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Midday Organ Music At Conservatorium

Cesar Franck's noble prelude, fugue, and variation was the outstanding feature of the Elder Conservatorium organ recital during the lunch hour yesterday. Mr. John Horner played it in a fashion admirable for expressiveness no less than technique. The Bach item, the allabreve in D, offered less scope, but its impeccable academic cleverness shone forth. Mendelssohn's C minor fugue completed the programme.

Such diverse songs as Schubert's "Erl King" and the Breville Smith "Witch of Bowden," were sung with good effect by Dr. Ray Newling to the recitalist's ably played pianoforte accompaniment.

On August 17, Mr. Horner will include in his programme the Mozart F minor fantasia, and the Stanford prelude in the form of a chaconne.

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SHAKESPEARE AND HIS CRITICS

Professor Oliphant's Lecture

"FOLLOW THE LEADER"

In a lecture at the Adelaide University last night, Professor E. H. C. Oliphant, lecturer on Elizabethan literature at the Melbourne University, vigorously attacked the popular conception of Shakespeare as the incomparable, not only as a dramatist but as an observer of human affairs.

If ever there were a slump in Shakespeare stock, he said, it would be the result of the extravagant eulogies of some of the most esteemed critics. The Shakespeare scholar's curse was cowardice. He was a sheep who expected to get loud applause for the marked intelligence with which he played "follow the leader."

He said that the only hope for betterment was to give younger scholars a freedom from prejudice which older men lacked, and through which they might learn to regard questions of scholarship from a broader outlook.

"The tendency to credit Shakespeare with the mastery of every field of knowledge is ridiculously common," he said. "In point of fact, there are few subjects on which Jonson had not a much wider and deeper knowledge. Shakespeare was an imaginative writer, not an observer. Had we to rely upon him for a knowledge of the life of his time, we should know very little of it. Of Shakespeare as a man next to nothing is known. But the ridiculously pedantic conception of him as a plaster saint ought not to impress anyone favorably. The moral element in his work has been greatly misrepresented. In it is to be found not the open Rabelaisianism, the sturdy, masculine, adult coarseness, of Jonson, but a sly, sneaking, adolescent nastiness. There are minds to whom this appeals, because they can pretend not to see it, but to the open-minded the frankness of Jonson is preferable, as being healthier."

"Afraid To Criticise"

Professor Oliphant said that it was regarded as a mark of insensibility to consider Shakespeare's work rationally. Literary critics of today were apparently incapable of appreciating the fact that, even without Shakespeare, the Elizabethan drama was perhaps the greatest the world had known. Men like William Archer, with the narrowest perceptive faculty and an exceedingly restricted outlook, were denunciatory of all Elizabethan drama, except Shakespeare's, although the objections Archer had would apply almost equally to the work of Shakespeare. He excluded Shakespeare from his general condemnation because he feared that otherwise his reputation as a critic would suffer.

Fulsome praise was bestowed upon Shakespeare even for those qualities in which he was most lamentably lacking, he said. For example, the back chat of Benedick and Beatrice was loudly acclaimed as the most brilliant thing of the sort in the language. But were it the work of anyone but Shakespeare, it would be perceived to be nothing more than a sorry interchange of verbal infelicities. Some scholars pronounced spurious anything in the Shakespeare plays of inferior value, and so created an entirely false standard by which to judge him. Others sought

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to extract hidden meanings from his plays, not realising that, in so doing, they were passing a severe condemnation on his work as a dramatist.

"Deplorable Cliquesm"

He said that a scholar knew that he must say nothing against Shakespeare, but might let himself go against his contemporaries. He knew that, if he advanced original views which proved unwelcome to the cognoscenti, he might lose a chance of promotion. That led to a deplorable cliquesm especially evident in England, where there was a great unreadiness to accept anything not coming from the immediate entourage of those in authority—an attitude bitterly resented in America.

The attitude of established leaders in the field of almost any branch of scholarship was more comprehensible than admirable, he said. New views were resented as constituting a reflection upon themselves. Less concerned with the truth than with the defence of their own reputations, they were ready to fight bitterly not merely to defend views advocated by themselves, but even views held by the majority on which they themselves had never expressed any opinion.

