

D. Benjamin Poulton died on Friday morning. He was one of the best-known and most successful members of the medical profession in South Australia. A native of Geelong (Vic.), he was educated at the Flinders School there, at the Scotch College in Melbourne, and at the Melbourne University. At the last-named institution he was associated with several other medical students who afterwards, like himself, won high distinctions. After a brief sojourn in Queensland, he continued his studies in England (at St. Thomas's and St. Bartholomew's Hospitals), and qualified for the degree of M.R.C.S. Dr. Poulton arrived in South Australia in 1882 as house surgeon of the Adelaide Hospital, which was before the establishment of the medical school. Subsequently, when Dr. Dunlop resigned the position of senior house surgeon, Dr. Poulton was appointed his successor, and his great devotion to his work, coupled with his exceptional skill, fully justified the confidence which had been reposed in him for



THE LATE DR. B. POULTON.

the responsible position. After a period of private practice, he was assistant to Dr. Gorger at the Hospital, and when the last-named practitioner left South Australia Dr. Poulton was elected honorary surgeon, in which capacity he acted with distinction until 1905, when he retired with honours crowding upon him. He was chiefly responsible for the organization of the Triennial Medical Congresses, which have won favour in all parts of Australia and New Zealand. The first congress was held at Adelaide in 1887, and was presided over by Sir Joseph Verco. From its inception the movement was highly successful. For some years he was secretary of the S.A. branch of the British Medical Association, and he had also filled the position of President. After 29 years' excellent work, he, in 1920, resigned his lectureship at the Adelaide University on the principles and practice of surgery, and was appointed lecturer in surgery honoris causa. He was also a member of its council. Dr. Poulton was highly esteemed by a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. Many of the present doctors in South Australia, and others who have gone to other parts, owe much to him for his painstaking and thorough labour as a lecturer and demonstrator. In the pathological section of the University there are excellent models which he made in his long connection there. He was a gentleman of reserved temperament, but those who knew him appreciated him to the full. He loved his life work, and wherever possible advanced the profession. In an unostentatious manner he took a keen interest in public matters. He was a member of the committee of the Royal Society of St. George, and was a zealous advocate of a vigorous policy of afforestation, and during the war period sent a parcel of wattle seed to be sown at Gallipoli. Years ago he was connected with the National Union and the Australian Natives' Association, and later was greatly interested in the work of the Cheer-up Society at the Hut. Dr. Poulton was also a governor of the Wyatt Benevolent Trust. In his younger days he took an interest in golf, and was also fond of the gun and of horses. In 1889 he married Miss Lettice Teasdel, daughter of Mr. Frederick Teasdel, of Sydney. A widow and three daughters survive.

THE MUSIC TEACHERS' CONFERENCE.

From C. M. LEUMANE, Gawler:—"Chorister" asks an interesting question, inasmuch as he brings into prominence a department of the singing teacher's art in which quacks have wrought much havoc, namely, the determination of the character or class of a voice—in plain words, whether a voice is soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, or bass. The compass of a voice is a secondary matter in determining its character. The tone-quality, or voice-color, is the primary. Let me illustrate. An ordinary melody may be played by violin or flute. The notes encompassed are the same in each case, but the tone-color of the one instrument could never be mistaken for the other. Baritones may be found of an exceptional range. Santley sang in "Zampa" what is practically a tenor role. Tenors with a limited compass are, nevertheless, tenors, and so on with all other voices. Vocal color is immediately recognisable by the expert ear. A qualified teacher, who, of course, must possess physiological knowledge, can, though not invariably, determine the nature of a voice without hearing it. Bases are generally tall men, and contraltos tall women, but not always. It will, however, be found that in the cases of short contraltos or bases the vibratory area will be greater than in the cases of sopranos or tenors. They will probably be found to have long necks. This explains the occasional apparent anomaly of a short-statured base or contralto. It is interesting in this connection to note that the height of a person is often merely a matter of the length of limb, and not of trunk. The whole thing is very interesting and would need more space to discuss thoroughly than it

is fair to ask an editor to grant. "Chorister" is afraid that the lowering of the pitch will tend to produce more baritones and contraltos and fewer tenors and sopranos. The pitch has been squeezed up by instrumentalists and instrument makers and is injurious to normal voices. Sopranos and tenors were quite as proportionately numerous when the pitch was much lower than it is now. Pitch-change can neither affect voice-color nor compass. Let me illustrate again. Say, for instance, a tenor's voice at concert pitch (the highest) is C to A. At a pitch altered to French (or normal) his compass would be D flat to B flat, so that, if his favorite song is in G at concert pitch, all he need do is to transpose it to A flat at normal pitch, and he is then singing exactly what he was singing before. As to the teachers that "Chorister" refers to as training one part of the register instead of the other, these are the persons of whom we are trying to get rid.

