

The Advertiser
17th September 1898

"Advertiser" 20th September 1898

FERTILISATION OF FLOWERS.

The first of a new series of University extension lectures was delivered by Professor Tate on Thursday evening to a large attendance of students, the subject being "The fertilisation of flowers." The series, which will be illustrated throughout by lantern views, will, to judge by the first one, be intensely interesting as well as instructive. The syllabus indicates only in a general way the scope of the subject, and the sequence of its main details. But it is anticipated that the lectures, particularly the earlier ones, will deal with matters not announced in the syllabus, and the information to be communicated will be adjusted to an average of 20 slides to be exhibited each evening. The object of the first lecture was to trace the various modes of reproduction in plants from the lowly-organised yeast plant to the highest form of vegetation, as in an ordinary flower. The asexual reproduction of the yeast plant by budding and cell division was illustrated, and in a somewhat modified form that of the motile algal plant—volvox. Then followed the foreshadowing of sexuality as seen in the green thread-like plants of our running streams, called confervae. Whilst the more complex methods of sexual reproduction in the higher flowerless plants were illustrated in some detail in the life cycle of a fern plant. The larger subject of "How flowers marry" was introduced by demonstrations on the structure of a flower, the forms of stamens, pollen, stigmas, and ovaria. The lecture was practically only an introduction to the series, and it is anticipated that the interest will be well maintained right through. These extension lectures are most valuable to those who can only spare a little time in the evenings to devote to the acquisition of scientific knowledge, and the University authorities and professors who contribute subjects are to be most heartily commended for their desire to give the general public opportunities of extending their knowledge and broadening their views of life.

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PUBLIC TEACHERS' UNION.

THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The third annual conference of the South Australian Public Teachers' Union was opened on Monday morning in the Trades Hall. The president (Mr. M. M. Maughan) occupied the chair, and there was a large attendance.

The President, in his opening remarks, congratulated the teachers upon meeting in congress for the third time, and upon the spirit of union and trust in themselves and in one another which was growing stronger year by year. (Applause.) Scattered through the length and breadth of their country as they were, opportunities of intercourse seldom occurred, and it was only by making some sacrifice of their convenience that they could meet in that manner. There could be no question as to the value and utility of such gatherings or of their beneficial influence both upon themselves and their work. He proposed to make a brief statement of the principal matters that had been dealt with since the last conference. During the past twelve months the executive committee had closely watched the progress of events, and had not hesitated to take such action as had seemed necessary. The committee had met every month and had dealt with a large number of questions submitted to them by associations. They had been met in a most kindly spirit by the Board of Inspectors and by the Minister of Education, and they desired to express their thanks to those gentlemen for their consideration. (Applause.) The resolutions passed at the last congress were forwarded to the Board of Inspectors, and their replies would be read to them. While they regretted that many of them were unfavorable, they felt sure that the board desired to meet their wishes as far as was possible, and that they were actuated, as they were themselves, by a sincere desire to do everything for the benefit of the whole service. (Applause.) The committee had been unable to deal with several matters referred to them by last congress from lack of sufficient definite information. The executive had collected a mass of information with regard to the rent of and repair to teachers' houses, and they hoped soon to take further steps in the matter. On the resignation of Mr. Assistant-Inspector Gamble a letter was written to the Minister of Education, urging the appointment of a full inspector, and again in June last a second letter was sent respectfully protesting against the appointment of an assistant inspector. These letters they believed to express the views of the teachers, and they proposed to ask them at a later stage of the congress for an expression of opinion on their action. On the appointment of Dr. Cockburn as Agent-General the committee waited on him and presented a letter of congratulation in the name of the union. (Applause.) They also, in the name of the union, addressed a letter of congratulation to Sir Langdon Bonython on the occasion of his knighthood by her Majesty. (Applause.) They could not but recognise that they owed a debt of gratitude to Sir Langdon for the deep interest he had constantly taken in the work of education and the kindness and consideration he had shown to teachers, both individually and as a body. (Applause.) Last year he referred to the establishment of the Federal Council of the Public Service. This body had met frequently during the year, and had considered at great length the Public Service Bill which the Government had in view. They had made a number of recommendations to the Chief Secretary, and they expected that the results would be beneficial to the whole service. Their representatives had carefully watched the interests of the members of the education

