

UNIVERSITY GRADUATES A BUILDING WANTED. ANNUAL MEETING OF ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of the Graduates' Association of the University of Adelaide was held on Monday night. The president (Professor T. Brailsford Robertson) presided. The annual report referred to the great debt owed to Mr. D. H. Hollidge, who, in the capacity of secretary, had given loyal service ungrudgingly. The report also stated that in the last two months valuable assistance had been rendered by Mr. L. E. Clarke, who had shared onerous secretarial duties with Mr. Hollidge. One of the first actions of the committee had been to get into touch with the Universities' Bureau of the British Empire, an organisation formed in recent years to link together the universities of the Empire and to act as a clearing house for university information. The bureau promised to co-operate, and to register names of members when visiting England. The chairman of the world association for adult education (Mr. Albert Mansbridge) had promised similar assistance. The executive committee felt that one of the most valuable services it could perform for the university community was to hold general meetings and lectures, followed by discussions on themes raised. Plans had been prepared for a building for the use of members. The membership was now 105, of whom 19 were life members. This was a gratifying record for the inaugural year, but a disquieting feature was the small number of recent graduates in the membership. Of 78 who graduated in December only 14 had joined the association.

Professor Henderson discussed methods of raising funds to construct a union building in order to enable the students to take some advantage of corporate life, which was such a factor in building up the spirit of esprit de corps. There was not the same intensity of love for the Alma Mater in the University as there was among the colleges. The value of that spirit could not be over estimated. They wanted a hall where a meal once a day and social intercourse and educational evenings could be enjoyed, and various rooms provided to meet all conveniences. An estimate had been prepared, but the work planned would cost £20,000. He suggested they should appoint members to make personal appeals to individuals willing to help with substantial amounts of £10 or upwards. They should raise a fairly large sum before making a general appeal to the public. At a later stage they might ask graduates to become life members. There were 1200 of them. To show the outside public they were in earnest he felt they should make an appeal inside first. When a site was found, the Chancellor had promised him a donation of £1000, the Vice-Chancellor had promised £500, two others £500, two others £100, and four professors £100 each. Probably there were others who would do likewise if approached. On the question of site, he did not believe the University would be shifted from North terrace. Indeed, the Vice-Chancellor had authorised him to state that negotiations were proceeding with the Government, and there was every hope of them proving successful, whereby a central position would be found for the union hall behind the archives building. He had an idea, also, that the engineering building would be removed to the lower Exhibition Ground, but he could not state that definitely. They could not cultivate the corporate spirit without such a union building. (Applause.)

The chairman said that a debating hall would be an essential feature, in the proposed war memorial theatre, and students' union.

The plans of the proposed building were illustrated in a lantern lecture, and discussion and votes of thanks followed.

The election of officers resulted—Patron, Sir George Murray; president, Professor T. Brailsford Robertson; vice-president, Professor E. Harold Davies; treasurer, Mr. F. W. Eardley; committee, Misses M. C. Kitson and S. E. Jackson, Drs. Dorothea Pavy and Helen Mayo, Messrs. D. H. Hollidge, S. H. Skipper, and L. K. Ward.

MUSIC TEACHERS' CONFERENCE.

From EDWARD HOWARD, Angas-street.—Mr. Leumane, in his letter on the teaching of singing, puts his finger on one phase of the disease, viz., the evil results of faulty voice-production. No doubt "a drastic remedy is needed," but that remedy will never be found until the public are educated to understand the facts of the case. I fear Mr. Leumane's suggestions would not go to the root of the trouble, which is deeply seated. If registration of music teachers were brought about, the register would probably include most, if not all, of those from whom in this matter the public require protection. It is not so much quackery (which stands self-condemned), but incompetency in this particular subject on the part of persons possessing valid qualifications in other directions. And this incompetency is often unconscious, which makes it more difficult to deal with. In its bearing on this question "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread" may be paraphrased to read—The ignorant enter with assurance where the wise tread with caution. As regards the three major conditions for a singing teacher's diploma suggested by Mr. Leumane, No. 1, "that applicants themselves should have been taught in a reputed school," might easily exclude a competent while including an incompetent teacher. The faculty of voice-training is as much a gift for tone discrimination as a good ear is a gift for judging pitch. It is knowledge and practical efficiency that matters, whether learnt in a school or out of it. No. 2, "that they should have been before the public as paid vocalists for at least five years in a reputed sphere," would cut out some of the best qualified teachers and replace them with retired singers or vocalists taking "a spell," some of whom have been tried in Adelaide and found to be sadly wanting. No. 3, "that they should pass a

