

Requies Oct. 12th 1908

The Sydney Morning Herald
October 12th 1908

CONSERVATORIUM STUDENTS' CONCERT.

The Elder Conservatorium proved too limited to hold the gathering which on Monday was present at the most popular of its season—the concert given under the management of Miss Guli Hack by the ladies' part-singing class and the Conservatorium Orchestra. The engagement was worthy of the patronage, and of the praise with which its several components were received. The choir numbered nearly 200 women's voices, while the mixed orchestra, of full strength in every department, comprised several scores of instruments. Miss Hack conducted most skilfully. It was obviously a heavy task to oversee, at times, eight vocal parts as well as a full orchestral score—to guide every mood and phase; but the labour which lay behind the production, though less noticeable, was really immense. Miss Hack met with an ovation from the audience, and a tribute of a floral shower from her choir at the close of the evening. Merited compliments, these, for the works were new and of an educative character, in keeping with the duty and ambition of the Conservatorium. Before the public could be presented with these examples of the newest, most original, and difficult of part songs, the singers themselves—not at all a picked choir of individually cultured voices—had to be trained with labourious care and patience. Their work was undoubtedly fine. Vigorous, persuasive conducting ensured generally clean attack. Time, in all its many-named shades and aspects, was pleasingly marked. Invariably good tone was produced, for the leading voices were heard with fresh and pure effect. Rarely were the chosen coterie of first sopranos at fault, from their A's to their C's in alt.; and seldom did the fourth contraltos flaw their mellow tones with harsh lack of quality. Of marked superiority in colour and skill were the strings in the orchestra to the brasses, and a few of the wood-winds. With occasional gaps, the ensemble was good; but the precision, tone, and general culture of the violins were invariably the saving graces. A performance of "Rafael" (Volbach, Op. 26) opened the programme. This was the second of three compositions illustrative of Raffael's three pictures of the Madonna—the "Madonna del Granduca." It was brought from Europe recently by Mr. Bryceson Treharne, and Miss Hack was the first to produce it in this part of the world. Consisting in mood and language of a noble paean to the Madonna, it was rendered as a two-part work with appropriate effect. The sopranos comprised Mrs. Gepp, Misses Ivy Jones, Alice Thwaites, Elizabeth Rodgers, Helen Gordon, Sylvia Harris, Winifred Holder, and Gertrude Underwood; and the contraltos Misses Clara Kleinschmidt, Florence Harris, Hazel Creswell, Irene Williams, Winifred Mellor, and Ethel Williams. Miss Nora Kyffin Thomas, who led the orchestra, played feelingly an enclosed violin solo. A "Romance of the year," by Bertram Shapleigh, was sung by Misses Martha Bruggemann and Florence Harris, and Messrs. Noel M. Hack and Frederick Hyett. This was a story of each of 12 months, told fulsomely, but with moments of beauty and minutes of taking originality. The voices, in company and alone, were tunefully and expressively pleasant. Mr. Bryceson Treharne was too modest to publicly accept the meed of approval which greeted his newest and greatest composition, "An ode to spring;" but Miss Hack was the recipient of warm applause and floral gifts for the brilliant way in which she had educated and conducted her numerous company in the production of the difficult work. The writing teemed with beauties, abounded in difficulties, and bristled with striking originalities. It must be heard again to be adequately appreciated. Produced in England by a leading choir, it would probably make familiar Mr. Treharne's name as a composer. His muse portrayed with wonderful faithfulness the inward stirrings of the earth to the call of spring, the bursting to light of a new life, and its joyous and beautiful growth. The audience sued long but unsuccessfully for a repetition of a portion. Mr. Stanley May took the heavy but beautiful solo in Coleridge Taylor's "Quadroon girl." His baritone voice was at its rich and mellow best, while the choir added many sweetly harmonious touches. They sounded impressively well in the coloured composer's ballad "She dwells by great Kenhawa's side," and in a "Vocal waltz" by Corder. Therein the soloists were Mrs. Gepp, Misses Martha Bruggemann, Ivy Jones, Alice Thwaites, and Elizabeth Rodgers. Miss Carlien Jurs played the piano accompaniments, the organist was Mr. Arthur Williamson, and the leader of the orchestra Miss Nora Kyffin Thomas.

THE UNIVERSITY.

REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT.

DEPUTATION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION.

On Saturday Dr. Nash, M.L.C., introduced to the Minister for Education a deputation representative of the Women's Progressive Association of New South Wales, who laid before him a scheme for university reform and development.

The reform proposals were as follow:—

1. (a) Abolition of the life tenure of office in the Senate, and in lieu thereof a term of three years; (b) election of Senators on the broadest basis of convocation, that is, graduates to be placed on the list of members of convocation immediately after graduation, voting by post for graduates in the country, or beyond the States; (c) women to be eligible for election to the Senate, and that there be on that body a representation of not less than three; (d) the Premier and Minister of Public Instruction to be members of the Senate ex officio.
2. Women to be eligible for appointment to the professorial staff.
3. That the names of successful medical students be listed in order of merit, regardless of sex, and that appointments to the Sydney and Royal Prince Alfred hospitals as residential medical officers be made according to such list.

