

of music. The pupils who go up for examination at the present day may be described as belonging to the new generation of learners. On account of the large proportions of passes scored in the earlier years of the tests, however, it is undeniable that an impression got abroad that the examination, whether for the junior or for the senior standard, was an easy affair. The consequence has been that a certain proportion of candidates have presented themselves about whom Professor Ives, without mincing matters in the slightest degree, declares that it was "downright cruelty" to send them up at all. The examiners seem inclined to throw the blame of this upon the teachers, but correspondents whose letters appear elsewhere insist—no doubt with good reason—that the parents are mainly responsible. It may be freely admitted that whatever alteration has been made in the standard set up for the pass in each case has been in the direction of greater strictness, and nearly every one connected with musical education in South Australia will readily admit that such a step was thoroughly justifiable. In this matter, however, there is no doubt that the new departure of securing outside assistance in the work of examination has been of very great benefit. In pointing out during the past two or three years the advantages which would attend such a reform, we have laid special stress upon the fact that it would strengthen public confidence in the examinations. The result has proved that its adoption has not only fulfilled this expectation, but has also produced another important effect, as it has enabled the Professor to bring about a much-needed stiffening of the standard without incurring any charge of having acted arbitrarily according to his own individual caprice. We hope that in future the tests will be kept fully up to their present degree of severity, and that the University certificates of the senior examinations in theory and practice will thus acquire such a value as will show at least that their possessor

is competent to teach the rudiments and to take pupils as far as the moderately difficult branches of the art.

Even in the very elements of music there is far too much defective teaching, and this is a fact which many parents only discover to their chagrin when they send their children to those who are competent to give more advanced instruction, and find that much of the work

already done requires to be undone before any really solid progress can be attempted. Pupils are allowed, and even instructed, to hold their hands in such a position that it is a physical impossibility for them ever to acquire even a near approach to evenness of touch. Then the neglect of sight-reading is perhaps an even more serious fault, which characterises much of the musical teaching that is attempted and paid for. Girls who for years have been playing brilliant fantasias, and practising the art of what the Yankee humorist calls "grabbing big handfuls out of one end of the piano and sticking them on to the other end," may be so lamentably deficient in reading that, when asked to play a simple accompaniment with which they do not happen to be familiar, they have to admit their incompetence. Viewing music as an accomplishment designed to brighten the home life, this is the most annoying of all the common mistakes, because it means that in after years the labour of playing new or unfamiliar music will become such a drudgery that the study will be dropped altogether. In respect of this department of musical instruction, parents may easily check or sample the kind of musical education which their children are receiving. No parent, after paying teachers during several years for giving to his child a sound English education, would be content to find that little or no progress had been made in reading, but that all that had been acquired was a parrot-like facility in repeating certain pieces by rote. If the points mentioned by the University examiners in the interview to which we have referred be duly attended to by those who are responsible for children's education, the result will be to assist most materially in the necessary process of sifting out the good from the bad in methods of musical instruction. In particular parents and pupils alike will do well to curb their impatience to have the University test applied—an impatience which must bring disappointment to them and mortification to the teachers.

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