

MUSICAL EXAMINATIONS.

From "Ludwig Hopf, R.C.M.L.":—"With reference to your correspondent's letter, I beg to state that I have been appointed examiner for the London College of Music for 'towns outside the City of Adelaide, and in some of the other States.' As I suspected machinations of some kind of a certain class of people in South Australia, in consequence of my appointment, I have requested the secretary of the London College of Music, founded 1887, incorporated, not to send me to any South Australian centres at all."

"Given" 11/5/07.

STATE EDUCATION.

THE FORWARD MOVEMENT.

CARING FOR THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH.

Mr. Price was the chief figure of the large gathering on "Parents' Day" on Friday at the Unley State School, and he had something interesting to say about the Education Department, of which he is the head. He briefly sketched the outlines of the next forward movement in connection with State education.

The Premier said—Last year I was able out of revenue—not out of loans, mind—(cheers)—to give the Railways Commissioner £82,000 to put his department on a proper basis financially. I was able to do this principally because of the magnificent prosperity of the State. Thank God for the good season—and we are going to have another good one this year. Now that the Railways Commissioner has been fixed up, I hope to be able to do more for the schools than has been done. Do you know that for 17 years some of the schools never had a paintbrush on them? Well, we have altered all that, and we are not going to let that sort of thing go on in future. Another thing—we are going to make important structural alterations in the schools. We are going to improve the lighting of the classrooms. We are going to do away with those long desks, and to cut them down, so that at most there will be only three children at a desk, and the teachers can get in and out amongst the children more easily. Then there is another thing. Do you fathers and mothers know that your children are some of them being ruined for life by being compelled to sit at desks which are all the same height without reference to the size of the pupils? Well, we are going to alter that also, and the desks will be regulated so that the children will not have to sit in cramped positions, and so contract spinal complaints and all sorts of bad troubles. (Cheers.) Then, again, how many of you parents know that your children's eyesight is defective? Well, we are going to get doctors to examine them and point out the treatment that is needed in each case. The same with the hearing; the doctors will attend to that also. (Cheers.) Of course all this is going to cost money, and a lot of money, but that does not matter; the money has got to be provided, and we will provide it. We want to keep the best asset we have got—our children—and we want them to grow up healthy and strong young Australians to do their work in the world, and to take our places when we are gone. (Cheers.)

"Given" 11/5/07.

ELDER CONSERVATORIUM CONCERTS.

An advertisement in another column announces that the orchestral concert arranged to be given on May 20 has been postponed until June 10. Season tickets (transferable), admitting to the whole series of concert for the session, may be obtained from the registrar.

The Advertiser

ADELAIDE, SATURDAY,
MAY 11, 1907.

IS LITERATURE DYING?

A writer in the latest issue of the "Contemporary Review" is much exercised over the "absolute dearth" which has succeeded an age of extraordinary productivity in the world of letters. The same phenomenon has been observed by others. But Mr. Herbert Paul does more than reiterate, in the rounded periods of one of the most accomplished of living journalists, a complaint which has long ceased to be novel. He is concerned to know why there is nobody left to fill the thrones vacated by the literary potentates of the past. It may seem a curious question to ask at a time when Great Britain, to name no other country, is still in possession of Swinburne, Hardy, and Meredith, and when even Froude, "master of style and thought," has a surviving peer in Goldwin Smith. But Mr. Paul excludes from consideration writers whose best work was done a generation ago. Nor will he accept as an explanation of the present dearth of genius the notorious fact that literary history presents many alternations of fertility and barrenness. The crest of the advancing wave—to change the metaphor—is necessarily followed by the trough, and hitherto, at least, the trough has been succeeded by another crest. If we could be sure that history invariably repeats itself, it would be mere querulousness to murmur at the repeated operation of a law of nature, and sheer unreason to declare that the day of literature has gone for good.

