

BITERS BIT.

first feelings were those of joy and elation at being entrusted with a task of such widespread interest and such considerable responsibility, and of being afforded the opportunity of observing at close quarters, and of assisting to the best of my ability in the growth and development of a young and vigorous community. Added to these attractions, there was also the prospect of making our home for five years in a country where we had been so happy in the past, and of taking part once again in your sports, pastimes, and social activities. I can assure you that the prospect was indeed bright and alluring, but on deeper reflection, the more serious aspect presented itself. What exactly were the duties and responsibilities of this office? To what extent was I qualified by training, knowledge, and experience to carry out those duties, and to undertake those great responsibilities? I confess that at first those responsibilities appeared to be somewhat formidable, but on thinking things over I have come to the conclusion that for various reasons my task is going to be far less difficult than at first appeared. To begin with, I am to preside over a community renowned for its loyalty and affection to the throne and person of his Majesty the King, and for that reason, if for no other, his representative is assured of loyal and devoted service. Furthermore, the responsibilities of a constitutional Governor are much lessened when he knows that not only the material interests, but, what is more important still, the honor and reputation of the State, can be safely entrusted to the Government, and that he has unlimited confidence in their wisdom and integrity. In that I know I am indeed fortunate. Fortunate, indeed, is the Governor who has a reliable and efficient Government, and doubly fortunate, indeed, is the Governor who not only has a reliable and efficient Government, but also finds himself possessed of a powerful and well-organized Opposition, because his task is very much simplified when he knows that the measures of his Ministers have been subjected to the keen and incisive criticism of an active and vigilant Opposition. That is, I believe, the happy state of affairs which exists in South Australia to-day. And last, but by no means least, my task will be made much easier from the fact that I shall have at my right hand a gentleman who holds a foremost place in the affections and respect of the people of South Australia. (Prolonged applause.) Sir George Murray's well-earned reputation for knowledge, wisdom, and understanding has spread far beyond these shores. (Applause.) I rejoice to think I shall have by my side a counsellor of such wide experience, on whose sound judgment and unbiassed opinion I can at all times depend.

I have confessed to you to-day some of my hopes and aspirations, and some of my doubts and misgivings, but from the sympathetic greeting you have accorded me I feel sure that, though at times I may err in my judgment, and though at times I may fail to serve you as effectively as I might, the Governor who honestly strives to do his duty, to whom the interests of South Australia, and especially her honor, are as dear as his own, who steers unmoved an even course, indifferent to praise or blame, between the political contentions of the day, will never appeal in vain to the sympathy and goodwill of the people of South Australia. (Prolonged applause.)

**Cheers for the King.**

On the conclusion of his Excellency's speech the National Anthem was again played on the organ, after which, at the call of the Premier, cheers were given for the King, and for Sir Alexander and Lady Hore-Ruthven. As the viceregal party left the hall the "Song of Australia" was played.

His Excellency subsequently attended a meeting of the Executive Council, at which he issued a proclamation notifying his assumption of the office, and appointed the following members of his staff:—Mr. Legh Winsler, private secretary; Captain E. H. Verney and Lieutenant the Hon. E. R. Grosvenor, A.D.C.'s; and Captain E. J. Andrew, honorary A.D.C. Subsequently a "Gazette Extraordinary" was issued containing those particulars.

Literary criticism is at once the easiest and most hazardous of employments. Any one may undertake the task of discovering other people's grammatical lapses; but no one who does so is safe from a counter-attack which will direct attention to errors of his own. To err is human; even Homer nods. Milton, engaged in a dispute about the divine right of kingship, caught his adversary tripping upon some nicety of Latin, but came to grief himself in the very moment of triumph. He "enforced the charge of a solecism by an expression in itself grossly solecistical," as the arch critic, Samuel Johnson, was afterwards very willing to point out. Where Milton fell, our University examiners in English should not be ashamed to lose their footing; but it is improbable, in spite of Milton and other illustrious examples, that they will derive much pleasure from perusal of an article in the current number of The South Australian Teachers' Journal, in which Mr. C. M. Ward, of the Adelaide High School, answers their strictures upon the papers presented at the last examinations, and fairly hoists them with their own petard. Mr. Ward might have borrowed a text from Pope:—