After dealing with the special work which he is doing in Melbourne, where he is endeavoring to create a school of students capable of doing original work in the study of the great Elizabethan dramatists, Professor Oliphant said that it should, by intelligent people, be as easy to discriminate between individual literary styles as between individual handwritings. It was the power of discrimination he wished to arouse in his students.

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OPPORTUNITY FOR DOCTORS

British Services Have Vacancies

Proposed reforms in the Imperial defence services are of interest to Australian doctors, because of opportunities that are being offered medical graduates here to take commissions in the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, and Royal Army Medical Corps.

Doctors will be given short service commissions of five years, and from them some will be chosen every year for permanent service in the army. Those not wanting permanent positions will be transferred to the medical reserves, and paid a gratuity of £1,000 to help in the purchase of a private practice.

The rank of lieutenant-colonel will be reached at 42, instead of 48; and that of colonel at 50 instead of 53. There will be no retirements under 55. The majority would retire at 57, and some at 60, drawing liberal sums of money on leaving the forces.

Between 35 and 50, emoluments would be increased at a substantial rate. The creation of a special medical scholarship, open to sons of members of the forces who wish to take up a service medical career has also been recommended. This scholarship would be administered by the Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund.

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"TIMELY AND REFRESHING"

Professor Oliphant's Views On Shakespeare

The outspoken censure of Shakespearean scholars whom he accused of following the leader in their refusal—often against their better judgment—to criticise the works and character of the great dramatist, delivered by Professor E. H. C. Oliphant, the eminent authority on Elizabethan literature, in his lecture at the Adelaide University on Friday night, has been welcomed in several quarters as being timely and refreshing.

Principal Klek, of Parkin College, said yesterday that while disclaiming any qualifications as a Shakespearean critic, he thought the professor had rendered good service by calling attention to the need for independent criticism of traditional views. Most people had a tendency to reproduce accepted views and estimates without any real, independent consideration of them. That was a weakness that needed correcting. What Professor Oliphant had said applied also to such classic writers as Milton and Dickens. Many people professed to admire them who knew little about them, and certainly

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did not sincerely appreciate them. Every generation ought to form an independent judgment on matters of this kind. They needed, however, to guard against the criticism which fastened on the minor defects of a great writer and missed his essential strength.

"Something To Be Thankful For"

"I did not hear Professor Oliphant's refreshing address," said Mr. W. H. Langham, a former vice-president of the Shakespeare Society, "but in the main I agree with him that we are afraid to criticise Shakespeare. He and the mythical St. George have been set up as the great exemplars of the spirit of our people, and nowhere has this flattery been more encouraged than in the schools and universities. There the library furnishes the criticism, and from Hazlitt to Raleigh it is well expounded, but not too often supplemented. This, however, is how we would have it. Shakespeare is like stability—something for which we ought to be truly thankful and accept without criticism. That Professor Oliphant thinks otherwise about Shakespeare is encouraging. His independence will be acclaimed, no doubt, but few, I think, will follow his lead. Criticism is disturbing, and we do not wish to be disturbed. Moreover, those who govern us prefer that we should walk quietly in the paths that they, at such great cost, have cut and paved for us. In this State we are so satisfied with old beliefs that we even refuse an adequate grant to keep the Public Library up to date."

"What Everybody Knew"

The president of the Repertory Theatre (Mr. S. Talbot Smith) said that it seemed to him that Professor Oliphant had simply said what everybody knew, but few people cared to talk about. Ever since Swinburne's time it had been admitted that Shakespeare had many contemporaries only less brilliant than himself. As to his weaknesses, which the lecturer had insisted on, he had given one side only, assuming, he supposed, that all his audience knew the other side already. It was a pity that no debate had followed the lecture.

Shakespeare's Son-In-Law

In "The Diary of a Doctor," published on Saturday, reference was made to John Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, for whom the writer claimed that he had written a work that deserved more fame than anything Shakespeare himself had written! John Hall's work was entitled, "Selected Observations on English Bodies," and in it Hall had stated that scurvy could be cured by means of a brew of grass and watercress. According to the writer of "The Diary of a Doctor," he had really discovered the vitamin theory, although he did not know it.

