

UNIVERSITY TRAINING COLLEGE.

The superintendent of students (Mr. A. Scott), in his report, remarks:—In January 33 students were admitted on the usual month's probation; of these 18, or 50 per cent., were males—a much larger proportion than has yet been admitted in any one year. This is a matter for congratulation, in view of the recent losses the Education Department has sustained through the departure of a large number of our young and promising teachers to another State in the Commonwealth. With the exception of one all these students finished their first year of training, the one exception being allowed to resign at the end of March to take a position in the Commonwealth service. The history of these students shows that before entering the University all but seven had attended the Pupil Teachers' School for either one or two years, and 31 out of the 36 had completed the requirements for the certificate of the senior public examination, while the remaining five had passed in either three or four of the five subjects necessary for that certificate. All had been through the preliminary course of study, which is regarded as the proper preparation for entrance to the University lecture room. In addition to the 36 who began the first year's work in January, 31 students returned for a second year's training—thus making a total of 67, the largest number ever present at one time in the history of the Training College. The results of the examinations held during the year, including subjects for the arts degree and the senior and junior public examinations, may be regarded as satisfactory; but one unsatisfactory feature about them is that 11 students failed to pass in a single subject and seven others succeeded in only one subject, though all of the 18 had been through senior work, and with four exceptions had gained the senior certificate. This seems to me to indicate that a large percentage of the students who come to the University are not capable of doing the work satisfactorily, even though they have previously passed the senior examination. Of course this is looking at the question purely from the examination side; and I am well aware that the results of the work cannot all be tabulated in the list of passes at the end of the year. I have had splendid opportunities of seeing how the very atmosphere of the University and the influence of the professors have been an inspiration to many a student, who, judged by the examination test, would have been counted as a failure; and this inspiration must be regarded as a very fine influence on the lives and characters of our young teachers. Still, the question remains—"It is advisable that all the pupil teachers who have satisfactorily completed their four years' work shall be allowed to enter the University?" In considering what can be done to meet the difficulty which the present system involves there seem to me to be two alternatives—(1) The possibility of modifying the University course in some subjects, and the introduction of such subjects as botany, biology, and geology, which would be very valuable in view of the increasing importance of nature study in public schools; (2) the establishment of a high school for those who by their previous records have shown that, though they are likely to do well as ordinary teachers, they are not capable of doing the regular University work. The first of these suggestions is, I am afraid, hardly practicable at present, as it would involve a considerable amount of additional work for the University staff, which is already working at high pressure; and the generosity of the University council would be further taxed by the extra expenditure of money which would be needed for such an alteration. Perhaps the difficulty might for the present be overcome by the appointment of two or three specialists to the Pupil Teachers' School, to which the less gifted pupil teachers of the third and fourth grade might be sent for special work in the branches of work I have indicated, and, in addition, they might give a greater amount of time to practical teaching than is practicable under the present system. If some such arrangement could be made, it would be possible to secure better results from the whole scheme of training by having two

distinct sets of students, each pursuing a course of study and preparation for their future work better adapted to their individual capabilities. Few people who have not been students at a university know the great difference there is between the work of a school and that of a university. In the former there is a comparatively small amount of work to be done, and individual help can always be given; in the latter the work is far more advanced and much wider in range, and, of necessity, the students have to depend largely on their own efforts, as one of the most important lessons which a university course teaches is that of self-dependence. Another aspect of the question is that passing the senior examination may really mean very little as a preparation for a university course, as success in any five out of the 14 subjects is sufficient to gain the senior certificate. The majority of my students come to me with passes in (1) English, (2) arithmetic and algebra, (3) geometry, (4) trigonometry, and (5) physics or chemistry; about one-third of them have also passed in Latin, and about the same proportion in history. What is really needed to bridge the gap between the senior examination and the university standard is the work of the higher public examination, which in many subjects covers a good deal of the ground of the first year at the university. Unfortunately for the department, there are two difficulties in connection with the preparation of pupil teachers for this examination, viz., (1) that the study involved would have to be done by the third and fourth grade pupil teachers in the two years which intervene between leaving the Pupil Teachers' School and entering the university—a time when they are sufficiently taxed by teaching all day in our schools; and (2) that it is impossible at present to provide teachers to help them who are not also engaged all day with other work. A further point to be considered is that many of the pupil teachers have reached the limit of their capabilities in some subjects, when the senior standard of work has been reached; so that, even if they had the necessary time, and if teachers were available, it is questionable whether much good would result, in many cases, from their

