

ELDER CONSERVATORIUM

MR. I. G. REIMANN'S STUDENTS

There was an excellent response to the invitations sent out by I. G. Reimann for a pianoforte recital in the Elder Hall last night. The noted teacher explained that this was one of a series of three programmes, all having a special object. The numbers given by members of his large concerto class, since his last visit abroad, in imitation of concerto and duo classes conducted at the Continental conservatoriums. All students are expected to perform, listen, discuss, and criticize critically, and solos, classical and modern, of the highest concert standard. These concerts are of an almost professional grade through the conscientious care taken in the matters of programme-building, ensemble-playing, and distinctive interpretation.

At the concert last night there was heard such works as Volkmann's duo, "Variations on a Handel theme," played with remarkable insight and perfect regard for interpretation. Misses Joseph Bensch and Lucy Danke were the pianists, who were richly applauded for this and for an equally fine performance of the first movement of "Mendelssohn's G Minor Concerto. Miss Bensch and Miss Adele Wiebusch deserved the enthusiastic applause accorded their splendid ensemble work in the first movement of Beethoven's Concerto in G. Schumann's wonderful "Andante and Variations" and Chopin's Andante Spianato and Polonaise and a series of "Scherzos" by Arensky, requiring keen imagination.

As soloist, Miss Wiebusch used devices of a thoroughly experienced pianist in the Bach-Tausig "Toccata and Fugue in D Minor." The "Scherzo" "Polonaise Brillante" duo was admirably presented by Mrs. Evelyn Shoebrite and Mrs. Black at the second piano. Mrs. Shoebrite was successful as soloist in a singularly clear rendition of Scarlatti's "Pastorale and Capriccio," an expressive reading of Chopin's G Major Nocturne.

Well-chosen programmes of the Vera Mayfield sang two French songs, "Les oiseaux" by Georges Hue, and "Fidemann" contributed by Mrs. Harold Kounz and Coleridge Taylor's compansists were Mrs. Evelyn Shoebrite and Miss Jean Bacon.

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WASTE OF TIME

Modern Secondary School Education

UNNATURAL SYSTEM

Professor Opposes Higher Leaving Age

Prof. Kerr Grant, lecturer in physics at the Adelaide University, thinks that the existing system of secondary education does not achieve its purpose.

He says that not only does it fail to equip the modern boy for the business of life, but studies many of his natural abilities.

He is decidedly opposed to raising the school-leaving age from 14 to 16 years, declaring that it would mean thousands of pounds out of the country's pocket every year without any useful result.

Unless some change is made, he says, the average boy may as well finish at primary school, as his studies in the modern secondary school are only so much time wasted.

"I should certainly agree with the suggestion if it could be demonstrated that the proposed extension of education would benefit the student and the nation," said a representative of "The Mail," who drew attention to the statement of a New Zealand head-master that a primary education is insufficient for children of the new era.

"But," he added, "I am extremely doubtful of the advantages to be gained by giving to all boys and girls in a community the type of education at present supplied by our secondary system of education."

"I believe that every teacher of experience will agree with me that only a small proportion of them even now receive higher education have the power of assimilating the sort of mental procreant which the school curriculum provides. It is certain that both the primary and secondary stages at the primary stage, the proportion would be far less."

"Asain, like many others, I am extremely doubtful of the value of stuffing the minds of children with information on a variety of topics utterly foreign to their natural tastes and aptitudes, utterly irrelevant to the normal occupations and pursuits of childhood, and often utterly useless as regards helping them to a means of livelihood."

Prof. Grant disagrees with the New Zealander, because he does not approve of the modern conception of a secondary school. If he were satisfied that they fulfilled their mission, he would commend the head-master's remarks. But as it is, he thinks that both from the educational and economic viewpoint the modern system of learning is unsatisfactory.

"On the other hand," he said, "I do not agree with the educationists of the broad-and-butter type, who convert the educational metaphors by the principles of a narrow utilitarianism."

"The modern methods of teaching an entire class the same subjects has many faults. Why, for instance, should the average girl learn French or algebra? Many girls spend hours cramming these subjects, and in the great majority of cases they are never taken to the school to become typists or assistants, and never again think of the subjects over which they have spent so many hours of study."

"How much better would be if they had learned something in those wasted hours which would benefit them in the fight for existence or contribute in some way to

their future welfare or enjoyment." The professor also offers an alternative to the present method of education. "The only way I can suggest is turning boys and girls into the world to find for themselves," he said. "In spite of its abstract harshness, there is much to be said for the real work of life or get engaged in the real world, a sense of responsibility and a sound and keen judgment. Most of all it gives the boy or girl or woman the great benefit of experience, without which the moderns would be helpless." "Our present system of education tends to kill initiative and, perhaps, to breed inherent ability," added Prof. Kerr Grant. "For all that is said in favour of education, we are not much better off than our earlier generations, possibly because we have tried to do too much."

TEACHERS DOING UTMOST

"I do not wish, however, to lay the blame on the teachers. They are doing their utmost that the present system will permit."

Prof. Kerr Grant says that the education of the child should proceed along more natural lines, and advocates open schools wherever possible.

"It is absolutely criminal to expect a class of small children to sit in rows in rows when their natural instinct leads them to romp and play and to follow their natural inclinations."