service. Much time and trouble had been spent over the formation of a plan for the publication of a teachers' paper. They had made, subject to approval, what they believed to be the best arrangement at present possible. The whole matter would be fully laid before them at a later stage and he asked their most careful consideration of the question. Another matter of importance was the securing of a sort of clubroom at which teachers could meet, and which should be at the same time a rendezvous and resting-place for country teachers when visiting the city. (Applause.) The committee had also brought before the Board of Inspectors the question of the issue of certificates to teachers, supply of apparatus to schools, the issue of a new copy-book for class V., a plan for the benefit of teachers who wished to study agronomy during the holidays, and the reading prescribed for class II. It had been suggested that branch congresses might be held in various country centres, and it must be agreed that these would be productive of great benefit. At the general conference there was so much business to be dealt with that it was hardly possible either to give sufficient time for discussion or to deal at all with many matters of considerable interest and importance. The Easter and the midwinter holidays afforded opportunities for such meetings, and they might hope that next year would see their establishment. (Applause.) Mr. Whillas, Mr. Harry, and the president, who were the delegates at the Melbourne Congress last Easter, were received with the greatest cordiality and were most kindly entertained. They now welcomed with much pleasure Messrs. Lewis and Rennick, and Mr. Potter (the editor of the "Australasian Schoolmaster"), who represented Victoria there that day, and their pleasure was increased by the fact that Mrs. Potter accompanied her husband. (Applause.) It was much regretted that during the past year it had only been possible for members of the executive to visit associations once or twice. They would like to be able to do much more in this direction, but it seemed hardly possible. Should branch congresses be held it was probable that some members might be able to attend them. He need hardly remind them that the second anniversary of the death of their late revered chief had just passed. Their hearts were full of sympathy with the lady whose loss was greater even than theirs, but he was proud to think their aims were still as high as when he was with them, that his spirit actuated them, and would continue to do so, and that the edifice he reared would be supported and maintained by a band of earnest and devoted men and women, who esteemed nothing so highly as their duty, and the truest welfare of those under their charge. (Loud applause.) Their greatest need was union—mutual sympathy and support—a community of interest. Let them strengthen their association by every possible means, not looking merely to the present or to their personal wants, but in order that they might help those who needed aid, and by meeting together gain the knowledge of one another that led to fellowship and mutual confidence. (Loud applause.)

The Secretary (Mr. John Harry) read the annual report, which stated that there had been a few changes made in the personnel of the executive committee since last conference. Mr. R. Hand, the corresponding secretary, had resigned his position in March last, and Mr. A. H. Neale had been elected to fill his place. The executive placed on record its appreciation of the work of Mr. Hand in connection with the establishment of the union. Mr. Sullivan having resigned early in the year Mr. Cherry had been appointed to fill the vacant position. The executive had been called upon to spend a great deal of time and thought upon the work of the union. Twelve meetings had been held in addition to the delegates' meeting at Easter, and a great number of committee meetings throughout the year. During the last nine months the average attendance of members had been seven out of twelve on the committee. The Easter meeting had been well attended by delegates from all parts of the colony. It was decided that the next general committee meeting should take place on

the Saturday following Good Friday of next year. Although they knew wherein they could work with more effect, if it were not for the cost entailed, yet they felt that they have the confidence of the public in the work in which they were engaged, and that they were expected to do their best to maintain the efficiency of the schools. The support given to the teachers by the public and the press in the colony imposes on them the obligation to in no way fall short in the performance of the high duties involved in their position.

The President moved that the new president be requested to wait upon Mrs. J. A. Hartley to convey to her the expression of the continued sympathy of the association.

Mr. R. T. Bernard seconded, and the motion was carried.

It was also agreed to place a wreath on Mr. Hartley's grave.

At 11 o'clock the conference was formally opened by his Honor the Chief Justice, who was accompanied by Mrs. Way, Lady Victoria Buxton and Captain Guise were also in attendance. There were on the platform the Minister of Education, Messrs. L. W. Stanton (chairman), T. Burgan, and C. L. Whitham (members of the Board of Inspectors), and H. A. Curtis (secretary), Inspector McNamara, Inspectors Clark, J. T. Smyth, I. A. Plummer, W. L. Neale, and Gell, Professors Tate and Mitchell, the Rev. W. Potter (editor of the "Australasian Schoolmaster"), Messrs. Lewis and Rennick (from Victoria), the Hon. F. Baskin, G. McGregor, W. A. Robinson, R. S. Guthrie, Messrs. J. T. Scherk, M.P., W. H. Carpenter, M.P., J. Hutchison, M.P., R. Wood, M.P., T. Price, M.P., F. J. Hourigan, M.P., and I. McGillivray, M.P.