searching examination before a medical board in the physiology of the human voice," apart from its expense, would put a responsibility on the medical profession which I feel pretty certain they would not appreciate. I have been told by a leading doctor that the medical profession generally know little or nothing about the subject of voice production, and if that be so, I should, if the opportunity arose, be pleased to put the broad principles of the subject before members of the local branch of the British Medical Association. A certain amount of physiological knowledge may be good and necessary, but unless it is combined with the voice-training faculty is likely to prove an unsuspected snare. Learners are told to beware of the physiological teacher—one who puts physiology first. The judicious teaching of singing is a conundrum, but its difficulties and pitfalls must be probed and recognised if they are ever to be remedied.

Register 20/7/21

JOSEPH FISHER LECTURE.

Persons interested in the lecture on "Currency and prices in Australia," recently given by Professor Copland, may now obtain copies on application to the University.

Register 20/7/21

Lady Weigall was present at the first of Professor Robertson's lectures on "The physiology of everyday life," which was delivered at the University of Adelaide on Tuesday evening.

"MAN, A PARASITE."

PHYSIOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

Professor T. Brailsford Robertson began a series of three lectures on "The physiology of everyday life" on Tuesday evening in connection with the Adelaide University extension lectures. His subject is to be divided into three sections, which will be headed "Nutrition," "External factors of growth," and "Internal factors of growth." The Prince of Wales Theatre was crowded, and among the deeply interested listeners was Lady Weigall. The lecturer began by saying that food was such a commonplace subject—indeed, it was such a daily occurrence—that perhaps he ought to apologise for venturing to talk about it. But there were several aspects that were not known as they should be. There was no doubt about the constituents or the quantity of food to be supplied to a steam engine or an aeroplane, and no doubt concerning what results would be achieved. But there was hesitation in deciding the elements and effects of food on the most complex of machines, to wit, the human body.

—Many Forms Yet No Change.—There were substances, said the lecturer, which could be made to undergo certain changes, yet which, through them all, remained the same. They were what chemists called elements, and with one or two exceptions they were immutable. They could be changed in form, and yet could be reverted back to their original form. Their intermediary forms went to show that things were not always what they seemed. Lead, for instance, if exposed to the action of vinegar, could be converted into a crystalline substance (acetic acid), altogether different to the dull inert metal. The acid could be drawn off, and the substance was transformed into red oxide. By intense heat the oxide could be dissipated, and the original dull old lead, with which the experiment started, would reveal itself. Alter its form as the chemist would, it was lead all through. There were several elements, but their number was limited, and, like the illustration he had mentioned of lead, they might pass through cycles only to return to their original form. He had mentioned that there were one or two exceptions. One was radium, which did undergo changes and give rise to other elements. The chemist had proved that merely chemical alterations of the common elements or their combinations with others did not alter the amount of the original element. No matter what was used there still remained returnable the same quantity after it had undergone the different processes. That law of the conservation of matter applied no less rigidly to the matter which passed through the systems of living beings than to inanimate nature. The human being could not create one single atom of an element, nor could he destroy one single atom. He could only use them for his own ends. He was utilizing elements every moment of his life, and was discharging them as waste products, but he was not destroying them. He called upon to work for him a certain amount of carbon, of hydrogen, of nitrogen, of oxygen, and other elements, but notwithstanding that their quantities in the world were unalterable. Just as much hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, and carbon must be restored as was taken into the living system, otherwise man and other animate creatures would vanish. Human beings absorbed them as foodstuffs and as liquids. One element was especially important to keep the human engine at work. It was nitrogen. It largely went to make up the atmosphere, yet, strange to say, we could not use it in the form in which it existed in the air. In that form it was useless to animals. While we were in the presence of an abundance of nitrogen, it was in reality another version of "water, water everywhere, yet not a drop to drink." Man uses three nitrogen in some particular forms, and those forms were known as proteins, which were nothing more or less than immensely complicated forms of nitrogen united with hundreds of atoms of hydrogen or oxygen or carbon.