Many great men of the world had little or no education, but were able to follow their natural inclinations."

They succeeded because they developed their ability along natural lines, and because they were not in school during the best period they attended school. "Sometimes think it fortunate that I received but a scanty education, and that practically all my learning came from books. At least I was free to follow my own inclinations and desires."

adv. 2-11-29

Professor Sir William Mitchell, Vice-Chancellor of the Adelaide University, will leave for England by the R.M.S. "Melodia," which sails from the Outer Harbor on Thursday next. Sir William is called to Scotland by the illness of members of his family.

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY

(By Prof. John McKellar Stewart, M.A., D.Phil., University of Adelaide)

AS a part of the system of organised education, a university shares in the general purpose of education. It may be said that the aim of education is to develop and train the powers of minds so that they may deal with their environment. Environment is taken to include Nature—the world or system of objects of sense in which we are accustomed to see all social—the past products of the human mind as these are embodied in art and literature, in science and philosophy, in traditions and customs, in laws and institutions; also that the world which lies deeper than the material, the natural and the social, and which is the source and goal of those aspirations which are distinctive of the human spirit.

The primary aim of education is so to develop the powers of minds that they may understand this environment, and, understanding, enjoy it, and control it in the interest of human needs.

The conditions of our own time are, in important respects, peculiarly congenial to the pursuit of this aim. One outstanding feature of our time is widespread recognition, both in the world, in the widest range of practical and theoretical, of the power of minds to obtain in the triumph of science, in that close co-operation between the universities and the world of practical affairs, in which the physicist, the chemist, and the economist are regularly being asked to give guidance.

From the standpoint of theory, one important fact may be noted. Fifty years ago the attitude of the gospel of the science was, in the main, agnostic; the face of its own powerlessness of the mind in and paradoxically—was persistently—change has taken place. A radical new attitude has been proclaimed. A radical change has taken place. Reflection on the progress of science itself leads to the conclusion that the alleged powerlessness of the mind was in error. This was not a mere question of fact, but a question of principle. The fact that it has allowed Nature to put her own questions to us, and that she does in this way, namely, that she allows us to put her problems to minds, the mind is not to be put her problems to minds, the mind is not to be put her questions has been amply demonstrated.

The exercise of the powers of the scientific reason, or intellect, during the past 50 years has provided one of the most exciting and romantic periods in the history of human thought. The mind has, in unparalleled fashion, asserted its freedom and the power of that freedom. Breaking through old habits, and giving itself freely to its objects, it has demonstrated its power to grasp these objects in their depth. Nature has proved itself to be a system infinitely complex, and a system in which the mind finds itself at home.

FUNCTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY

To conserve the achievements of the human mind in its search for knowledge and truth, and, if possible, to add to these achievements, is one of the functions of a university.

To communicate what has been achieved to students, so that they may apply these to the search for the community, is the second function. Both are important, and the first is primary. If the University fails in it, then whatever else it may achieve, it has failed in its central function.—Prof. John McKellar Stewart, M.A., D.Phil., University of Adelaide.

The primary concern of a university is with knowledge and with the power to acquire knowledge. To extend, by investigating problems, all of which are, in the last resort, problems of "life," the bounds of knowledge, to communicate knowledge acquired, and to stimulate others to acquire knowledge, are the functions which a university can render to the community. It is hindered in its service if utilitarian claims, interpreted materialistically, are pressed upon it. The first article of faith of a university is, I believe, in the power of the mind to think and to know; and its first practical principle is—Secure first the freedom of the mind and all other essential things will be added.

The University of Adelaide has faculties in Arts, Science, Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Agriculture, Applied Science, Music, and Education, a board of commercial studies, and a joint

committee for tutorial classes. It has 29 professorships, with one lectureship or more attached to each Chair. In addition there are independent lectures in French, German, and education. In the year 1928 the number of students was 1,478, made up of 400 undergraduates, 800 non-graduating students, 870 post-graduates and 101.

It may be assumed that one test of the value attributed to a university by the public is to what extent it is supported by the community. What material support? When this test is applied to the University of Adelaide it has no reason to be ashamed. Throughout its history it has not lacked the material support of public-spirited citizens, and that for the last forty years has seen this support more than sustained.

At present, for example, three new buildings are in prospect—a great hall, a new library, and an extension to Melrose laboratory at the Waite Institute, at a cost, respectively, of £40,000, £33,000, and £10,000. The sum of money in each case has been given by an individual or family. The community has also expressed in a practical way its interest in the University, through the gift of money to those who, as members of the University Council, have given freely of their time and thought in the direction and control of its affairs.

What are perhaps the most tangible links between the University and the community have been mentioned. There are others less tangible but even more vital. They are the influences which in diverse ways flow from the inner spirit of the University, that spirit which we may say to be grounded in the intellect and power of the mind. In view of the importance of this spirit as constituting the riches of the university treasury, it has been the policy of the University to maintain, at their maximum strength, the faculty of arts and of pure science, and to maintain a proper balance between what may be termed respectively the academic and the professional interests.

To conserve the achievements of the human mind in its search for truth and to communicate it to the achievement—is one of its functions. To communicate what has been achieved to students, so that they may apply these in the life of the community, is the second function. Both are important, but the first is primary. If the University fails in it, then whatever else it may achieve, it has failed in its central function.