

Register Sept. 4th 07.

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UNIVERSITIES AND MUSIC.

To the Editor.

Sir—I was glad to read Professor Peterson's interesting and erudite article in The Register of September 3. With much of it I cordially agree, and I think the time is opportune when many of the misconceptions that have been so rampant regarding the purport of conservatoriums generally should be dispelled. The prevailing idea here is that the conservatoriums in Europe exist solely for the exploitation of talent, that only advanced pupils are admitted, and that elementary instruction is not given. This is quite erroneous. On my recent visit I made a point of enquiring into this matter, among many others, and I found that in all institutions, excepting those supported by the State—such as the Paris Conservatoire—where the instruction is entirely free, pupils of all grades, from the lowest to the highest, were admitted. In some places preparatory schools are attached to the main institutions, where the best pupils of the respective masters take charge of elementary pupils, under the supervision of their own instructors. This, in a feasible way, ensures to the pupil a good fundamental training in one particular method, and gives the students a practical insight into the science of teaching. The importance of a good start in the early courses of training cannot be over-estimated. Every teacher knows that it is harder to eradicate faults which have become ingrained through use and abuse than to inculcate correct formative principles. Then, again, on the question of standard, I say as a bare statement of fact, without any wish or intention to unduly appraise the Elder Conservatorium, that in point of material and in achievement of results we here compare favourably with the attainments of institutions where the advantages are manifestly greater and the difficulties far more easily surmountable than is the case here. One thing from which we in Adelaide suffer acutely is the dearth of orchestral concerts. This deficiency remedied would do much towards mitigating the loss we feel in dwelling at such a great distance from great musical centres. Mental knowledge is good as far as it extends, but to adequately realize the beauties of a work it is necessary to hear it performed. Orchestral timbre cannot be learned from books or from scores. This aspect of the question is apart from the mere pleasurable sensation of hearing a fine work, finely played by a fine orchestra. Then, again, it has an important bearing upon creative work. In the struggle for recognition each country has to stand alone, and it is by the merit of the work which it produces that it is artistically judged. In Europe and in America large endowments are given towards ensuring the permanency of orchestras. We have many liberal philanthropists in our midst—men who have given much toward the alleviation of general causes. Words cannot adequately compute the munificence of the late Sir Thomas Elder, and I hope that some day the good work which his benefactions have been the means of promulgating will be further strengthened and intensified. The lack of such an essential as this keeps our community from advancing musically and artistically as it should do. Unless we can give our students advantages equal, in part at least, to those attainable in Europe we can never hope to retain them. I think the exodus of Australians to Europe each year is calamitous and baneful. People of talent who migrate from here are so much strength lost to Australia; and how much more desirable it would be if they became what it was intended that they should become by both Nature and temperament, contributors to the expansion of artistic taste in their own country.

I am, Sir, &c.,
BRYCESON TREHARNE.

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Mr. W. G. T. Goodman, the engineer for the Tramways Trust, will deliver a lecture at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, University, on Thursday evening next, under the auspices of the University Scientific Society. Mr. Goodman will describe the Waipori hydro-electric 35,000 volt-power transmission scheme, for which he was responsible, and the lecture will be illustrated with a fine series of lantern slides.

A GREAT ELECTRICAL SCHEME.

HARNESSING A NEW ZEALAND RIVER.

Mr. W. G. T. Goodman, engineer to the Tramways Trust, lectured at the University last night on "The Waipori hydro-electric 35,000 volt-power transmission scheme," by means of which Dunedin is supplied with power for tramways and lighting. Mr. Goodman, who was in charge of the Waipora scheme, explained that at the point where the river left its last elevated plateau and commenced its final rush to the sea the site of the intake was chosen, the height above sea level being 1,125 ft. From this point the river rushed in numerous cascades through a vertical height of 700 ft. in less than two miles. The length of the river above the intake was 22 miles, and the catchment area of the watershed was about 95 square miles. Nearly 1,000,000 super ft. of timber was used in the construction of the fluming, and 400,000 super ft. of sapwood was used for building purposes. The pipe-line was 1,776 ft. in length, and the power station building was 100 ft. by 64 ft. The power station was 436 ft. above the sea level, and the total length of transmission to Dunedin was 29 miles 8 chains. The transmission lines were in duplicate throughout, and totally independent of each other. In one place on the route the lines were taken across a ravine in a single span of 1,700 ft. in length. Steel cables, with a tensile strength of 6,000 lb., were used for the purpose, and they were of sufficient size to carry ten times the line current without heating. There were 164 miles of copper wire in the transmission lines, and 1,802 poles and 15 steel towers were erected. The total cost of the scheme was £149,038. The operating expenses were estimated at £24,140 per annum, and the estimated output was valued at £24,490. Mr. Goodman's lecture was admirably illustrated by limelight slides.

