

IDEAS ON EDUCATION.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

When you meet a newly constituted headmistress, and when she has been travelling abroad, you feel impelled to ask her about Neo-Montessori, and the claims of self-government and that sort of thing. Miss Mabel Hardy, who has returned to act as principal of the new girls' boarding school of Arthur's Seat, Mount Lofty, is refreshingly free from modern catch-words and the academic complex.

A QUESTION OF RESPONSE.
 "Do you think," I asked, "that all children, or most children, can respond to the beauties of literature?"
 "Nearly all of them," said Miss Hardy. "The trouble is that a subject which above all others should be well taught, used to be given over to anybody. The uninspired teacher, coming upon a child with a sensational story, used to speak slight-

cause the principal and vice-principal are not themselves old-fashioned; but it will be run, to begin with at least, on quite simple and old-fashioned lines.
 "We want it to have the atmosphere of a home," said Miss Hardy; "a place where the children will be interested in everything that is done. I see no reason why they shouldn't walk into the kitchen and see the jam being made just as they would at home. At Frensham, a great school, for which I have the greatest admiration, each girl had some simple home duty. I think this is an excellent idea, for I remember my mother saying years ago that she would never send a child to a boarding school where she would be so much out of touch with domestic things that she would expect to be waited on when she came home, and be unable to do simple things for herself.
 "Sewing and handwork generally will be a feature at our school. Apart from the great usefulness of sewing, girls who are stupid in school are often quite clever with their fingers. The old-fashioned school was a little one-sided, and many girls who were thought very poor pupils afterwards showed themselves very capable and intelligent in the affairs of life. I think it is very good for every girl to have something which she is good at, and also for a clever girl to have something which she is bad at. It prevents the feeling of inferiority in one case and has a humbling effect in the other.

many delusions."
 My conversation with Miss Hardy lasted longer than this, but somehow we got to talking about irrelevant things—the middle ages alive in Strasbourg, the gaiety of Brussels, the charm of Italians, of what J. C. Squire looks like, and how Edith Sitwell reads her own poetry so beautifully that she makes it sound full of sense and meaning. Coming from Italy, which she holds has no more colour than our own sunburnt land, Miss Hardy finds Australians sad-looking. "To see far poorer peasants of Florence, and their continual interest and happiness, is a perpetual reminder of how false our modern values are. They have beauty in their work, and their hovels, though very dirty, are rich in colour, if not in comfort. The industrial system has taken beauty from the lives of people here; that is what is the matter with them, I think. If we can get beauty back into ordinary living, people will learn to look happy again."



MISS MABEL HARDY, B.A.

"People ask me my theories about education," she said, "and are shocked to find that I haven't any. If you read the history of all the great new schools of England, you will find that few of them learned from each other. They made up their methods as they went along, to suit the children as they found them. Methods don't matter much; what counts is the personality of those who use them. Even the new methods are not so very new. The Dalton plan, for instance, is quite as old as Dickens. At Miss Blimber's Academy, the pupils were all given so much work to do and left to finish it. It was the Dalton plan, exactly."

It is not to be inferred from this, of course, that Miss Hardy despises the growth of knowledge that has led to varied methods. To teach without knowing anything of psychology is, in her opinion, like working in darkness. In dealing with children one should have learned a lot of psychology and forgotten it again.

"I am not in accord, either," said Miss Hardy, "with the present-day belief in making science the foundation of education. I agree absolutely with the conclusions of that wonderful report on 'The Teaching of English in England.' It makes the best and widest basis for true human education. We are going to pour English into our pupils, in all kinds of ways."

"A very interesting woman I came upon in England was Mrs. Williams Ellis, the poetry editor of *The Spectator*. She has written a little book on 'Poetry as the Foundation of Education.' Her case is that while science develops the mind and makes it more logical, it leaves out of account the human passions. An education founded on science has no training for the emotions, and a child brought up on facts and logic, ignorant of the great domain of feeling, is far more likely to be swept away by sudden gusts of passion than one whose introduction to the powers and frailties of human nature have been in the world of poetry, in company with truth and beauty."

ingly of it, leaving the child with a dim impression that literature was to be enjoyed only by reading heavy books in leather-bound covers. You have to lead children from the starting point of what they do like, and the childish taste for literature differs from the adult, just as does the childish palate, or the juvenile love for bright colours. A good library, good pictures, and good music are essential to an education which is planned to give girls something abiding, that will give them true interest all their life long.

"Then I believe in a beautiful environment, and its subtle influence on character. I believe in making solitude possible for those who feel the need sometimes to be by themselves. A school where one can never get a moment to oneself to think, never even go for a walk alone, is a real oppression to some children."

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS.
 Descending from such abstract considerations, Miss Hardy remarked very heartily that she believed in children being warm, well fed, and in the open air. When the weather permitted it, quite a lot of lessons should be done outside. Evening homework—and many parents will heartily agree with her—could and should be abolished.

"I brought back one good idea from Switzerland. There the children have two hours for luncheon. Thoroughly rested and freshened by playing games, they can then work longer in the morning and afternoon, so that by starting school a little earlier and ending it later, all preparation can be done in school hours.

"The schools at Switzerland are amazingly good, only too practical. They disregard the cultural part of education—don't teach Latin, for instance, because it has no practical value. As in America, rich and poor go to the same school. There are a few private schools, but they are thought very little of, and hardly count."

The school which she and Miss Patience Hawker are establishing is not to be, Miss Hardy emphasized, a "crank" school of any kind. It will not be old-fashioned, be-

SIMPLICITY.

When I asked Miss Hardy curiously whether she thought the touch of old-fashioned simplicity would be welcomed by modern parents, she said that she thought the time was ripe for a return to a simpler child life.

