

Reg. 27th March 1906.

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THE UNIVERSITY AND SPORT.

To the Editor.

Sir—"Undergraduates" letter in The Register of Monday is incorrect, ungrammatical, and unworthy of even serious perusal. Let me assure them that they had better develop all the muscular power possible for using their extremities in honest labour. Judging from the sample of composition they have given they are not likely to do much with their brains.

I am, Sir, &c., SPERO MELIORA.

Sir—In "Undergraduates" letter I am pleased to see that the strongest argument the writers can advance in favour of an absurd proposal is that 150 students met and unanimously assented to it. I was present at that meeting, and I think—though this is immaterial—that the number present was much nearer 75 than 150; and the great majority of these consisted of members of the Sports Association. But, even if there was no dissent at that meeting, it does not prevent a person like myself, who was there and did not dissent, upon fully considering the matter from protesting now against it as being unfair and likely to work badly all round. The object of the enactment seems to be to replenish the coffers of an apparently not too well managed Sports Association. The speakers at the meeting referred to contented as much. One speaker spoke of the deplorable lack of funds, and another of the still more deplorable fact that members would not pay their subscription. If this is not it, what is the object of the measure? Does the Sports Association think that the standard and efficiency of sports at the University will be increased by compelling men who know nothing about sport and care less, and men who, though interested in all athletic matters, cannot through circumstances participate in the sports at the University, to pay 7/ per term towards the maintenance of the association? It will not, I venture to say, improve the sports of the University one bit. Previously the association was open to any student who wished to join, and those who are taxed now against their wills are not likely to take part in the sports, for the reason that they cannot, even if they would. So what is the use of the law except to increase the funds of the association? But, admitting that the proposal will make men, who previously were not, now interested in the association, does the association think this will enhance the athletic reputation of our University? You will have a crowd of non-sports who compulsorily are members of the association, and as members they must have a say in its management; and possibly their first step will be to vote the association out of existence! You cannot make a man a sportsman by making him contribute to a Sports Association; but you can make a sportsman—a true sportsman—contribute to a well-organized Sports Association by offering him the advantages of membership of that association. The Sports Association was formed by the students independently of the management of the University; and the strength of the association is not likely to be increased by every man, no matter who, who pays his fees at the University being a member. The Sports Association should themselves be the first to resent this proposal, except for one reason—that, with this proposal a law the association will have a handsome source of revenue, and the poor treasurer or secretary or whoever's duty it is, will be relieved of the disagreeable task of requesting delinquent members to pay their arrears. And look at the other side of the picture. Men who find it hard enough to pay lecture fees, and who through stress of time or other circumstances cannot possibly participate in the sports or enjoy any benefit from them, are compelled to contribute to keep in affluence those who have these advantages. But, even if the proposed law is confirmed by the Senate, it is in my humble opinion ultra vires of the University, and I trust some student will be found who will have the courage not to pay his seven bob, and allow the Supreme Court to express an opinion.—I am, Sir, &c.

ANOTHER UNDERGRAD.

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ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.

PROFESSOR ENNIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Professor Ennis, Mus. Doc., delivered his annual address to the students and the teaching staff of the Elder Conservatorium in the small concert hall on Tuesday afternoon. The professor's remarks may best be described as a brief introduction to musical aesthetics. In opening he said that music occupied a unique place among the fine arts. With painting and sculpture, when a work was finished it was at once ready to make its appeal to the public. With music its mission was by no means completed when the last notes were penned. It could only be heard through the medium of the performer, or performers, otherwise it was meaningless. Very much depended upon the manner in which it was presented, but there was, perhaps, too great a tendency upon the part of the public to regard the performance as of paramount importance, and to forget the work itself.

