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UNIVERSITY MUSICAL EXAMINATIONS.

Mr. C. R. Hodge, Registrar of the University of Adelaide, has sent us the following copy of a letter addressed to Mr. E. E. Mitchell, Woodville, in reply to suggestions made by members of the musical profession.

The University of Adelaide, August 3, 1900. Dear Sir—The proposals submitted by teachers of music to the board of musical studies at the conference on the 3rd ult. have been considered by my council, and I am now directed to forward the following reply:—

1. The council have given careful consideration to the request "that both examiners in the practice of music should be non-resident in South Australia, and should have exclusive charge of the examination," but they see no reason to alter the expressions of opinion contained in their resolutions on this subject in 1898, as follows:—(a) "We have thorough confidence in Professor Ives, and are satisfied that he was not interested, directly or indirectly, in the success of any of the candidates at the public examinations in music, except so far as any professor in any faculty is interested in the success of students under his care." (b) "It is essential for the University to maintain the principle that the services of the professor of music, as well as those of professors in other faculties, shall be available for examinations in the subjects proper to their respective courses." Professor Ives, however, having expressed a desire to be relieved of the position of examiner in the practice of music, it has been resolved that those examinations shall, in future, be conducted by the examiner of the associated board alone, or by that examiner in conjunction with some other person unconnected with the Conservatorium. The teachers present intimated that they would be satisfied with either of the alternatives.

2. The council are unable to make any alterations in the syllabus, as it is prepared by the associated board. Negotiations are proceeding with a view of adopting the entire scheme of the board's examinations in practical music. If, as is hoped will be the case, these negotiations are successful, the desire for the omission of some of the pieces will be met in another way.

3. My council are also unable to act upon the suggestions made by you and Mr. Stevens as to the examinations in theory, as their tendency was in the direction of lowering the present standard. Care, however, will be taken to furnish a complete syllabus as requested. My council are advised that the history of music cannot properly be excluded from the examinations in theory, but contemplate including it in the examination for the Mus. Bac. degree.

4. As was intimated at the conference, the examinations will continue to be conducted at the Elder Hall. One of the reasons for its erection was to supply a suitable place for holding examinations.

5. In conclusion, my council desire me to express their gratification that the board of musical studies had the opportunity of a free discussion with the members of the teaching profession on the matters referred to at the conference, and that it has been found practicable to give effect to the wishes of the teachers on the principal matter as to which any difference of opinion had existed."

Vice-President to fairly boll over with indignation, and declare that he would like to severely punish any teacher who should even attempt to teach mental arithmetic to infants. Probably he will, under the rule of the New Code, never be called upon to trouble himself any further about the teachers in this connection. They do not relish any more than he does the notion of cramming the infantile mind with arithmetical facts; but so long as Inspectors demand that the process shall be attempted there is no help for it. In future all the British Inspectors will take their places as advisers of the teachers, and their inspectorial duties will apply not to the individual children attending any particular school, but to the school itself and the mode in which it is conducted. Sir John Gorst referred to the Inspector's examination having been "absolutely abolished" by the Government, and deprecated as a retrograde movement the attempts by some School Boards and other local authorities to revive and perpetuate the system. Doubtless, as Inspector Neale remarked in a recent lecture to teachers, the New Code in this particular respect must for some time be regarded as being on its trial, and no one but an optimist would expect it to work perfectly during the first year or two. A nation, after encouraging its staff of school inspectors to convert themselves into mere machines for grinding out questions and checking answers, cannot reasonably hope that they will all at once enlarge the horizon of their daily efforts, and become guides, philosophers, and friends to the teachers instead of taskmasters to the pupils.

Literature is pre-eminently one of those school subjects in which hasty examination is practically impossible. Even in Colleges and Universities, where the time devoted to the periodical test is much longer than it could possibly be in primary schools, the current style of examination is by no means satisfactory. Mr. Herbert Spencer has severely taken to task some of the Collegiate Examiners of England for their habit of estimating the candidates' knowledge of a piece of literature according to the number of archaic or slang expressions culled from it which they are able to explain; and, indeed, the Universities as a rule are almost as far astray in this matter as are the primary schools. All studies which can be more or less accurately tested by a few set questions are forced to the front, while anything like a wide and intelligent reading of literature is correspondingly discouraged, simply because no time is left for it. The Latin, Greek, French, and German dictionaries; the standard mathematical and geometrical theorems and problems; the dates and names from particular periods of history; and the formulae of chemical reactions—all are sufficiently tangible to lend themselves readily to the examination system. But the literary, philosophical, and moral studies, which make the truly cultured man, cannot so accurately be measured by the footrule of the examination-room. One lamentable result of this invidious and evil preference is that, estimated by the time which is devoted to its study, our glorious English literature has been almost squeezed out of the curricula of the Universities of the British Empire. For the B.A. course at the Adelaide University, for instance, the requirement in English literature prescribed during the first year consists of one play of Shakspeare—which can be read in a couple of hours—and some prose work demanding no special application; while the books in classical and foreign languages set for examination probably take up at least ten times as much of the student's time as those written in his mother tongue. When such conditions prevail in the highest seat of learning, how can we expect that anything like a perfect adjustment of studies can prevail in the primary schools? Of the two cases, however, there is perhaps more hope for the latter than for the former; because the true source of the evil complained of is likely to be sooner swept away. As soon as the teachers are freed from the constant fear of their departmental bogie, the annual examination, and are enabled to spend more time in teaching those subjects which have a moral and humanizing value, a new era will begin to dawn upon the instruction of the people. Children will be encouraged to study the philosophy of common things with their own powers of observation, learning to value and not to despise the occupations by which their parents earn their livings, and, above all, keeping constantly in touch with the reali-

ties of creation and the higher emotions of the human soul. All children naturally possess enquiring minds, and it is pitifully stunting to their characters to be told that they must not ask what they want to know because it is not down in the regulations. True education, as the word implies, is a "leading out" of the powers which lie dormant. The germs are in the mind itself, and need only to be cultivated, because "the youth who daily further from the east must travel, still is Nature's priest."

