

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

NO DEMAND BY THE PUBLIC.

"There is a good deal of truth in that statement," was the comment of Mr. W. T. McCoy (Director of Education), when interviewed yesterday by a representative of "The Advertiser" regarding the remark of Mr. S. H. Smith (Director of Education in New South Wales), that the Education Department was unable to force agricultural education on an unwilling people.

There was only one Agricultural High School in the State at present, said Mr. McCoy. Four years ago the course was not popular, but under Mr. Hilton considerable progress had been made. It was probable that in the near future consideration would be given to proposals for extending the benefits available at Murray Bridge to certain High Schools in suitable country districts. No demand, however, had been made by the outside public for such an extension. In the large majority of cases in country centres parents were more anxious that their children should receive the same type of education as that given in the city, irrespective of the future needs of their children.

That Mr. McCoy is alive to the importance of providing for agricultural education is evident from the following extract from his report made on his trip abroad last year:—"It is recommended that more adequate provision be made for teaching elementary agriculture, woodwork, and domestic science in rural schools, and to this end—(a) That a system of bonuses be inaugurated to encourage the teaching of these subjects, such bonuses to be paid on the certificate of the special officer to those teachers who having obtained the prescribed qualification, have done satisfactory work in their schools; (b) That an allowance for the purchase of seeds, manures, water, fencing, &c., be paid on the £1 for £1 principle, and on the recommendation of the special officer to schools with a qualified teacher; (c) That a special officer be appointed, in the first case, for a period of three years, to organise, supervise, and encourage the teaching of these subjects in rural schools, and to organise and foster boys' and girls' agricultural clubs. Such an officer would be expected to cooperate with the local agricultural societies and to use all reasonable means to stimulate public interest in the work of the school and clubs."

Mr. McCoy was also interested in the cable message in "The Advertiser" yesterday stating that Empire scholarships were to be established. Education by travel such as this scheme would provide for would, he said, be a very fine thing.

Dr. Eric F. Gartrell, of Adelaide, has gained the diploma of Member of the Royal College of Physicians (London). After receiving his early education at the State schools, he won a Government scholarship at St. Peter's College. There he gained a "medical" bursary, and after five successful years at the Adelaide University graduated in medicine in 1921.



A JOURNEY ACROSS THE ANDES.

At the Stow Lecture Hall, Flinders-street, to-night, Professor T. Harvey Johnston, Dr. Sc. of the Adelaide University, will give an interesting illustrated lantern lecture to the members of the Carnation, Dahlia, and Sweet Pea Society and their friends. It is entitled "A Journey Across the Andes." Visitors will be welcomed.

PERSONALITY AND GOD.

THE REALITY OF IDEALS.

The final lecture of a series dealing with the philosophic study of the nature of personality was delivered by Professor J. McKellar Stewart in the Prince of Wales Theatre at the University on Tuesday evening. The previous lectures had dealt with the machine and the individual, and in the concluding address Professor Stewart spoke of the standpoint of Philosophical Idealism and its relations to art, morality, and religion.

The lecturer considered the problem of the relation between mind and body had proved one of the most recalcitrant to philosophic thought. The fact from which to start was that of a living, thinking organism. But most of the traditional theories from that of Descartes onward involved a presupposition, the very nature of which rendered them inadequate. Those theories came under three main heads, explaining the relation between mind and body as either one of interaction or one of parallelism, or one of epi-phenomenalism. They all set out from a common presupposition that the body was merely a machine. The problem assumed a more hopeful form, however, if they rejected this idea and frankly recognised the characteristic features of the organism. Dr. Head, the well-known neurologist, has recently argued on the basis of experimental observation that the organism acted as a whole, and that in this action it exhibited the essential elements of purposive adaptation. He described the vigilance of the organism, which was a characteristic of the organism as a whole. He argued that the central nervous system did not function on the principle of an automatic machine, but exercised, for example, selection among the diverse and massive influences acting on the organism from within. If they followed the clue here given the problem of the mind-body relation assumed a different form from that which it had traditionally taken. It was that of explaining how body as a living unity was included in the higher unity of mind, takes up into mind and thus raised to a higher power. The question was ultimately the philosophical one of the relation of mind to Nature, and the principle to be held firmly was that neither life nor mind was foreign or alien to Nature. The physical the vital, and the conscious were elements or stages, in the one total process. Neither life nor mind were intrusions in a world organised on other principles, they were rather the flowers of the process of Nature, and the task was to show that mind had its beginnings in Nature, and to trace the development by which those beginnings had evolved into self-conscious mind through the living organism. That task could be achieved only by the cooperation of the physical scientist, the biologist, and the philosopher.