But Mr. Paul, in his capacity as student of literature, finds himself seated beside what he believes to be its death-bed. Without sharing Mr. Paul's apprehension that the end of literature is at hand, we may agree with him that agencies are coming into play which, to say the least, are not favorable to its existence. Literature has ceased to be revered. It is well that the capacity to read should be widely diffused, but we have to reckon among the immediate consequences the creation of a vast circle of bookbuyers not distinguished for critical acumen, to whose level an author must descend if he is to live at all. It was not for such patrons that Flaubert passed a sleepless night in the attempt to discover a way out of the difficulty presented by a double genitive, and that Tennyson devoted days together to the fabrication of "jewels five words long." In spite of the current craze for the classics, the mind of the age, as diagnosed by Mr. Paul, is neither adoring old intellectual idols nor pining for new ones. What, indeed, asks Mr. Paul, could be expected of a generation so incurably Philistine as to applaud Mr. Rhodes' description of the British flag as an "asset?" Who, again, he enquires, cares nowadays for the humor of "The Northern Farmer?" Its place has been taken by a flippancy which to any person of refinement must be "as boring as dulness itself." And as the supply of an inexhaustible fund of reading matter in the shape

of daily, weekly, or monthly trash has become a trade like any other, it follows that the appetite for what is base has abundant scope for growing upon what it feeds.

A plentiful lack of "sweetness and light," however, is not necessarily an incurable evil, and if literature had nothing more to fear one might, as even Mr. Paul seems to admit, hope for its ultimate recovery. The trouble is that its plight is fatally aggravated by the prominence which physical science must inevitably assume in the minds of this and later generations. Against science in itself not a word can be said. Besides the actual facts at which it arrives, and the arts and industries it promotes, there are certain indirect advantages which its study confers. It raises up a standard of truth below which its votaries do not like to see their neighbors falling, and it obliges mankind to reconsider many foregone conclusions. But it also leads the mind into details, and inspires a doubt as to the value of any truth but its own. Literature, to be great, must keep close to the mind of man, and to the mind of man as it appears in the noblest and most typical individuals, and it is precisely from the mind of man, especially individual man, that physical science is apt to lead us away. Just as motor cars are superseding horses so, Mr. Paul suggests, is "science superseding humanism." A world immersed in "actuality" tires of "verbal exercise;" hence the growing distaste of Charles Darwin for literature which led him in the end to regard the study of even Shakespeare as unprofitable. Tyndall lectured on the "scientific use of the imagination," but what use can science make of the faculty which it does so much to starve? In the competition with science, which offers the prospect of boundless progress, how can literature, in which there is no progress whatever, but rather deterioration, hope to "retain its attraction for men of genius?" We began by dissenting from Mr. Paul's conclusion, and we may now note the fatal flaw in his argument. There would be little or nothing to say against the superstructure he builds upon it if we could grant his fundamental proposition that "men are not born literary or scientific." The old apothegm, "Poeta nascitur, non fit," has had too many illustrations from the day of Shakespeare to that of Burns for its truth to be in serious question now, and for that reason we find it difficult to subscribe to Mr. Paul's dictum that science is to literature what life is to death. We do not deny that the age has something to answer for in respect to its literary degeneracy. But there is one truth which its censor seems to have overlooked—that great works have always been rare, and that the literary monuments that remain from the past are, taken together, but the pyramids that seem to accentuate the desolation of the surrounding desert.

The Ballarat Courier May 9th 1907

UNIVERSITY MUSIC EXAMINATIONS.

THE CONSERVATORIUM'S CLAIMS.

A.N.A. ASSISTANCE SUGGESTED.

OTHER MUSICAL BODIES CRITICISED.

Since Professor Peterson has been associated with the Melbourne Conservatorium he has been an ardent worker in endeavoring to induce Australians to support the Australian institution. At the present time there are some four musical bodies in active competition for students for examination, and it has been the endeavor of the Conservatorium authorities to urge on Australian people that it is unwise to send money to the old country when students can get an equally high examination in music at the Conservatorium. Last night Professor Peterson (director) and Mr H. A. Thomson (organising secretary), of the Melbourne Conservatorium, addressed a public meeting at the City Hall with a view to making public the aims and methods of the Conservatorium. There was a fairly numerous gathering of ladies and gentlemen interested in musical matters. Mayor Brokenshire presided.