undertaking the work of the higher public examination. Summing up the whole question, I may say that I think the time has arrived for some modification in the present system of training our teachers, as many of the pupil teachers who are sent to the university are not able to do the work—some on account of want of capacity, others on account of their studies having failed to give them an adequate preparation—and neither time nor instructors can, under the present arrangements, be spared to give those who might profit by such instruction a better preparation for university work after they have left the Pupil Teachers' School. A feature of the year's work that is specially gratifying is that three of the students (Frederick N. Bennett, Reginald G. Burnell, and Adolf J. Schulz) completed the Arts course of study, and were admitted at the December commemoration to the rank and privileges of the degree of Bachelor of Arts. It is also gratifying to me to be able to report that Adolf J. Schulz had the honour of being bracketed equal with another student for the John Howard Clark Scholarship, which is given annually for the best examination in English language and literature. In addition to the three graduates already mentioned, four past students of the Training College secured the Arts degree, which is satisfactory evidence that the generosity of the University Council to the Education Department is bearing fruit, in enabling teachers to pursue their studies to a successful issue. A new departure was made towards the close of the year by a course of instruction in the teaching of sewing being given to the lady students by Mrs. Hills, formerly an inspector of schools in this State. This is a most important branch of work, and the opportunity of learning how best to teach this subject was welcomed by the students. A large number of the lady students joined Miss Hack's choral class at the Elder Conservatorium, and thus had the chance of practising singing regularly. I much regret that some similar arrangement has not been made possible for the men, many of whom are at present unable to teach singing, but would gladly improve themselves in this respect.

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**SIR CHARLES TODD,
K.C.M.G.
EIGHTY YEARS OF AGE TO-DAY.
AN INTERVIEW.**

[By our Special Reporter.]
Mr. Griffiths had finished his official business with Sir Charles Todd at the Observatory when the nurse admitted me into the bright-looking room, which by reason of its numerous photographs and innumerable relics breathes the atmosphere of cable, telegraph, and telephone communication, to say nothing of the weather and the sun, moon, and stars. The dear old knight, who is practically the father of the Australian telegraph service, was sitting at his desk, and with a buttonhole of violets in his coat and a smile on his face, he looked really quite jaunty. With a little chuckle he remarked, "You see, I am under petticoat government now, but nurse has consented to my telling you something about myself. Yes; I am 80 years of age on Saturday; but perhaps we had better start at the beginning."

—Work in England.—
"I entered the Greenwich Observatory in the early part of December, 1841. I was appointed assistant astronomer at Cambridge in January, 1848. Mr. Airy (afterwards Sir George Airy) asked me to go back to Greenwich in May, 1854. In 1855 I was on my return from Deal, where I had been inspecting the time ball. I stayed the night at Tonbridge with the late Mr. C. B. Walker, the electrical engineer to the South-East Railway Company, and I received a letter from Mr. Airy, telling me that the Colonial Office offered me the appointment of Government Astronomer and Superintendent of Telegraphs; in fact, wished me to start the telegraph service in South Australia. On returning to Greenwich I saw the Astronomer-Royal, and told him I must first of all consult a young lady. I accordingly went to Cambridge, where I arranged matters satisfactorily, and accepted the appointment."

—Arrival in South Australia.—
"I was appointed by the late Lord John Russell, in February, 1855, and arrived here on November 5 of the same year. Mr. McGeorge had just completed a short line of telegraph to Port Adelaide. We constructed a line immediately, and it was opened in the early part of 1856, and was extended to the Semaphore. The Government ultimately purchased the line erected by Mr. McGeorge, which had passed into the hands of Messrs. Elder, Smith, and Co. That was followed up immediately afterwards by an extension to Gawler, and I wrote to the Government recommending that we should negotiate with the Victorian Government for the erection of a line between Adelaide and Melbourne. I was sent to the sister capital to negotiate the matter with the late Hon. H. C. Childers (Commissioner of Trade and Customs) and the late Mr. Samuel McGowan (Superintendent of Telegraphs there). Having completed the business, I returned to Adelaide, travelling overland from Portland to fix a route for the South Australian section of the line.

—A Strange Meeting.—
"Yes, I had some strange experiences in the course of my journeyings. One night I arrived at a shepherd's hut after sundown. It was 20 miles to the next station, so I asked the shepherd if I could remain for the night. He said I could do what I liked, so I stayed. After I had taken my horse to water and so on I spent a pleasant evening playing chess with the shepherd. He was a Master of Arts of Cambridge."