With regard to moral personality, reference to such typical thinkers as Descartes and Plato showed that one main contention of idealistic philosophy had been that the self had contact with a spiritual order of reality. In its specific activity, exhibited in the disinterested pursuit of truth, in moral aspiration, and the appreciation of beauty, the self was conscious of the presence in its experience of ideals, operative powers which were not of the self's creating, but which possessed a nature of their own. The essential parts of the human spirit was to incorporate and actualise those in its own thought and activity. Morality began when the line was crossed which marked the boundary of natural impulse. The sub-moral life was moved by appetite and impulse, and by habit based on impulse. Here was the instinct of spiritual self-preservation, an instinct stimulated to action by the soliciting presence of the ideal right. With the emergence of this mental or spiritual or rational impulse the moral life set out upon its adventurous career. The reach of the moral agent always exceeded his grasp; but insofar as he did lay hold of the ideal right, he translated it into principles which ordered and harmonised his desires and will, and at the same time constituted the moving power to further advance. It was this power to frame, and consequently to follow an ideal which constituted man's nature as a rational creature. In the power of the rational being to lay hold of the objective ideal and to make it the informing power of his experience he proclaimed his freedom in the only sense of the word worth contending for. When asked what was the source of those ideals and their meaning in human life, the religious consciousness replied that they constituted "the presence of God within us." The Divine nature expressed itself in the fundamental structure of reality. The most real thing in human experience were the ideals by laying hold of which they were raised to personality. In laying hold of those they were at once apprehending and being apprehended by God.

THE PLANET MARS.

NEAR THE EARTH.

POSITION FAVORABLE FOR OBSERVATION.

Our most interesting neighbor in the solar system, Mars, will for the next two months be better situated for observation than it has been for over 120 years.

The Government Astronomer (Mr. G. F. Dodwell) contributes the following notes regarding Mars:—

The planet Mars is now in an exceptionally favorable position for observation by observers in the Southern Hemisphere. It is at opposition, that is, in a direct line with the earth and the sun, and on the opposite side of the earth from the sun in the early morning of August 24. On account of the eccentricity of the Martian and terrestrial orbits, however, the planet will be nearest to us on August 23 at 9.30 a.m., 17 hours earlier. It will then be nearer to us than it has been since before 1800, or than it will be again until after the year 2,000. At the nearest point we shall be within 34,630,000 miles of the planet. The planet Venus comes closer than this, viz., to within 26 million miles, but it is then between us and the sun, so that we only see it as a thin crescent. Mars, however, being outside the earth's orbit, shows a full surface, illuminated when it is at the point nearest to us. The changes which take place upon its surface can be watched this year for some months. Its position in August and September being from 17 to 18 deg. S. of the Celestial Equator, it is much better situated for us in the Southern Hemisphere than for northern observers.

Mars will present a larger disc than it has done for many years, its maximum diameter on August 22 being 25 seconds of arc, i.e., about equal to three-quarters that of Jupiter at the same time. It passes its winter solstice for its northern hemisphere on October 5, and we shall consequently get an excellent view of the southern hemisphere of the planet and the polar cap in that hemisphere is conspicuous. At opposition it rises at sunset, and is overhead at midnight.

As Mars takes a little more than half an hour longer to rotate on its axis than the earth does, different portions of its surface successively come into view, and it is of great interest to study and make careful drawings of the surface markings. Some of the markings are permanent, and others change, and Professor Pickering suggests that those who possess filar micrometers should make as many determinations as possible of the latitudes of certain selected points, not only to confirm the position of the axis of rotation, which appears to have changed in relation to these points (or rather it should be said that the positions of the markings have changed with respect to the axis), but also to determine the nature of the shifts in the location of these markings, how far they are seasonal, and how far irregular in the nature of a week to week shift in position. Professor Pickering considers there is no question now but that the shifts occur, and their extent is small, hardly exceeding the width of a wide Martian canal, and it is for this reason that independent observations are necessary to confirm and measure them.

Another point of interest to observe is whether the changes are most marked before or after passing the central meridian, this being linked up with the question of the influence of the sun's rays on their development. The presence of white clouds concealing some of the dark portions of the disc may be looked for, also the changes in the green color of the southern markings, and the appearance of the canals and the seasonal change in the polar cap.

NORMAN LINDSAY'S PICTURES.

From Mrs. J. R. WILTON:—I rejoice to see Professor Coleman Phillipson's fine article on Norman Lindsay's pictures, and cordially endorse every word of it. It is high time that all of us who really know something about great art should speak out, and no longer allow the public to be humbugged into accepting indecency as beauty.