—Theory of Music.—

In respect to the study of music the term theory of music was very loosely applied. Generally it referred to the study of harmony, counterpoint, &c., which was not theory at all, but in reality actual composition. Theory of music was rather the study of such branches as acoustics and aesthetics. It was difficult to accurately define the art of music; it was largely an art of presentation, calculated to create in the mind certain pleasurable emotions. There was, of course, pathetic music, just as there were most pathetic scenes in great plays, but people who wept over these very scenes attended the plays again and again. Therefore it might be reasonably inferred that they enjoyed them. The musical faculty was an indescribable one. Nearly every one enjoyed a good melody, but they could scarcely tell why, and the most minute analysis did not throw much light upon the matter.

—Art Work.—

A work of art must have vitality; mere popularity for a brief period was no guarantee of intrinsic worth. Beethoven's nine symphonies were written about 100 years ago, and were now heard and enjoyed nearly all over the civilized world. Bach composed his wonderful organ works 150 years ago, and organists still delighted the public with these wonderful compositions. On the other hand, many tunes which were the rage a few years ago were now entirely forgotten and obsolete, for the simple reason that they possessed no artistic value.

—Melody.—

The simplest form of music was a melody, and this depended upon two things for its beauty—the relation of pitch and the relation of time. In a good melody the right notes came at the right time. To put in one wrong note would often entirely spoil the most beautiful creation. Again, the notes must be of correct duration. If time values were much altered even the most familiar melody became unrecognisable. Both the pitch and length of the notes must be arranged with the unerring instinct of an artist to produce a really beautiful melody. The rhythm of the once popular song "Grandfather's clock" and the opening of the last movement of Beethoven's little "Sonata in G" were similar; but the same notes were not used. Hence the ephemeral popularity of the former. Seeing that the correct notes were such an important matter, and were often the outcome of much thought and care upon the part of the composer, he would like to draw attention to the necessity for absolute accuracy in the performance of works.

—The Top Note.—

Some vocalists were accustomed to add a high note to the end of their songs merely for the sake of an ad captandum effect when a lower note was written. Such a course in the case of a classical song could not be too strongly condemned, for it would often ruin the whole effect of the work. If it was a trivial drawing room ballad perhaps it would not matter so much; but the principle was distinctly a bad one.

—Tempo Rubato.—

Referring to accuracy as to the lengths of notes, the professor said he did not in the least wish to condemn the use of "tempo rubato." In some music it was absolutely essential—Chopin's, for instance. He had only that day been reading the comment of one of the world's greatest artists, who said that it was impossible to imagine in point of time an absolutely correct, and at the same time pleasing, rendering of this master's compositions. Scarcely any music could be enjoyable if performed with absolute metronomic accuracy. But sometimes virtuosi, for the sake of display and effect, was rather apt to abuse the "tempo rubato," and such a course should emphatically be discouraged.

—Harmony.—

Speaking briefly upon the subject of harmony the professor said that, as with the notes of a melody, they wanted the right harmony in the right place. Sometimes different harmonies would sound equally good, but in other instances only one succession of chords would do. Extracts from Beethoven were played to illustrate this latter phrase of the question.

—The Performer's Ideal.—

In conclusion the professor urged the students present to remember that they were the medium between the composer and the audience, and that for the time being they were actually taking his place. Before they could adequately do so a great deal of work had to be done. First, they had to acquire the necessary technique. Technique for its own sake, and also for the sake of what it was a means to an end, should have for them an engrossing interest. But they should not make it the beginning and end of their study. They should instead endeavour to grasp the aim of the composer, and to create in the inner consciousness of their audience the emotional life the composer had lived in his work.

THE UNIVERSITY AND SPORT.

To the Editor.