—Three Capitals Connected.—
"The telegraph line to Melbourne was completed and opened in July, 1858. Here is rather an amusing story. There was a telegram addressed to an old lady at Mount Gambier from her son. When she received the message she denied that it was from her son because she said it was not in his handwriting. The telegraph was extended throughout the colony, and subsequently to Sydney via Wentworth. In 1857 the New South Wales Government wrote asking me to recommend some person to the position of Superintendent of Telegraphs in New South Wales, and I recommended Mr. Cracknell, whom I brought out as chief assistant, and who was appointed to that post in that year. Sydney and Melbourne, however, were not connected till towards the end of 1858."

—Overland Telegraph Line.—
"In 1863 I read a paper before the Philosophical Society (now the Royal Society) proposing the erection of the overland telegraph line to the north coast to connect with the cable from India. Sir Dominick Daly was in the chair, and Mr. F. C. Waterhouse, the then Premier, was also present, and joined in the vote of thanks passed to me. That paper was published in extenso in the Electrician in London in April, 1863. That was the first time the question was put before the English public. Nothing, however, was done until the starting of the present Eastern Extension Company in 1870, when Commander Osborne, brother of Admiral Osborne, was sent out to negotiate the laying of a cable to Port Darwin, thence by land to Bourketown, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, to join the Queensland lines. When it came before me I recommended that South Australia should undertake the erection of a land line to meet the cable, in preference to the Queensland route. This was approved, and the line was commenced in 1870. It was divided into three sections. The first one, from Port Augusta, of 500 miles, was let to Mr. John Rounsevell. The middle section, which was considered the most difficult, was undertaken by the department, and the Northern Territory section, from Port Darwin southward, was let by contract to Messrs. Darwent & Dalwood. The last section broke down, and the Government had to undertake it. First Mr. R. C. Patterson and later on, owing to difficulties due to the wet season, I was sent up, to complete the work. Before leaving I dispatched the Young Australian round by the west coast to meet me at the Roper River. I proceeded in the Omeo with horses and a party of men. When I arrived off the mouth of the Roper there was no Young Australian to be seen. I met Mr. Patterson and the late Mr. Little, and after waiting a day or so I decided to go up the Roper. The captain said it would invalidate the insurance. As it was absolutely necessary to get into the river I made the Government responsible for the Omeo, and directed the captain to go on to the bar, take careful soundings, and hoist a signal when there was sufficient water to cross. This was done, and I proceeded some 40 or 50 miles up the river, landed the horses, and then went up to the landing to discharge the cargo. I should say that on the way up we were joined by the Young Australian, and I went up to the landing first in that vessel to take soundings and see if it was safe to venture there with the Omeo. After being at the Roper landing for several weeks, and as the rains were very heavy, I dispatched a party with horses and loading to the interior, and then proceeded to Port Darwin in the Young Australian. On my return to the Roper I started off on my journey to Adelaide to carefully inspect the line. I made all the necessary arrangements for the working of the line, and arrived in Adelaide late in October, 1872. I had the pleasure of joining the wires and completing the communication between Adelaide and Port Darwin early in August, 1872. At that time the cable was interrupted, and it was not till October that communication was restored, and the line opened between Australia and England. Banquets to commemorate the event were held on November 5, 1872, in London, Adelaide, and Sydney. Sir James Fergusson presided. Mr. Henry Ayres was made a K.C.M.G., and Mr. Dutton and myself C.M.G.'s. Later on, when Lord Kintore was Governor, I was created a K.C.M.G., and I received a very complimentary letter from the Secretary of State for the Colonies."

—Amusing Experience.—
"Perhaps the most amusing experience I can tell you happened when I was camped on the north bank of the Murray for some weeks fixing the boundary line. I asked a blackfellow who had attached himself to my camp for some time if he would climb the poles and replace the broken insulators between the border and Overland Corner. I showed the aborigine how to do the work, and told him to let me know when it was finished. He had seen me speaking to Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney with a little pocket relay; so each time he placed a new insulator in position he would descend the pole and tap it at the bottom. Somebody at Overland Corner asked the black man what he meant by the tapping, and in a wise way he answered:—"Oh, to let the old man Todd know I done 'em." I always found the blacks in the Northern Territory and elsewhere very friendly and ready to give me every assistance. They supplied me with fish on the coast. But they were always anxious that I should kill their neighbours. When on the Roper River I met among the natives a second Sir Walter Raleigh. We were 'wooding' the steamer Young Australian in the lower reaches of the river, and as I had seen some distance up the river a dead crocodile on