*Let such teach others who themselves excel,  
And censure freely who have written well.*

The self-sufficient and even cynical tone adopted by the examiners, invited such a retort as the indignant teacher has supplied; their failure to maintain a literary style at all consonant with the extravagance of their demands upon the skill and culture of the children examined, made that retort not very difficult. They "felt that they could not speak in honeyed terms of the work which had been put before them;" but they should at least have been able to discuss that work without exhibiting some of the very faults which they condemned. To quote Pope again, it is not very hard to say, in these circumstances, "if greater want of skill appear in writing or in judging ill." Youth and inexperience must plead for the victims of the original criticism; but the original critics, as Mr. Ward caustically remarks, have had the advantage of an "intensely specialized literary training," and are therefore entitled to even less consideration than they were willing to show those budding scholars who burst into flowers of rhetoric in an effort to please them.

Mr. Ward is conscious that the teaching of English in our public schools leaves a good deal to be desired; but he is careful to point out, by inference rather than by declaration, that the desired improvement is not likely to proceed from the "twenty dreary pages" of the "Notes by Examiners," in the course of which these censorious gentlemen score so neatly off the hapless students of our difficult language, and, in the process, sufficiently indicate what a difficult language it is in which to express even the soundest judgment without impropriety of phrase or confusion of sense. Mr. Ward, although not positively brutal, is certainly merciless. He feels that "the purveyors of literary criticism, with its hackneyed terms and threadbare conventions, should periodically take stock of their wares." His article will assist some of them to do so. He begins by directly challenging the justice of a few of the examiners' censures. One well intentioned student, for example, was rapped over the knuckles for writing of "another point in Richard's character." Mr. Ward very properly ridicules the unctuous comment of the examiners, that "characters do not have points," and hazards the opinion that the sapient authors of the "Notes" believe Euclid to have a monopoly of the word in question. It is not the chief concern of the counter-critic, however, to defend schoolboy English.

"For examples of unprovoked assaults on propriety and simplicity of diction," he says, "one need not look beyond the language of the examiners' report." Space forbids that we should follow him through his analysis of what he is bold enough to describe as "this murky effusion." Suffice it to say that he makes a number of "points" which the examiners will find painfully sharp. The real point of the matter is this, that "students, whose English composition has been good enough to satisfy completely examiners in other subjects, literary as well as scientific, have been relentlessly failed in English literature and thus deprived of certificates."

What is the remedy? English, unfortunately, is largely a matter of taste; and literary history is full of examples of the conflicts thus produced. Criticism has changed only in so far as it has shared in that general reform of manners which forbids that a spade should be called a spade any longer, if a polite synonym is available. The libel law, also, has made itself felt since the pitiful heroes of "The Dunciad" "wrote and floundered on in mere despair." Every modern dispute about the art of writing must seem miserably listless, to a student fresh from the still glowing exchanges between Dryden and Settle—to select another example of plain speaking. Remembering what Mr. Ward says of the examiners, and the provocation they gave him, it is interesting to remember that "the father of English criticism," without having received any provocation at all, except that Elkanah Settle had written a temporarily successful tragedy, described his rival playwright as "an animal of a most deplored understanding in a twilight of sense," and declared that his style was boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. From these rather unflattering generalizations, Dryden proceeded forthwith to the grateful task of analytical comment, exploiting, among other things, "rumbling pieces of nonsense," "clogging, thick, undigestible stuff," "giblet porridge, stodged full of meteors, orbs, and spheres," and matter which, "were it written in characters as barbarous as the words, might very well pass for a doctor's bill." He took strong exception to the use of the word "sphere," in a sense suggesting that "our learned author takes a sphere for a country;" but, within a very few months, had himself written a play with a misplaced sphere in the very middle of it. Settle was not long in bringing the fact to his notice; and was equally prompt to direct public attention to numerous other poetical absurdities, as, for example, that Dryden had introduced, "riding in floating gold," something that was at once a ship, a phoenix swimming, and a sea wasp flying. Every literary critic is the tenant of a glass house; and English should be taught, and its students examined, with this circumstance in mind.