Mr Thompson was the first speaker, and, in opening, emphasised the fact that the Conservatorium examinations are University examinations, and, therefore, he contended, they ranked higher than the examinations conducted by any outside body. They were not there to seek for profits; they were there in the interests of education. They wanted money for education. They wanted to establish exhibitions; to bring the University examinations to the doors of the people, and to assist gifted students. The movement was the beginning of what would develop into an associated board for the whole of Australia. The Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide also covered West Australia and Tasmania, and there was no doubt New South Wales was only waiting for the chair to be established. At the conference last year Sir Robert Stout, chancellor of the New Zealand University, expressed the hope when the examinations would stand not for Australia, but for Australasia. They were desirous also of making mutual arrangements with the Associated Board.

Professor Peterson, in the course of his remarks, said that in Paris they had what he considered to be the ideal conservatorium. No fee was paid, and any child was eligible to be elected a student after passing certain examinations. In Victoria they did not receive the same assistance from the Government, and had to ask the people if they would help the Conservatorium when it got a talented student to receive the best musical education it could give. They had been sending a lot of talented students to Europe. A more appalling waste of money could not have been suggested to the public. The money to send them Home was collected in a semi-private manner, and the student was selected, not because he happened to have the most ability, but because he had the most friends. These students were sent to France, though they knew nothing of French, or, perhaps, to Germany, despite the fact they had no knowledge of German. It was therefore a profitless quest. They had degrees in Melbourne quite equal to the best at Home. When we sent people Home it was so that they could become acquainted with the musical atmosphere and hear the best orchestras, &c. To send students Home who were not able to take advantage of that was a sheer waste of money. Students had gone Home not to make a name for themselves, but to make money. Last January one of the Melbourne papers published a list of Australians who had gone Home and filled highly creditable positions. He was interested enough in the matter to make a copy of the list and sent it Home to one of the biggest concert agents in London. He asked the agent to let him know what he thought the positions were worth. He (Professor Peterson) had previously stated that the fee these people received was not sufficient to pay the cost of the cable message announcing their success. The answer he received from the concert agent was rather astonishing to the friends of these people. In regard to one, he said, "Probably played for nothing;" to another, "I think he might have been £1 is without expenses;" and in another case the comment was, "This engagement was of no importance." In the whole lot he considered there was no £33s worth of engagements, and yet they were published to induce people to go Home to

teach poor old Europe how it should sing and play. (Laughter.) Young artists who went Home were literally starving, as far as the return they got from their work was concerned. What he wanted to emphasise was that they had their own University, and it gave them the best they could get, and gave the best student the opportunity of studying in a more promising "atmosphere." When he came to Victoria he instituted a new system of examination papers. The University had been hammering at the wrong end. He asked them to write the scale of F sharp, and found they could not do it. He set exercises, and he was happy to say that now they had model answers to the papers, which showed that the foundation was being thoroughly mastered, even in the outlying parts of the State.

Questions having been invited, the mayor asked the relative advantage of a Home degree and one obtained from the University.

Prof Peterson, in replying, said that in Melbourne he had seen people advertising "Gold medallist of the — College of Music, London." That was a perversion of the truth. No one could be a gold medallist without being at that college; and for those who spent about a quarter of an hour in an examination in Melbourne to claim that was an untruth. Comparing the quality of the degrees given by the Home bodies and the University, he might say that no qualification was given by one or the other for local examination, for they had nothing to do with teaching. It was only a "pass" for pupils.

Mr Lawrence Richardson asked if Prof Peterson could explain how it was that Mr Ernest Wood was an examiner for the London College of Music?

Prof Peterson said that the London College of Music, like the Victorian College of Music, was a body without any responsibility whatever. The London College of Music was recently fined at the Marlborough Court because it had not put "Limited" in sufficiently large letters. Why any reputable musician in Victoria, New South Wales or New Zealand lent himself to a body of that kind was a thing he could not understand. Mr Wood being one of the best and most experienced musicians, was invited to join the Conservatorium Board. It made no difference that he was connected with the London College of Music, except that while he examined for that body he could not act as an examiner for the Conservatorium. It was to be regretted that Mr Wood lent his support to an institution which extracted money and only gave them millinery. (Laughter.)