From P. H. ARBER:—The perverted art of Norman Lindsay is a testing ground whereby each individual looking upon it finds either his spiritual strength or weakness. In the pictures there is a direct appeal to the desire attribute of man. Much harm may result from the inspection of these pictures by sexual perverts, who, upon leaving, would hold their images in their minds for some time after,

in some cases with dire results. Those, however, who are able to control the desire attribute, would not be blind to the appeal in the pictures, but, having spiritual strength, would leave the gallery and immediately occupy their minds with the higher and nobler callings in life. Each man is the master of his own destiny, and it therefore rests with him whether Norman Lindsay's pictures drag him down into the mire or leave him there.

From "G.L.":—Professor Phillipson's article has confirmed my original doubts regarding Mr. Norman Lindsay's exhibition. The impression I derived from my first visit to the gallery was that Mr. Lindsay's work was intended solely for experts in progressive art, and that its public exhibition would defeat its end. Since he has chosen to use, instead of a tack hammer, a sledge hammer in attacking the conventions that have cumbered expression for centuries, it is inevitable that there will be protests from the conservative public. There always have been people who will go out of their way to hamper and hinder—even destroy—those whose aim is advancement. I will not presume to write a defence of the pictures themselves, but in regard to the medium—I speak of the "objectionable" pen-and-ink drawings—there is much scope for controversy in what Professor Phillipson says. For one thing, he calls for idealisation of the existent. With the advantages of color this is rather a tall order. Where Nature is concerned, the existent is the ideal, and any attempt to gild the lily savors of blasphemy. Most artists (including great artists), in attempting idealism, arrive at a boring travesty. With the greater limits of black-and-white it is essential, therefore, to have a definite motive, and satire suggests itself. In this respect some of Mr. Lindsay's work comes very near to the moralising that Professor Phillipson disclaims. The ambiguous comments itself only to those who understand it, and for that reason it is a pity that the general, one-idea public should be at liberty to view and criticise such sublime subtlety as Mr. Lindsay's. To ask an artist in pen-and-ink to make a picture of green fields and running brooks amounts to asking Shakespeare to write an advertisement for canned tomatoes. If either of them stuck to facts (which is unlikely) the finished article would be beautifully handled, no doubt, but scarcely likely to outlive its perpetrator. Most people think that Titian, Velasquez, & Co. are beyond criticism. This is far from the truth, as an extensive study of their works will show. Titian was a colorist who was guilty of some hideous blunders in construction and composition, and Velasquez was responsible for quite a lot of "gross exaggeration and grotesque distortion." Michael Angelo, Raphael, and their respective schools painted neither for art's nor life's sake, but for the sake of glory and a good living, as their fawning and pandering to the powerful reveals. None of them was above painting a figure upside down if it fitted his decorative scheme. Mr. Lindsay's work admits no precedent, so, having no guide, we must view it with a perfectly open mind. If we were as far above vice as we pretend to be we would put a different significance into his work.

From "E.W.P.":—Art should be neither moral nor immoral—just the truth. But the great majority, who are optimists, who believe that "the soul of things is sweet," will require that the artist shall exalt the good and the true as well as the beautiful. On the other hand, to expect him to conform to morality, which is only the average moral use of a particular age, and which is changing every day, is merely to bring him down to the common level. And how can we expect him to inspire, instruct, and raise under such bondage? Norman Lindsay's pictures are only the expression in art of a movement fairly general through all our Australian life, and expressed perhaps most forcibly in physical culture. It is a greater care, respect, and admiration for the physical body. In cold countries like England and Northern Europe, where thick, warm clothes and cosy houses are so essential, naturally drapings and furnishings come to be looked on, even in the realm of art, as of more importance than the physical body which they were intended to serve. But just as naturally here in Australia, where clothes are at times more of an encumbrance than a comfort, we are gradually learning to discard them, not only physically, but also in our thought; and on the other hand to exalt the physical body, with all its wonderful functions, to its rightful place. And that is where Norman Lindsay comes in. Instead of beautiful and ugly dressings, country landscapes and factory chimneys, he portrays delightful and repulsive human forms, emphasising, as is the artist's function, the beauty in the first and the ugliness in the second. Take the picture called "The Birth of Life" as an example. This in Lindsay's original style is a portrayal of a mystical subject, which has been treated over and over again in all branches of art, and variously styled "The Fall of Man," "The Struggle Between the God and the Beast in Man," &c. At the top of the picture is seen a crowd of beautiful nude figures (you surely would not dress the soul in clothes), being as it were hurled down into the lower regions of the brute, where on the ground repulsive forms, half man and half beast, are seen to clasp them.