From "VOCALIST":—The conditions Mr. Leumane would impose on teachers of singing are, in my opinion, amusing. Perhaps the following condition would meet the case:—"All teachers who after five years' practice of the profession have not produced a competent vocalist shall desist from teaching." What a lot of unemployed there would be at the end of five years! And they would not all belong to the so-called "small fry." If I were interviewing a teacher with the object of taking lessons the first question I would ask is—"Where are your pupils, and what have they accomplished?" If that question cannot be answered satisfactorily all the talk about the medical profession, physiology, &c., is mere piffle.

From EDWARD HOWARD, Angas-street:—I venture to think Mr. Leumane and myself are both striving for the same objective, viz., to throw light upon a musical subject which is imperfectly understood and too often very badly taught. I cannot, however, accept his dictum "that no such thing as a faculty for voice training exists intuitively." I know that it does exist, although it may be dormant if not utilised. The late Sir John Stainer stated that some teachers possessed it, while some did not, and that it was a faculty almost impossible to define. No other branch of music gives a tittle of the scope for charlatanism as does singing, particularly as regards the "voice production" phase, which is that department most exploited by those who understand it least. Flagrant cases have occurred in London itself. In 1906 my old master (Visetti, of the R.C.M.) told me of a man there who gained notoriety by publicly dissecting the throats of nightingales, from which he drew various deductions as to his skill in dealing with the human voice. He lived in a big house, with flunkies to show pupils (dupes) in and out, made a good deal of money, lasted some little time, and then disappeared. He was a clever man musically and otherwise, but as a teacher of singing he was a charlatan. May I attempt to show some of the causes from which the difficulties connected with this subject arise? Fundamentally they are (1) the fact that there is a physiological side to the question; (2) that musical efficiency as well as vocal gift is required; (3) the

great divergence in the matter of natural vocal and musical talent. Evidence of the existence of difficulties may be seen in the following paragraph, copied from the prospectus of the Adelaide College of Music for 1896:—"Vocal division—After an experimental period extending over several years it has been found impracticable to classify vocal students according to their attainments." Such a difficulty could not arise in connection with any other branch of music. The subject may be classified under four heads—(a) the voice and the ear, (b) musical knowledge and skill, (c) temperament and nerve, (d) intelligence and education. For illustration students may be divided into three classes under each of the above headings. As regards the voice and ear—(1) the exceptionally gifted, (2) those with average talent, (3) those with more or less serious defects. As regards musical knowledge and efficiency—(1) those who are good pianists, or who understand and can read vocal music; (2) those who can play a lute, but have no knowledge of the reading of vocal music; (3) those who know practically nothing. As regards temperament and nerve—(1) those with natural feeling, the ability to give expression thereto, and confidence; (2) those in whom these things are dormant but capable of development; (3) those who are naturally only mechanical. Last, but not least, as regards intelligence and education—(1) those who are well qualified in both respects; (2) those of average qualifications in these particulars; (3) those who are lacking in one or the other of these desiderata. As any set of combinations are possible in the individual learner, can it not be seen that discrimination, judgment, and skill are necessary on the part of the teacher in order to deal effectively with the diversities which inevitably must arise in practice? The customary "short, sharp, shiny" way out of these difficulties is to ignore all detail and devote the time to interpretation, be it good, bad, or indifferent, treating all pupils as nearly alike as possible. It is of little service to suggest remedies till a disease is recognised and admitted to be injurious. If the public can be enlightened they have the remedy in their own hands. I trust Mr. Leumane will take my comments on his suggestions in the friendly spirit in which they were made.

[This correspondence is closed.]

ELDER CONSERVATORIUM. CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT.