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ENCOURAGING BOTANICAL RESEARCH.

Recently we published the salient points of a communication received by the Premier (Hon. T. Price) from the Ames Botanical Laboratory, North Easton, Massachusetts, urging that more attention should be paid by the University of Adelaide to the study of botany. We also published extracts from the report of Professor Stirling in respect to the matter, in which he stated that Miss Benham, B.Sc., conducted a class in botany for the benefit of students of pharmacy at the University, but that botany "as a living and progressive science" was not a special feature of the University curriculum. Dr. Stirling added that want of means was the only plea that could be put forward in excuse for the absence of a chair of botany. Upon seeing this information Miss I. A. Stuckey, of Unley Park, wrote to Professor Stirling asking for further particulars on the subject, and as a result of subsequent correspondence that lady has generously forwarded to the University a cheque for £500 to encourage the study of botany. Immediate steps will be taken to utilise this gift in the direction indicated. The University has already a valuable herbarium, the result of the work of the late Professor Tate. This was added to last year by a splendid collection of plants purchased from Mr. Oscar Menzel. Miss E. I. Benham, B.Sc., will carefully prepare, mount, and classify this collection with a view of making it available to all interested in the study of botany. Miss Stuckey's opportune gift will enable the University to provide a laboratory for practical work, and a suitable home for the herbarium, with which it has been suggested the donor's name should be associated. It may be mentioned that Dr. Holtze, the Director of the Botanical Gardens, has for years acted in the capacity of a Government botanist, although he has never received formal appointment to that office. Scarcely a week passes in which some plants or herbs are not sent to him for the purpose of identification, either from the Department of Agriculture, or from other sources.

academy, where systematic and thorough instruction was available. When in 1895 the Conservatorium was opened attention was naturally absorbed by practical instruction leading to the diploma of associate only, and when I was appointed to the Chair in 1901 I found on the University roll the names of 24 associates, and of only three Mus. Bac's., the last of whom had graduated as far back as 1895, since when no one had even presented himself for the degree examination. New regulations drawn up in 1901 assimilated the course of diploma and degree, so making the one a possible step to

the other, instead of presenting to the student the necessity of a choice, which in the past had driven every one to the practical side on which they had to depend for their professional existence.

—Conservatoriums.—

The Conservatorium side of the question need not detain us. From early times conservatoriums (or hospitals) and academies of music have provided complete courses of study in music on a quasi university basis, and have granted diplomas as well as turning out an army of splendidly equipped musicians, and I am perfectly confident that so far as the work in our conservatoriums goes the results can be compared favourably with that shown in any European conservatorium; most certainly this is the case in the commoner branches of study—piano-forte, singing, and harmony. Music is universally recognised as one of the most valuable—it not the most valuable—educators, "drawers out," of the fine artistic side of our nature, and Australia is served more or less efficiently by a multitude of teachers, which apparently no man can number. Not only is the opportunity given to our two sister universities, but the duty is laid upon them of seeing to it that the coming generation shall be better served by more thoroughly equipped, if somewhat less numerous, instructors—men and women who have undergone a supervised course of instruction, and whose nature has not run the risk of being warped by exclusively singing or playing the piano-forte, avoiding the study of literature and intercourse with intellectual equals and superiors. By the incorporation of a conservatorium in the university the musical profession gains greatly, although some of its members just now, short-sightedly, and I would say selfishly, refuse to see the benefit to itself and its pupils. The community gains enormously by the uncompromising ideal and by the opportunity of holding that ideal before students, and of insisting on strenuous conditions of study. Conservatorium students reap the unspeakable advantage of being submitted to university conditions, and being steeped in an atmosphere of earnest artistic work where self-culture is stimulated by emulation and intercourse with other workers in art. The body of the university is no loser by the inclusion of a number of earnest students, although St. Cecilia at practice is rather too near other and more purely contemplative saints! And the university gains by assuming the control of a living educational force, whose wholesome influence on the community has been recognised from the days of the wise old Greeks onwards.

—A Great Disadvantage.—

The music course at the university labours under one great disadvantage when compared with the other schools. Although secondary education in Australia generally may leave something to be desired, there is a great deal of method and some control; but musical education at a similar stage is in a state of the most hopeless, helpless confusion. There are, it seems, in Victoria, over 3,000 teachers, with (it has been suggested) an average of 10 students each—i.e., 33,000 individuals, of whom a large proportion are only wasting time and money. One step inevitably suggests itself—the establishment of an institution of institutions like the University High School or other secondary college served by a staff familiar with university requirements, on which for a reasonable fee parents could depend on sound preliminary training for their children, at which young teachers could gain the experience they require, to which country centres could look for the necessary supply from time to time of thoroughly equipped teachers, while the conservatorium would be enabled to build more rapidly, and with better results, on a foundation so carefully laid.