—Whence, and How Much?—Humanity was much concerned with the question of how much of this or that particular type of nitrogen existed, and whence it came. It was derived in the one place from the animal foods which we consumed, such as meat or milk or eggs. But where did the animals get it? They got it from members of the vegetable kingdom. We could procure it and use it from the same source, but in a more wasteful way than vegetation-consuming animals could. There was the other question of where did plants receive their nitrogen from? There arose the matter of dependence upon the lowly and unseen forms of life. The plants derived nitrogen in a different manner to the animals. The latter got the element in a way that it was already prepared for them. Vegetation started on a lower scale. They began with the nitrate in the soil, the food animals ate the vegetation and we

from four to five. Simple pitch tests were carried out with remarkable results in very elementary singing. A good deal of emphasis was placed on the value of allowing the children to correct each other's mistakes. An illustration of this was given by allowing one child to indicate on the blackboard the particular notes being sung, and the class to say if an error occurred, and they were not slow to detect any slip. All would go well until a wrong note was pointed to, when each child who detected the mistake would put up a hand, and one would be selected to say what note should have been shown. The intelligence with which these simple

devices were followed was quite surprising. Sight-singing from the blackboard, too, was a revelation to most of those present. A number of lessons for the cultivation of the ear formed an interesting part of the demonstration. Miss Sterry holds that it is as natural for children to make their own tunes, when rightly directed, as it is for them to dance to music. In proof of this she sang a line of some nursery rhyme to an impromptu tune, and left the children in turn to supply a tune to the following line. The value of this, it was pointed out, was that it developed originality. She explained that at this early stage the whole thing was play, and it should not be attempted to make it anything else.

With a class of girls and boys of 12, some wonderful results were obtained in sight-reading, key transposition, and the adaptation of the tonic solfa notation to a chart of the keyboard of a piano. Physical exercises in which the class responded to the indications of cadence formed a part of the demonstration. After demonstrations of the manner in which the sense of time and pitch was developed separately, other blackboard exercises were given in which the two were blended. The elder girls also gave displays of physical responsiveness to musical ideas.

That the system develops faculties in a remarkable degree and conduces to alertness on the part of the pupils was apparent from the readiness with which any mistake made by the child chosen to demonstrate was detected and corrected by the other members of the class. Even when Miss Sterry made a slip in transcribing on the blackboard a time measure played on the piano—she was explaining the method as well as illustrating it—the mistake was instantly noted by the children, who directed her attention to it. Specimens of youthful composition previously prepared by some of the pupils were presented, and here again it was evident that the faculties were really being developed.

Speaking of the aesthetical side, Miss Sterry said it was important, if they wished to sow the seed of a musical nation, to remember that to the child with a lively imagination music was something very wonderful. Programme rather than pure music was suitable to the child-mind. To cultivate the imaginative sense in children it was a good plan to play a piece of music and get them to suggest a suitable name for it. She had on one occasion played three brief passages from different oratorios by Elgar and asked the children to say what they suggested. The answers were decidedly good in most cases. Through appreciation of programme music children could be led to appreciate absolute music. Last year she took a little party to an orchestral concert. They had studied the special themes of the Haydn Symphony, with the result that even the 10-year-old children were able to understand and enjoy the concert. (Applause.)

At the close of the lecture Dr. Davies expressed the appreciation of the conference to Miss Sterry. The demonstrations had supplied a convincing proof of the possibility of developing faculty by the application of right methods. It had been shown that there was every justification for the claim that music was a language. To those who understood it, it meant something quite definite. It was full of life and meaning for all. By the method they had witnessed the vital faculty of concentrated attention, which was of so much importance in the study of music, was developed. (Applause.)

Thanks to Professor Davies.

On the motion of Mr. A. Paddy, seconded by Dr. Ruby Davy, it was resolved that—"We, the members of this conference of music teachers, most heartily thank Professor Davies, Director of the Elder Conservatorium of Music, for arranging and conducting the conference. We greatly appreciate all that he has said and done towards making it a success, and we also ask Professor Davies to convey our thanks to all who have in various ways assisted him."