The eighth concert of the 1921 season was a chamber music recital of special interest and attractiveness. The works of two composers far apart in time and style, but each strikingly individual—Schumann and Franck—afforded scope for varied interpretation. They were rendered in a finished and expressive manner, which brought out the special character of each. The artists were:—Violin, Mr. Gerald Walenn and Miss Nora Kyffin Thomas; viola, Miss Sylvia Whittington, A.M.U.A.; and violoncello, Mr. Harold Parsons, Mus. Bac. Schumann's "Quartet in A minor, Op. 41, No. 3," is the one dedicated to "his friend, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, in sincerest devotion," and the composer spoke of it as "I sometimes think, my best work." It was composed rapidly, although with no lack of care, and perhaps owes some of its delightful freshness and spontaneity to this circumstance. The short and expressive andante which ushers in the allegro has a strongly marked character, and the succeeding movement is worked out in familiar Schumann style. The playing throughout was expressive and finished. The broad sustained melody of the opening of the adagio molto was given with fine effect, and the independence and originality of the finale in rondo form was delightfully brought out. The vigorous and exciting coda, which demands much of the performers, was also particularly well played. Each part was most perfectly balanced. Miss Ada Wordie, A.M.U.A., was the vocalist of the evening, and sang with charming effect. "The almond tree" (Schumann) is a haunting little song, and Mr. Harold Wyde, M.R.C.O., accompanied sympathetically, bringing out the character of the music admirably. "Tears of joy" and "The green hat," two other songs by Schumann, were also delightfully rendered, and received with hearty applause. The greatest enthusiasm, however, was aroused by Miss Wordie's singing of "The blackbird," by Hook (modernized by Corder). Cesar Franck's "Quintet in F minor, for piano, two violins, viola, and violoncello," was the concluding orchestral number. This writing, rich in great musical ideas, handled with all the resources of the art

of the Belgian composer, who has been called "the godfather of the new French school," is in Franck's grandest manner. The piano part is especially characteristic of the writer. In this, Miss Maude Paddy was at her best—which is saying a great deal. Her power and expression, her singing touch, and silvery clear runs, brought out the quality of the music perfectly. Mr. Gerald Walenn played with brilliancy and feeling. Miss Nora Kyffin Thomas, Miss Sylvia Whittington, and Mr. Harold Parsons, each made their part tell effectively and artistically, and throughout the ensemble was perfect.

THE UNIVERSITY.

Four or five weeks ago Professor Sir Edgeworth David, lecturing in this city on "A People's University," paid several high but well-merited compliments to the University of Adelaide. The local seat of learning, by its elevated standards, and the progressive spirit it displays in keeping pace with the advance of knowledge, and adapting its curricula and methods of instruction to the growing intellectual needs of the community, certainly plays a large part in justifying the reputation of Adelaide as a centre of culture. Professor David noted the interesting facts that the University of Adelaide was the first in Australia to grant degrees in science, to establish commercial, agricultural, and forestry courses, and to found a Conservatorium and Chair of Music. Moreover, it was the pioneer among Australian Universities not only in admitting women to the benefits of higher education, but when they achieve success in recognising it by the granting of degrees. With such a record, the Adelaide University has established a substantial title to the distinction of being a thoroughly democratic institution, in harmony with the popular basis of the State and Commonwealth political Constitutions. That its teaching is not absolutely free does not seriously discount this claim. Of 1,828 students who were on its rolls when Professor David lectured, free education was given to no fewer than 418 under a system of bursaries which throws open the portals of the institution to scholars in poor circumstances who aspire to and are worthy of a University training. Considerations of finance largely determine the policy of exacting fees from students who, not having won bursaries, are still anxious to take advantage of the facilities for higher education, and are both able and willing to pay; but in any case, as the University of Sydney has decided, there is much to be said in favor of a system which requires from those in a position to give it a fair monetary return for the value they receive. It is, after all, only a limited, even if, happily, an ever-increasing, number of the youth of the community for whom a University education is necessary or desirable as a preparation for the serious business of life. The bursary system, which should be as liberal in its scope as the State finances, supplemented by private munificence, will permit, is designed to give the assurance that poverty shall be no bar to the academic advancement of the clever and industrious student. Thus Professor Huxley's ideal of a ladder set up from the gutter to the University is practically realised. The boy or girl in the humblest circumstances may climb the ladder from the bottom rung, and, given ability and perseverance, need not despair of reaching the top. A University whose ministrations to the desire for knowledge extend over so wide a field of course requires, as Professor David pointed out, the provision of suitable accommodation and equipment. The need has been growing in Adelaide with the increase in the number of bursaries awarded, and, beyond these, the wider recognition of the value of higher education. Fortunately the University has small reason to complain, considering the State's financial difficulties, of a grudging measure of support from the Government. Its resources, too, have been generously enlarged by splendid gifts from wealthy and public spirited citizens. These are gratifying marks of public appreciation of the work