John Hall, who married Shakespeare's eldest daughter, Susanna, in 1607, and subsequently settled at Stratford-on-Avon, obtained great local eminence as a doctor, attending many of the titled families in Warwickshire and neighboring counties. When he died, in 1635, he left his books and manuscripts to his son-in-law, Thomas Nash, with instructions that the latter were to be burned or disposed of as the legatee pleased. Apparently they were not destroyed, for in 1643, James Cooke, a surgeon of London, who was then attached to the Parliamentary Forces, visited Mrs. Hall and was invited by her to examine her late husband's manuscripts.

As a result, Cooke published, in 1657, the rare volume entitled, "Selected Observations on English Bodies, and Cures, both Empirical and Historical, first written in Latin by Mr. John Hall, physician, living at Stratford-on-Avon, where he was very famous, as also in the counties adjacent, as appears by these observations drawn out of several hundreds of his as choysest, and now put into English for the common benefit by James Cooke, practitioner in Physick and Chirurgery." Hall's original Latin notes, which cover the years 1632-35, are in the British Museum.

"Striving After Effect"

Professor H. J. Wilkinson, Professor of Anatomy at the University, said yesterday that Hall was undoubtedly a physician with a scientific turn of mind, who kept a record of his observations. He probably made infusions of many herbs and tried them out on his patients, but it was rather a stretch of imagination to credit him with having discovered the theory of vitamins because he had ascertained that a brew of grass and watercress would cure scurvy. Captain Cook had kept his men free from that disease by administering regular issues of wort made from germinating barley. Both those discoveries, however, had been forgotten, although Cook had been granted the Copley medal by the Royal Society for his success in preventing scurvy among his crews.

"I think the writer of 'The Diary of a Doctor' was rather striving after effect in claiming that Hall was more deserving of fame than his father-in-law," he said. "I do not think that there is any comparison between them."

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Students' Concert At Conservatorium

At the Elder Conservatorium students' concert last night a standard of general excellence was revealed. Particularly well done was the vocal duet, "La Ci Darem La Mano," from Mozart's "Don Giovanni," by Phil Hefferan (Madame Delmar Hall) and Kenneth Ward (Mr. Winsloe Hall). Beryl Kekwick and Howard Pfizner, pupils of the same teachers, sang the Bizet "Carmen" duet, "My Mother I Behold," in clear, melodious fashion. Mavis Ramsay (Miss Hilda Gill) gave a pleasing rendering of Elgar's "Like To a Damask Rose." Mostyn Skinner (Mrs. Reginald Quennel) contributed the Rachmaninoff "At Night," and Hilda Simcock (Mr. Frederick Bevan) the Saint-Saens "La Cloche"—both in good style. A vocal ensemble, comprising Merna Harris, Hilda Dunn, Marjorie Anderson, and Mavis Ramsay (Miss Hilda Gill), sang the Brahms "Death of Trenaer" creditably.

In his organ solo, Norman Chinner (Mr. John Horner) made much of Handel's "Larghetto in B Minor," and as accompanist with Clarice Gmeiner (harp) of the cello solo, "Hamabdil—A Hebrew Melody" (Granville Bantock) by Juliet Savage (Mr. Harold Parsons) did well. Miss Savage's expressive playing, ably aided by harpist and organist, resulted in a charming rendering of a noble composition. Violin solos were pleasingly played by Helen Magarey (Mr. Peter Bornstein) and Jens Hakendorf (Miss Sylvia Whittington). The piano soloists were Aetha Upton (Miss Maude Puddy) and Phillis Richards (Mr. George Pearce); both were well received. The first movement of the Brahms piano quartet in A major was effectively played by Dorothy Angus, Mary Hancock, Katho Yoerger, and Juliet Savage, members of Mr. Harold Parsons's ensemble class. A pleasantly varied programme ended with a good performance of the opening movement of the Mozart D major sonata for two pianos by Gwen Paul and Gwen Hill (Mr. William Silver).

The piano accompanists were Misses Jean Barbour, Gwen Paul, Muriel Porter, Joyce Rofe, and Mrs. Jean Black.