The Chief Justice prefaced his remarks by extending a hearty welcome to Lady Victoria Buxton, who had given significant evidence of the warm interest she had taken in the cause of education since her arrival in South Australia. (Cheers.) He expressed his appreciation of the honor conferred upon him in asking him to open the conference. (Cheers.) The office has

then filled had had distinction given to it by reason of the circumstance that his Excellency the Governor and Dr. Cockburn had previously performed similar functions. That morning's position recalled to his mind many old associations. He remembered that a quarter of a century ago he was a member of the old Education Council. It was the Boucaut Ministry, of which he was a member, that passed the Education Act in 1875. That measure was drafted by Sir James Penn Boucaut, and he had the privilege of revising and settling it. It was introduced into Parliament by the then Minister of Education (the Hon. E. Ward) in a speech of remarkable eloquence and foresight, and owing to that Minister's and the Premier's courtesy he had the privilege of carrying it through committee. He was proudest of the fact that he had the honor of nominating the late Mr. J. A. Hartley, and that it was by his personal influence with his colleagues that that gentleman was appointed permanent official head of the education system in South Australia. He had been invited to open the gathering on account of his connection with the University of Adelaide between which and the public school's system of South Australia there was such close relationship. Quite four-fifths of the University students from its commencement to the present time had had their educational gradus ad Parnassum in the public schools of South Australia, and scholars from those schools had been amongst their most brilliant graduates appointed to many distinctions. He also recalled the fact that a large number of students had had the advantage of the liberal scholarships which were available through the bounty of successive Ministers and Parliaments of South Australia. On the other hand, several of the teachers in the public schools had graduated at the University. The higher public regulations were expressly framed for the benefit of teachers. In their elementary schools a number of the members of the profession were taking advantage of those regulations with a view to graduating at the University. In addition to that the public schools had undoubtedly shared in the educational stimulus which had been given throughout the colony by the University, and year after year still larger numbers of the scholars of the schools of the State went up for the preliminary examinations. In the examinations held that very month out of 594 candidates 115, or nearly one-fifth of the total were sent up from the State schools. (Cheers.) For nearly 20 years the late Vice-Chancellor of the University, and their late Inspector-General, was the living link between the University and the State schools system. His virile personality impressed itself upon the University only less strongly than it did upon the public schools system, and its beneficial effects would be quite as permanent with the one institution as with the other. (Cheers.) "His memory long would live alone in all their hearts like mournful light that broods above the fallen sun, and dwells in heaven half the night." (Cheers.) He wished to discuss the proposal that had been made by the University Council to make the connection between the University and the public schools closer, more permanent, and more beneficial than ever. He referred to the offer that had been made by the University Council to take over the Training College and undertake the responsibilities of the training of the candidates for teachers in the public schools, and to do all that free of any cost whatever to the public revenue. (Cheers.) He would not refer to the question if it were a political or controversial one, but it had received the approval of a body of experts more competent to express an opinion, perhaps, than any body of men and women in South Australia. He referred to the teachers themselves. It had been advocated in "The Advertiser" that morning, and it had received the approval of Dr. Cockburn. The present Minister of Education was also good enough, on a public occasion and in his place in Parliament, to express a wish that the proposal should be carried out, and in the recent interesting discussion on secondary schools in the House of Assembly members supporting the Government and members of her Majesty's Opposition expressed strong approval of this idea. The proposal had its origin in the munificent bequest of the late Sir Thomas Elder. The council of the University, in casting about for the best means of giving the widest possible effect to the bequest, came to the conclusion that the beneficent objects of the testator would be best accomplished by a step which would give the University a beneficial influence over every child in South Australia for all time through the medium of the public schools. (Cheers.) The proposal was formulated 15 or 18 months ago, when he was on the other side of the world, and the authorship was due to Professor Mitchell—(cheers)—who, as a graduate of a Scotch university, a former member of the teaching staff of University College, London, an examiner of secondary schools for the University of Cambridge. He had an intimate knowledge of the education question in every aspect, and had brought to South Australia an enthusiasm in its favor which was kindled in the old country. (Cheers.) The proposal of the University was not intended in any way to disparage or undervalue all that had been done for the advancement of elementary education in South Australia under the leadership of the late Mr. J. A. Hartley. (Cheers.) Less was it intended to disparage the gifts or qualifications or the excellent work which had been done by the teachers of the public schools of South Australia. The extension of elementary education was a necessary corollary in the demoralisation of their institutions. "We must next," said the late Robert Lowe, in one of his famous speeches, "attend to the education of our masters." The English Elementary Education Act was only passed five years before the South Australian Act of 1875. The extension of elementary education required two conditions. The first was efficiency, the second cheapness. In estimating the result of the first they must not forget the limitations cast upon them by the second. In South Australia, however, they need not fear any criticism of quality of the work which had been done at the public schools, and they need not screen themselves behind any limits.