THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—In replying to my letters on the above-named subject Mr. Newman has altogether departed from the question at issue. The virtual object of my first letter, in so far as it referred to Mr. Newman, was to show that Mr. Newman’s diction was not marked by that purity which one might reasonably expect to find in the writings of an author of books on grammar and composition. And, by quoting verbatim a couple of faulty sentences from Mr. Newman’s brief “Preface to No. 6,” I succeeded in my purpose. I must confess that had Mr. Newman politely admitted his fallibility and requested my real name at that stage with the object of securing my services for correcting his books, I should have revealed my identity without hesitation. Since, however, he has adopted another course I cannot at present help him to augment the funds of the Children’s Hospital as he suggests. Under the circumstances it is very unfortunate for Mr. Newman that he deigned to notice my criticisms. In neither of his two letters does he advance, or even attempt to advance, a single refutation of my arguments. On the other hand, each of his epistles furnishes additional examples of that slipshod style of expression which so ill becomes an author. To prove the accuracy of this statement I shall select a few of the said examples from Mr. Newman’s letters:—

(1) Mr. Newman writes—“Being a true educator, his half-an-eye detected what was passed by myself and two other gentlemen.” This makes the “half-an-hour” the “true educator.”

(2) Mr. Newman tells us that “every one admits the value of Dr. Mitchell’s work at the University, and by giving candidates at the next preliminary examination an hour and a half at composition the standard of English composition in secondary schools will undoubtedly be raised.” Let us all earnestly hope that it may be raised! Who intends “giving” the hour and a half? Mr. Newman’s sentence does not make this clear! Who intends “giving” the hour and a half?

(3) Mr. Newman’s assurance that “Rusticus” is too well known to me to call for any lengthy comment on his last production, composed again, I perceive, at his suburban retreat, might have been expressed far more elegantly. “Rusticus” does not know Mr. Newman, nor will he “call” for any lengthy comment. The “again” is also badly chosen: “also” would have suited the case far better; for my “last production” was only composed once and never “again.”

(4) “Could he not have helped him?”—a question asked by Mr. Newman—reminds me of another almost as indefinite: “When did who chase whom around the walls of what?” once asked by an examiner. This last might easily be extended, but it is already quite long enough to serve my purpose.

I am, Sir, &c.

RUSTICUS.

Parkside, March 23.
Sir Thomas Elder's munificent gift of £20,000 to endow the Chair of Music at the University at once places the musical course, the existence of which really hangs on the pecuniary resources of the University, on a footing of safety. There is no further anxiety as to whether the lectures will be maintained. Musical folk are doubly aware that during 1884, through the partial want of the gift, the position of the Professor of Music had been in jeopardy, and in consequence, students, who then commenced the musical course, did so under the distinct understanding that the lectures might cease altogether at the end of the year. The gift of Sir Thomas Elder has come to the followers of the "divine art," for the public examinations in music were in the meantime established, and at the end of that year, the original lectures were sufficient (though under the partial gift) to meet the requirements of the Professor of Music. At the present time the fees have increased so that at the last examination there was more than sufficient to pay an additional Examiners. The gift of Sir Thomas Elder is, therefore, the person of Mr. W. H. Wallis Mus. Bac. R.C.O. of Sydney. These two sources of interest on Sir Thomas Elder's gift, and the question of the course, should now have about a year to spend on music; and the question will naturally arise, "How or be we going to do the course?"

It may be read here that the salary of the Professor of Music is £200 per annum, but this was a Professor Ives was first on, aged 21, the fee was £150 per annum. In addition, this, receive £150 a year as City Organist, and be allowed to take six assistant pupils, which would bring his income up to nearly £2,000 a year. Professor Ives, a young man, is now in the second year of the same salary. Professor Marshall Hall, of Melbourne, has £1,000, and it is evident that the University cannot clout this sum, and must command the entire services of a first-class man. A salary of £500 a year is certainly not to offer the University Professor and, indeed, none of the salaries in the ranks are more than £500. If this were done there would still be a considerable surplus which should undoubtedly be devoted to improving the University's position in the public examinations in music. Complete Board of at least two practical Examiners in addition to Professor Ives ought to be engaged. The University should not allow certificates beyond the reach of any student. The need of a pianist of high standing, and a violinist with a good acquaintance of the principal orchestral instruments, to assist as co-Examiners is felt by all connected with these examinations, and, indeed, by none more than Professor Ives himself. With the funds now at their disposal the University can do this, or, indeed perhaps for a larger Board of Examiners, which would considerably enhance the worth of our musical diploma, and place them on a footing with similar certificates granted in the Australian Colonies. The increase of work that necessarily follows such a course might enable the University to maintain the fees and charges for examinations, which are certainly in consequence felt to be rather high. A reduction of the present two guineas and one guinea to one guinea and half a guinea would be very important to students, especially in the country districts. With regard to the award of the Board of Examiners, the University have the opportunity of securing a first-class English musician as a comparatively small fee. Associated Boards of the Royal College of Music, London, consider the old country is desirable, and many fine musicians have been awarded the examinations in music.