"Many parents," she said, "see that their children are not getting the best out of life for all their feverish rush after pleasure. Unless people are going to find joy in simple pleasures and in the true and abiding beauties of art and literature, the search for happiness will lead them nowhere. Most things are lost in searching after them. People who do not know how to use their leisure, who have never, because of their rush from one thing to another, had any leisure to use, are fated to boredom and futility.

"The great danger before Australia is the one into which America has fallen—that of making money the standard of everything. Money snobbishness is the worst of all forms, and it is apt to overtake a new country, where there are no other and finer traditions. You don't find it in England. We want children to know and understand the finer things of life. Our musical appreciation and art appreciation classes will be for everybody, not just for the girls with a gift. Girls leaving school should be able to know good music, enjoy poetry and great pictures. They will go on to ordinary social life afterwards, I dare say. The girls at Frensham left and went straight into the whirl of social life. But I think they must always have kept something of that early atmosphere of beauty and simplicity, and that afterwards, when they married, perhaps some station man, they settled down to a quieter life and brought up their children particularly well."

PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

Miss Hardy believes very much in co-operation with parents. "I was very interested," she said, "in the work of a headmistress from New Zealand and her parents' association. She has regular meetings, when she discusses with them the details of the work, and takes them thoroughly into her confidence, inviting criticism. The French mistress, for instance, will give a paper on the way she teaches French, and the reasons for her methods.

"I liked the idea very much. The old-fashioned school of my own time was apt to ignore the parent, when it came to actual teaching. If a headmistress thought a girl should leave off Latin, she left it off, without dreaming of consulting the mother. If I were a parent, this would have annoyed me very much. Parents have the first right to their children, and shouldn't be required to deliver them over mind and body.

"I think that very often the old style of school actually made a cleavage between the child and parent. In the first days of women's emancipation, teachers were so enthusiastic that they rather gave us the impression that an academic life was the only thing worth living for. What came after that they left to our imagination. The obvious inference to the crude mind of a young girl was that her mother was rather a dull being because she had not had an academic career, but had got married and had children. Running a house was nothing—a thing anybody could do. It took some girls many years to get over these early impressions. Where parents and teachers are in sympathy, there is not likely to be this cruel and mischievous cleavage, in which mothers must often have suffered and daughters been prey to

MAL 92-10-26.

Mr. Clive Carey put forward some good work at his students' recital on Monday night, foremost being the finely dramatic rendering by Miss Olive Bassett of the Letter Scene from Massenet's opera *Manon*. Miss Bassett was a former student of Mr. Frederick Bevan, and later studied under Madame Agnes Larkcom at the Royal Academy of Music London, where she gained the diploma of L.R.A.M. Since Mr. Carey's advent in Adelaide she has continued her vocal studies under his guidance, and her voice has gained much in color and brightness. From being recognised as a true contralto, with a voice of much weight, her voice has gone up to mezzo-contralto, even entering mezzo-soprano range, which puts many other than definitely contralto roles within her scope.

Mrs. Dorothy Back, fresh from a pleasurable experience in opera in Melbourne, was another vocalist of distinction, adding to a naturally good voice, a buoyancy of expression, which carried her hearers with her and won for her warm applause.

Miss Lillian Wilkinson's return to the concert platform after a period of silence was fully appreciated and she gave a difficult Wagner bracket, well memorised, and carefully prepared. She has a voice of much power and extensive range. Dr. Ray Newling, for long a well-known amateur vocalist, greatly pleased his audience with a bracket of contrast in Schubert's "The Wanderer" and Leoni's "Tally Ho." He had to return to the platform and acknowledge appreciation of his work. Many other good numbers were submitted, and Miss Alice Meegan did her usual good work at the piano as accompanist for all.

Savriti in Melbourne

Mr. Carey finds time for many musical interests outside his Conservatorium duties, and most of his vacations are spent in Melbourne, where he has become a favorite, through the British Music Society. Everything that Mrs. James Dyer, the enthusiastic president, touches is assured of success, as she has a knack of gathering in the right people, and spares no trouble nor expense in matters of detail. Music in the past has always largely depended upon music-loving and wealthy patrons for its support, and the Victorian branch of the British Music Society is fortunate in its generous-minded president.

Record success was the result of the combined efforts of Mrs. Dyer as organiser, Prof. Bernard Heinze as musical conductor, and Mr. Carey as producer of the Holst symbolic opera "Savriti," which was performed for the first time in Australia. A small orchestra and an invisible choir of women's voices was utilised, with forest settings. The performance netted some hundreds of pounds to be applied to the endowment of the British Music Society.

It might be a good idea, if, with our wealth of good voices, and dramatic and orchestral resources, the performance could be repeated in Adelaide to augment the "Rose Grainger" endowment of the South Australian Orchestra.

Welcome to Mr. Bevan

Students of Mr. Frederick Bevan gave him a welcome home on Wednesday evening in the form of a social evening, and in spite of the inclemency of the night there was a large gathering of those invited, which included members of the staff of the Conservatorium.

Mr. Reimann, on behalf of the company, gave his musical confrere a warm welcome home, and alluded to their many years of work together. To see Mr. Bevan with his students was to know the affection which existed between them. Mr. Bevan replied, and said that the same affection awaited him in America when Clytie Hine, a former student, practically took charge of him during his visit there. Otto Heggie, whom he had taught on the very platform where they were then standing, was a great man in the world of music there, and his name was emblazoned in electric signs across the night skies of New York. A happy spirit prevailed over the gathering, and Mrs. Smedley Palmer received an acknowledgement of her services as teacher in Mr. Bevan's absence. After a musical programme a capital supper of home-made dainties was served by the students.