**UNIVERSITY ENGLISH.**  
From G. G. NEWMAN:—The thanks of all teachers of English literature and the approval of all candidates who failed in the last November examination and in the February special examination must unreservedly be given to Mr. C. M. Ward, deputy headmaster of the Adelaide High School, for his outspoken and sensible remarks on the extraordinary marking which resulted in the failure of so many candidates. Professor Darnley Naylor used to say, "The class makes the standard," but obviously the English examiners are out to slaughter the innocents. Surely at least 50 per cent. of the candidates must have covered the work set out on the syllabus. Many candidates in November who sat for five subjects found themselves deprived of their certificates because they failed in English. Nothing daunted, they filled in the time intervening between the publication of the results until the February examination at English alone. Many students gave up their well-earned holidays in vain: for the same stringency—to use the softest term possible—prevailed, and the same result followed—failure. It is time the headmasters of the leading colleges entered a protest against this method of marking. In a previous year, when a Melbourne examiner, in order to prove his superiority, "failed" almost all the candidates, he was asked to revise his results and to pass at least half the candidates. This was done. According to Mr. Ward's showing, examiners write the same "journal-ese" which they so strongly condemn, and even make fun of in the work of the candidates, and jeer at their teachers. Why should more fail in English than in any other subject proportionally? In German nearly all the candidates pass!

THE GOVERNOR'S LEEVE.

His Excellency the Governor (Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven) will hold his first levee at Government House on June 1st at noon. All gentlemen attending must take cards with their names distinctly printed or written on them for presentation to the private secretary (Mr. Legh Winsler), who will announce the names. Officials are requested to write their official titles on their cards. All are entitled to wear uniform or court dress are requested to do so, but others will wear evening or morning dress. There will be no precedence in order of presentation, but members of public bodies are requested to enter together as much as possible.

UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

From RE.—At a citizen of Adelaide, a former University student, and an employer of educated workers, I am naturally interested in the public examinations of the State, and I earnestly hope that the examiners in English will not be diverted from their duty, by the quite unconvincing attacks of Messrs. Ward and Newman. Everyone knows that until recently the standard of English in this State was scandalously low, and the examiners deserve great credit for having insisted on raising it, in the face of captious criticism. As for Mr. Ward's criticism of the examiners' own English, it is fantastic, and will recoil upon himself. I have procured their reports, and have read them. I have also read the whole of Mr. Ward's article, and I can truthfully say that their English compares more than favorably with his own. Anyone can make fun of someone else's style by taking phrases out of their context and criticising them. Isolation of this kind is only fair in the case of serious grammatical mistakes, of the kind quoted again and again in the examiners' reports. There can be no suggestion that such mistakes occur in the examiners' own English, which, in my opinion, will stand any test applied to it by a fair-minded person. Mr. Ward's own article contains such phrases as "assimilate a lot of humbug," "nothing but high-brow jargon," and those who read him at length are not likely to take him seriously as a literary purist.

AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIPS

One Gained by Adelaide Man

LONDON, May 16.

The fellowships offered by the New York Commonwealth Fund to residents in the British dominions have been awarded to Messrs. Walter E. Crocker (of Adelaide), Jules Malfroy (New Zealand), and Roland Wilson (Tasmania). Mr. Crocker will go to Stanford University to learn history, Mr. Malfroy to Columbia University to study law, and Mr. Wilson to Chicago for a course in economics.

Mr. F. W. Wagner, B.Sc., Rhodes Scholar for South Australia for 1928, will leave to-day by the steamer Kolu for Europe. Prior to proceeding to Oxford, it is his intention to remain for a time on the Continent, principally at Hamburg to acquire a better knowledge of the German language. He expects to enter Christchurch, Oxford, in October to read for his Modern Greats.