telegraph," that the so-called "direct, natural," or conversational method of teaching a modern language is infinitely superior to the old system of first learning the grammar and then the language. The boy or girl who can converse with a Frenchman without causing the foreigner to show more amusement than we evince when a Frenchman murders our sacred mother tongue is certainly far and away a better educated

child than the pedant little prig who can quote any and every rule that governs the intricacies of the language. But—and it is a very big but—the shadow of examination lies heavy upon the direct method, for, while the public estimates the efficiency of a school by the number of examination passes, and while the examining bodies examine in a living language, as though it were a matter of exact measurement, so long will the old-fashioned method exist.

It is of considerable interest, therefore, that an actual experiment is being made with the newer method. Mr. S. Lasker, M.A., first assistant at Fort-street School, Sydney, has taken a number of boys from the junior classes, and, on a guarantee from the parents that they will see the thing through, has undertaken to make them pass the junior examination in French and German, using only the direct method. For three months these boys have been talked to in German—they talk it themselves, they write it from dictation—but they have never yet opened a German book—much less a German grammar book. They are on their honor not to open a book until they get permission. Slight doses of grammar are mixed with conversational jam at rare intervals, but mistakes are frequent and unashamed. Now if these boys were examined in their actual knowledge—practical knowledge—of the language they would be found immeasurably superior to the boy who conscientiously translates every sentence in the grammar books, but it will be a pleasurable surprise if they are found able to dodge the grammatical pitfalls that so abound in modern examination-papers.

#### Medical Inspection.

The Hon. A. H. Peake, Minister for Education, who attended the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne last week, states that the question of medical inspection of public school children was considered in all its aspects. It was felt that if the inspection were to be of any value for statistical purposes, it would have to be carried out on uniform lines. There was complete unanimity of opinion that medical inspection was highly desirable, but that the value of that course would be seriously discounted if all the States adopted their own standards for examination purposes. It was therefore resolved to seek the assistance of the Commonwealth Statistician in the adoption of one uniform standard examination for all the States. Mr. Peake adds that he understands no time will be lost in preparing the standard, and that therefore the examination of 1,000 children in South Australia, which was to have been commenced by Dr. R. S. Rogers a fortnight ago, may be started at an early date.

#### The Western Australian Conference.

At the Conference of the Western Australian Teachers' Union the president (Mr.

John Tucker) said a strong effort had been made during the year to increase the membership of the union, and with that object in view he had travelled 1,200 miles to address gatherings of teachers. As a result of that effort the executive were able to report an increase of 40 per cent. in membership, but much still remained to be done. Dealing with the work of the teachers, he said that throughout the educational world there had begun a reform in the conduct of examinations, and teachers welcomed it in so far as it relieved the strain which was harder now than ever. But did the changes assist the teacher? In several parts of the world the word "examination" had disappeared, but the spirit remained, and little relief was afforded. It was the fear of examination that handicapped the teachers in their work of "teaching to think." Speaking from an experience of 25 years' practical working in every class of school, he was forced to the conclusion that a true teachers' work could not be assessed and tabulated by any system of figures. The "ideal" was the highest aim of education, and in Western Australia more inspectors were needed to enable their ideals to be realised. The inspectors were too busy. As a rule there was too much rush, too great a race with time to enable them to spend longer periods in the schools than they did at present. Increasing the number of inspectors would enable these "guides, counsellors, and friends" of the teachers to visit the larger schools, and those of easy access more frequently. This would give such a correct estimate of methods and progress of work that the inspectors' "annual" test could be dispensed with, and the millennium of the teachers begun. Any system of primary education could never be considered perfected while the gap between theory and practice remained unbridged. It would cost money, but an expenditure in this direction of £2,000 or £3,000 a year would do much to relieve the strain in the lives of hundreds of faithful men and women, and lead to the realisation of the highest ideals. The teachers, especially the thoughtful teachers, who were well versed in educational literature believed that the system of "inspectors' examinations" had done its duty, and that it would

not work in with present-day ideals. They did not condemn careful and frequent inspection, but welcomed the help that the experienced, practical, sympathetic inspector proffered. The teachers in Western Australia were anxious to help the department in this great work of nation-building, anxious to send forth from their schools loyal, courageous, thoughtful, honest, industrious men and women who in every way would be worthy of the traditions of their forefathers and strongly imbued with the desire to advance Australia.

#### Exchanging Teachers and Inspectors.

The Director of Education in Victoria (Mr. F. Tate, M.A.) has expressed the opinion that the suggested exchange of teachers and inspectors between the motherland and Australia would especially benefit the English teachers, who came out here. The methods of education in Australia were certainly not behind those in England, and with our freer conditions we had been able to introduce and launch schemes which would be impossible in more conservative countries. He would not be in favor of sending teachers to England, but thought that inspectors would gain a good deal of experience in organising, and the larger educational life. An Australian inspector of schools was in the position of a superintendent, and if he was a man of wide educational outlook, as he ought to be, his teachers would benefit by his added knowledge. Mr. Tate added that there were difficulties in the way of giving effect to the exchange proposal. The inspectorial staffs, for instance, were only sufficient to compass the work of the inspectorial districts. If a stranger were brought out, he would necessarily have to perform the full duties of an inspector, and as an inspector required training for his special work and knowledge of local circumstances, several months would be lost to the department by each exchange. He is confident that while the inspectorial staff of Victoria would be benefited by such a system of exchange, it could not be brought about under present conditions.

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### INTER-UNIVERSITY SPORTS.

The near approach of the period of the visit of the Sydney and Melbourne athletes for the inter-university sports, to be held in Adelaide, is stimulating activity in the ranks of local undergraduates. The championships will be decided on the first day of the meeting, June 3, and on the following Friday the open events will be contested. In these all three universities will be represented. The gathering will have the distinction of being the first occasion on which Adelaide University students will have an opportunity to secure the much-coveted new "blue." This badge is being evolved after much thought by the members of the association, who have been anxious to secure an emblem which shall be truly symbolical of Australia. Their desire in this direction seems likely to meet with conspicuous success, for out of the many designs submitted in response to the offer of awards there are several which strikingly fulfil the conditions imposed. The final decision of the members will be known in a few days. To possess his "blue" will be the ambition of every athlete among the undergraduates.