Sir—I consider it my duty as hon. secretary of the University Sports Association to answer some charges made against the members of that body by a correspondent who signs himself "Another Undergrad." "Another Undergrad" states that the strongest argument that can be advanced in favour of what he calls "an absurd proposal" is that it was consented to by 150 students. That this is a strong argument in favour of the proposal even he must admit; but it is incorrect to say that it is our "strongest argument." In bringing in this compulsory subscription the council is merely following a precedent set by most of the Australian, the great majority of the American, and several of the English universities. If the universities who are older and more experienced than ourselves have deemed it advisable to introduce this compulsory subscription, and have found that it works for the good of the university, surely we cannot do better than follow their example. "Another Undergrad" also states that the object of the enactment is "to replenish the coffers of an apparently not-too-well-managed association." Now this is not the primary object of the enactment. Its object is to bring students closer together, to teach them to sink all individual feeling, and to work for the glory and credit of their Alma Mater, and thus in some measure to bring about that feeling of esprit de corps which is so necessary in undergraduate life, and which, alas—as is shown by "Another Undergrad's" letter—is generally wanting in a non-residential university. With regard to the suggestion by your correspondent that the association is not well managed, I think that had he taken a little trouble to make enquiries from any of its members or from any fair-minded undergraduate he would not have made such a statement. The University Sports Association is in a sound financial condition. In the season of 1903-4 there were 60 members on the roll, and during the season of 1905-6 the membership list had increased to 120. This is in itself a sign of strength and good management. I have the honour to be on the committees of several sporting organizations in this State, and I think I may say without egotism that the Adelaide University Sports Association has one of the most clear-headed, fair-minded, and hard-working committees of any sporting body in South Australia.

I am, Sir, &c.,

C. L. JESSOP.

To the Editor.

Sir—What can appear more contemptible to an unbiased mind than the actions of "Another Undergrad," when in his letter he admits that he was present at a meeting called for the purpose of founding a compulsory fee, and did not object to the resolution? He even, in fact, joined in the unanimous vote in its favour. Apparently not possessing sufficient force of character to give voice to his adverse sentiment at the meeting of his fellow-undergrads, he, under the protection of a non-de-plume, appeals to a public not fully cognizant of the facts, and thereby endeavours to prejudice the members of the senate who have yet to adjudicate. This ingenious youth has stated that so far as he can see the only object of the compulsory fee is to "fill the coffers of an apparently not-too-well-managed Sports Association;" but, coming from one who admittedly never took even a passing interest in the association until his pocket was affected, such gross ignorance is not to be wondered at. It may be of some interest to your correspondent and your numerous subscribers to know that the association was managed by a committee which was, and still is, annually elected by the voice of the majority of members; and, whether the management was good or bad, surely members are prepared to stand or fall by their own decision? The chief objects of a compulsory fee are:—1. To increase the membership of the association. 2. To reduce the yearly subscription from 30/ to £1 1/. 3. To endeavour to make those undergrads who are real sports, and are playing for outside teams, play for the University. 4. To endeavour to persuade such interesting freaks of learning (?) as "Another Undergrad" to take, if possible, an intelligent interest in the other side of "varsity" life. These objects, and especially the fourth, are objected to by your correspondent on account of men being by circumstances prevented from partaking in sport; but, admitting that there are a few, let us look at the benefit to the Varsity as a whole, and the few cases fall into insignificance. Moreover, with regard to his objections relative to those who are not in a position to pay £1 1/ per annum, let me draw his attention to a proviso inserted in the resolution that, if any undergraduate under any special circumstances applies for exemption, it may be granted in the discretion. The only circumstance accepted by the council—and rightly, too—is that of poverty. The whole action of the University is far from being without precedent, and the objects are an adaptation of a similar resolution passed and now in force at the Melbourne University; and at St. Peter's College not only is there a compulsory fee, but also every scholar must take an active part in sport. In conclusion let me appeal to "Another Undergrad" to come forward in his true colours, and converse with his fellow-undergrads, who at least have an idea of how the association is, and has been, managed, and with them settle his difficulties, and not drag his grievances through the public press, through which he must assuredly bring himself and his arguments into utter contempt in the minds of the University Senate.

I am, Sir, &c.,

ONE OF THE 200.