The proposals in reference to the development of the institution were:—

1. The establishment of chairs of education, agriculture, and domestic science.
2. Reduction of fees (at least 50 per cent.), and a more liberal system of bursaries.
3. Evening science classes.
4. Granting of degrees by examination to such as are unable to attend lectures, through stress of earning a living, distance, or other unavoidable circumstances, for instance, Melbourne.
5. A more liberal system of extension lectures, dealing with more practical subjects, in addition to the academic, i.e., agriculture, sociology, economics, industrial questions, commerce, and domestic science. When such lectures are delivered in remote districts a travelling library to precede them if practicable.
6. The establishment of affiliated colleges in large centres, such as Broken Hill, Newcastle, Armidale, Goulburn and Wagga.
7. An increased Government statutory endowment to admit of carrying into effect the suggested reforms.

The speakers in support of the scheme were Dr. Arthur, M.L.A., Miss Annie Golding, president of the association, Mrs. Dwyer, Mrs. Alphen, Mr. P. B. Marshall (Sydney Labour Council), and Mr. J. Connolly, B.A.

The Minister, in reply, said at the outset that he could not in any way agree with the opinion that had been expressed by one or two speakers that our university life had suffered through the sordid character of the people. It was not fair to compare this State with an old country like England, with its big wealthy classes, and in any case the Sydney University had a roll of benefactors of which any country might be proud. The State itself had also dealt very liberally with the institution. He thought it was generally recognised that the life tenure of office in the senate should be abolished, and he was in entire agreement with the request of the deputation. As to the election of senators, he thought the present system was a good one, in that it provided for a desirable maturity of thought being brought to bear on the elections. The matter of the eligibility of women for the senate or professorial chairs, he took it, was for the University itself to determine, and not for any outside body—even the Legislature. If the University chose to elect a body that would be in favour of the admission of women to the senate, well and good. Personally he would offer no objection to it. He agreed with the deputation that the Minister for Education, if not the Premier, should be members of the senate, ex officio. When the State endowed the University it should have some representation. As to the proposed list of medical students, that was surely also a matter for the senate itself. Turning to the proposals under the heading of "Development," he thought it was necessary to have a chair of education. There had been a suggestion made that the Principal of the Training College, Mr. Mackie, should be appointed to such a chair. There could be no objection to that suggestion provided Mr. Mackie continued at the head of the Training College also. The matter of the establishment of chairs of domestic science and agriculture might be left for further consideration. They would have to be considered in connection with the finances. There should, of course, be a reduction of fees. At present the fees were the highest in the Commonwealth, and there was no reason why they should not be reduced. And from what he knew, the senate was only too willing to make a reduction. To do that it would be necessary to receive some extra assistance from the State; and the State was not indisposed to give that extra assistance. The question of the establishment of evening science classes depended solely on the subject of funds. As to granting degrees by examination to those at a distance, that was

again a matter for the senate, and he did not feel called upon to express an opinion one way or the other. This remark also applied to the proposal for the extension of lectures. Regarding the establishment of affiliated colleges, everyone realised the advantages that would accrue from this, but he was disposed to think that the proposition was a little premature. He did not consider that the population was sufficient—even the Broken Hill—for the establishment of such an institution yet. Finally, on the question of increased statutory endowment, he could not at the moment determine to what extent he should go in that direction. The matter required to be dealt with by the Cabinet. Taking these suggestions as a whole, he said they were entitled to sympathetic consideration, and to be dealt with in a practical spirit. He hoped something would be done before long, but to hope that everything asked for would be embodied in a bill would be too sanguine altogether. It was his aim to see the whole educational system still more closely linked up, and to make the passage from the primary schools to the University as easy as possible to every man and woman of talent.

Sydney Morning Herald
Oct. 12th 1908

UNIVERSITY REFORM.

The deputation introduced by Dr. Nash to the Minister for Education on Saturday was happy in its choice of a moment for raising the question of University reform. It is a mistake to suppose that such a suggestion, wherever it happens to come from, represents a hostile spirit. It represents a healthy interest no University could well do without. Everyone recognises the wonderfully rapid expansion the University has accomplished, and the only hope of those who have the interests of higher education at heart is that this expansion may be continued. Since there is no denying the sincerity of this feeling, it seems that the University might very well meet its friendly critics rather more than half-way. And so far as its graduates and staff are concerned we have no doubt a majority is quite ready to do so. The trouble is inherent in the constitution of the University, and there exists no practicable means of expressing the corporate opinion of the graduate body; for Convocation fails to meet the case. Suggestions for reform in control, and specifically for a change in the election and tenure of the Senate, therefore, have of necessity to take their rise outside the University, even at the risk of the criticism being called hostile. It is difficult to see any way out of a situation not quite easy to adjust other than by initiative on the part of the Minister, as fully as possible with the friendly concurrence of the University itself. And if this looks like asking more than human nature can perform, we have to remember how much the State does for Sydney University, and how much more it is willing to do.

As to the main principles embodied in the remarks of the deputation, there can be little argument. They have been urged repeatedly from many sides. A Senate with a life-tenure, and elected on a narrow franchise, is an anomaly no one can defend. The tenure should be limited, and the franchise and method of election should be as liberal as possible. Undoubtedly all graduates should have a vote, and be able to make it effective—if necessary, through the post. Such a system would go far to ensure fluidity in the Senate; but if it failed to do so there are historic cases in which a wider franchise than that of graduates has been resorted to. This is