

THE MUS. BAC. DEGREE.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Much misapprehension exists regarding the requirements necessary for the attainment of the Mus. Bac. degree. It has even been said that the students for other Bachelor degrees look down on the Mus. Bac. students, whereas the fact of the matter is that in order to win the latter degree, in addition to the requirements for other Bachelor degrees it is necessary to possess an unusual amount of originality and more than ordinary musical gifts. The difficulty is to find people who possess all these requisites combined. The prevalent idea has been that if a person is a fine performer he or she is sure to get the degree, but in reality it has nothing whatever to do with executive skill, as in the whole course it is not required to perform a single piece, either instrumental or vocal. I doubt whether of all the most musical people one in a hundred could get the degree. There are many who possess sufficient originality to compose a melodious waltz or ballad, but such do not necessarily possess the high order of intellect required in the attainment of this degree. When the first course of lectures began over fifty-five students attended the lectures—people possessing special musical gifts and tastes—and of these only five passed at the end of the third year's course. Only one has since gained the degree, showing that the requirements are quite beyond the ordinary, and rightly so. Three years' examinations have to be passed in the following subjects (a knowledge of theory of music as required by the Public Examinations being taken for granted):—Harmony, counterpoint, canon, fugue, instrumentation, form, composition, acoustics, and reading from sight full instrumental scores. After having completed this three years' course, and passed the required examination, formerly known as matric, as entrance to the University degree courses, then, when other students would get their Bachelor degrees, still another year has to pass before the Mus Bac. student, if successful every time, can get his or her degree, for now comes the crucial test. To read in the papers that "the exercise for the degree is usually a setting of words from the Psalms to music" gives one the idea that a hymn-tune had been composed, whereas the fact is that the so-called "exercise" only differs from an oratorio in that the composition dignified by the latter name is longer; so that for every one chorus, quartet, or solo in the one there are half a dozen in the other. The composition is of the same high standard, requiring to be written for the voices and a full-stringed orchestra containing a fugue—the highest form of composition—a five-part chorus, and, in short, is required to be a most scholarly piece of work, showing originality, artistic handling of the subject, a complete knowledge of voices and of the stringed instruments, and the having hundreds of rules at one's fingers' ends. I write the above to throw a little light on a matter in which all but the students themselves seem to be entirely in the dark, and consequently these latter are as it were reproached because not more of their number succeed in getting the degree. It certainly is not Professor Ives's fault, whose interesting lectures give all the knowledge that is required. The reason is the scarcity of the combination of talents, almost genius, that is required in the attainment thereof, as the cleverest and most talented would find if they went in for the Mus. Bac. degree.

I am, Sir, &c.,

A ONE-TIME STUDENT.

Maclaren Vale, December 17.

"Advertiser" 23rd Dec. 1897.

ART GALLERY AND CONSERVATORIUM.

We understand that a letter was written by the Minister of Education on Wednesday to the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery in response to the request of a recent deputation from the University and the board requesting the Government to erect the eastern wing of the building so as to provide an art gallery and accommodate the School of Design and to hand over the foundations of the new Art Gallery to the University as a site for the erection of the Conservatorium of Music. The Government declines to accede to the request of the deputation on the ground of public economy and for other reasons.

The Advertiser" 23rd Dec. 1897.

LADY BACHELORS OF MUSIC.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—In a recent issue you refer to Miss Campbell as the first lady to attain to the degree of bachelor of music in Australia. Will you kindly allow me to correct what must be an oversight on your part. The honor of being the first lady holder of this coveted degree belongs to Miss Mona McBurney, of St. Kilda, Victoria, who obtained her degree, I think, last year at the Melbourne University. Miss McBurney, like Miss Campbell, is of Scotch parentage, and is also a very highly gifted lady. I believe I am correct in saying that she is a descendant of Dr. Burney, the famous Scotch musician, of the last century. Miss McBurney is one of a most talented family, her father having been a musician of no mean ability, whilst her brother holds the high degree of doctor of music, and his services, I believe, could have been secured for our University had the authorities looked around in the right direction. Trusting you will insert this in fairness to Miss McBurney, as your papers are of course largely circulated in Victoria—I am, &c.,

H. PEIRCE VAUGHAN.

Teatree Gully, December 21, 1897.

"Register" 23rd Dec. 1897.

THE MEDICAL SCHOOL. — In a paragraph published in *The Register* yesterday it was stated that the negotiations between the Council of the University of Adelaide and the Hospital Board for the continuance of the fourth and fifth years of the medical course had failed. We are informed that this is not correct. The position is that last Friday the Hospital Board appointed a committee to meet a committee of the University Council to confer on the matter, and an early meeting will be held. It is perfectly true, however, that the subject has been so long kept in suspense that several advanced students, despairing of any settlement being made, have arranged to complete their education at other Universities.

SUBURBAN AND COUNTRY SCHOOLS.

CHRISTMAS DEMONSTRATIONS.

A number of parents and friends assembled at the Mitcham Ladies' School, on Tuesday afternoon, December 21, the occasion being the first Christmas breaking-up festival of the school. Mr. W. C. Gräsbjy presided. A varied programme, including vocal and instrumental music and calisthenics, which was presented gave evidence of careful training, the pupils—from the kindergarten class upwards—acquitting themselves most creditably, and their efforts were heartily applauded. Miss Carey's report spoke of the increasing number of pupils and steady improvement on the part of the scholars, between whom and the teaching staff there existed the happiest relations. Special acknowledgment was made of the valued services of Miss L. Wright (art) and Miss M. A. Wright (singing), visiting teachers, and Miss Winwood was congratulated upon having successfully prepared the first pupil from this school for the recent University junior examination in the theory of music. The programme was diversified by afternoon tea, the distribution of prizes, instructive and encouraging remarks by the chairman, for which he was warmly thanked, and the singing of the National Anthem.

Narracoorte, December 21.

Several schools in the district have had "break up" gatherings and speech days during the week. On Thursday evening the scholars of the Narracoorte Public School, under the direction of the headmaster (Mr. J. Moyes), gave a "break-up" entertainment in the Institute Hall before a crowded audience. Mr. A. Attiwill (chairman of the school board of advice) presided. The programme consisted of action and part songs, musical and ring drill, club swinging, dumbbell exercises, and other items. The chairman, in the course of a short address, said that the school had established a record by this year's work. Eight of the scholars had passed the University preliminary examination, 11 of them had passed the special examinations in agriculture held during the year, and taken all the first and second prizes offered. At the recent annual examination 40 compulsory certificates had been obtained, and three of the scholars had passed the pupil teachers' examination. The scholars who were trained for the University preliminary examination made a presentation to Mr. Moyes during the evening accompanied by an address, which the recipient suitably acknowledged. Mr. Fillmore, on behalf of the parents, proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Moyes for the excellent results obtained by his scholars, and the motion having been carried with acclamation, Mr. Moyes acknowledged the compliment.