Mr Richardson: I think you under-rate the A.L.C.M. degree. If you pass Mr Wood you pass a severe examination. I don't think millinery has anything to do with it. You have to pay for that.

Mr Peterson: No one has a higher estimation of Mr Wood than I have. I don't know the standing of the London College, and I don't know anyone who has failed to pass it.

Mr Richardson pointed out that at the last examinations held at Ballarat by the London College several failed.

Mr Thompson said that Mr Ernest Wood's position was frankly this. Mr Wood was an excellent musician. He was willing to give the board the benefit of his experience and knowledge. He attended the board meetings regularly. While he examined for the London College he was excluded as an examiner for the Conservatorium.

Mr Richardson: I don't see why Prof Peterson should satirise what appears to be a strongly developing body. I know for a positive fact from English papers that the London College is on the ascending scale. It is really on a par with Trinity College.

Prof Peterson: That does not say much. Mr Richardson had not attended to espouse Mr Wood's cause; but hearing Professor Peterson satirise the A.L.C.M., he thought someone ought to take up the cudgils on behalf of the London College.

Professor Peterson was sorry if anything he said unduly satirised any institution which conducted honest examinations. If people were willing to get any degree, then the future was not very hopeful. If he had spoken strongly on the London College, it was because he knew it so well. It might be as good as Trinity College; but that was no credit to it if it was. The Conservatorium had something to offer them in return for their money. They said, "Help us to help you." He was sorry if the temptation had led him to say anything unkind about other institutions.

The Mayor: I think this is a question which the A.N.A. should take up, and send it right through the State. (Hear, hear.) As the professor had stated, why should they send Home when they could obtain equally good degrees here? Why

should they send the money Home? (Hear, hear.)

Professor Peterson said he knew the cheque for the Trinity College in Sydney was £2000 for New South Wales alone. The London College was satisfied with local examiners; but Trinity College sent out people like Mr Edwards, and the Associated Board last year sent out Messrs Myles and Dunhill. Mr Wood was of immense value; but he would like to know who helped him to examine in Victoria. They had men possessing far more experience than Messrs Dunhill and Myles. The Conservatorium wanted the money, not for themselves but for the people. He wanted a travelling scholarship attached to the University of Melbourne. What was the good of sending money to these other institutions?

Miss Hayhoe, who was invited to speak, said that since the University examinations had been established in Ballarat she had entered candidates, and never entered candidates for any other examinations since those of the University had been established. As loyal Australians they ought to support what they had here. (Hear, hear.) "I am an Englishwoman myself," continued Miss Hayhoe; "but you have your Conservatorium, your University, your examinations, and I think you ought to support your own. (Hear, hear.) I agree with what Professor Peterson and Mr Thompson have said."

Mayor Brokenshire: There is a lot of sound advice wrapped up in that little speech. I say again from a native standpoint, "You ought to support your own."

Before the meeting terminated, Professor Peterson said this was a matter in which they had to work out their own salvation; whilst the mayor again urged action by the A.N.A.

The Evening Echo
Ballarat May 9th 07

The strong point made by Professor Peterson and Mr H. A. Thomson, of the Melbourne University Conservatorium of Music, at the City Hall last evening, was that the claims of the University must be recognised by Australians as being bound up with the national welfare. Australians should support their own institution, especially when its certificates, or diplomas would carry more weight in Australia than the certificates of any outside body. Professor Peterson cast ridicule on the "millinery" degrees of one outside college, and showed that a great deal of money was being needlessly and wastefully sent, he considered, out of the country. The University Conservatorium did not seek to make a lot of money out of the candidates for examinations, but rather to help all promising students whether they had money or not. The poorest child with talent should be able to get a training at the Conservatorium at little or no cost (as in Paris) to his or her parents. If a student showed exceptional talent there would be chances of winning a travelling scholarship. Even now the Conservatorium was assisting country candidates by paying their train fares to Melbourne to be examined in the violin, etc., by experts in those subjects. The University Conservatorium existed for the people and the people should support it, in their own interests. The scheme of amalgamation with the Adelaide University was outlined and the Australasian scheme foreshadowed.