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From Mrs. Emily A. M. Law:—"Kindly allow me to point out that a few of the teachers only signed the memorial protesting against the University examinations in music about two years ago, and also that five teachers only were present at the meeting of teachers held in the room of Messrs. Howells & Young last month. I believe the majority of teachers are more than satisfied with the examinations as held at the University in conjunction with the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music." We are informed that "although only five teachers attended the meeting referred to, four more were represented by proxy, and that these nine teachers represented the most prominent members of the local profession who are not connected with the Conservatorium."

Reg. 11th Aug. 1900

"EDUCATION AND CRAM."

To the Editor.

Sir—In a leading article in your issue of Wednesday last it is stated that "for the B.A. course at the Adelaide University . . . the requirement in English literature prescribed during the first year consists of one play of Shakspeare—which can be read in a couple of hours—and some prose work, requiring no special application." You will, Sir, no doubt be relieved to hear that this statement is entirely inaccurate. We have but one course in English literature—a course which students are free to take either in their first, second, or third year. For this course the following books are prescribed:—Skeat, "Primer of English Etymology;" Stopford Brooke, "Primer of English Literature;" Raleigh, "The English Novel;" Chaucer, "Prologue to the Canterbury Tales;" Spenser, "Faerie Queene," Book I.; Shakspeare, "As You Like It;" Hales, "Longer English Poems" (in this volume are poems of Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Collins, Gray, Goldsmith, Burns, Cowper, Coleridge, Scott, Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, and Shelley); Bacon, Essays; Carlyle, "Sartor Resartus." In addition to this course of reading, students are required to attend the lectures of the Professor of English Literature, which are given four times a week. Your article states that the only prescribed book of English poetry can be read "in a couple of hours." The fact is that in the three terms of our academic year at least 70 hours are spent in the reading of literature in class, and the time spent in reading in class is but a fraction of the time that students are expected to devote to the study of the subjects of the literature course. In class alone there have been read, or will be read, this year portions of the following authors:—Chaucer, Wyatt, Surrey, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Goldsmith, Burns, Cowper, Coleridge, Scott, Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley. In face of these facts it is scarcely just to assert that the reading of literature is discouraged at the University. May I add that with the main purpose of your article I am in entire agreement.

I am, Sir, &c., R. L. DOUGLAS.

The University, Adelaide, August 19.

[The object of the article referred to—with which, we are pleased to see, our correspondent is in entire accord—was to urge the need for more time being allowed for the study of English literature. The reference to the course for the B.A. degree at Adelaide University was to the "requirement in English literature during the first year," and therefore applied obviously only to those text-books which were prescribed for one year's study, when the work was divided, as it was till the end of last year. Recently the first and the third year's work has been brought together, and may be taken at any time during the course. This fact was overlooked, but the main point of our contention is not affected, because on comparing the sum total of the three years' work in English literature with that in classical and foreign languages the same disproportion will be found as that which we commented upon in relation to the study prescribed for one year. Mr. C. R. Hodge, Registrar of the University, has written to us a letter of like purport to that of Professor Douglas.—Ed.]

To the Editor.

Sir—I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your excellent leader of August 8 on this subject, and trust some of our legislators will have the courage to do something by way of amending this "soulless system of cram." That your leader will bear much good fruit I have no doubt—vide that very able letter by "Unfathomable" in to-day's issue of your noble paper. This writer has evidently "fathomed" what he is good enough to write about in such an able manner, and I trust he will be followed by a few more able philanthropists like himself, and that they will not rest until this cursed system of arbitrary and artificial cramming is superseded by a system of genuine and intellectual culture. I am, Sir, &c., AN INTERESTED FATHER.

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EDUCATION AND CRAM.

It has been truly said that the modern evil of cram in education is the child, or, at any rate, the direct lineal descendant, of the examination system. The idea that any conceivable plan of setting questions and requiring answers will perfectly elucidate the mental and moral condition of a human mind is a fallacy, which, a generation hence, will probably have been relegated to the limbo of those things whose former existence is difficult to believe, although incontestably true as history. Recently "The Register" has on several occasions pointed out that England is making far more rapid progress towards a really intelligent system for gauging the work of her primary schools than Australia has yet accomplished. The reason for this we cannot now discuss; but the fact must be admitted in candour, and the lesson to be drawn from it should not be ignored. The British Parliament was recently asked to vote, as provision for primary education, more than nine and a half millions sterling; and, in moving this line on the Estimates, Sir John Gorst gave a most interesting summary of the reforms included in what is now known as the New Code. This utterance, which in the history of educational progress is certain to become classical, has been dealt with by our Special Correspondent in London, so that it is unnecessary to characterize it here in detail. Our present purpose is to call special attention to the peculiar parallelism between the evils which have been proved to exist in the old country and those which still exercise their pernicious influence in Australia. Examinations, as we have said, are largely responsible for the prevalence of cram. In this fact has originated a natural tendency to force unduly to the front those subjects of an educational curriculum in which the test of an ordinary examination, hastily conducted, is most conclusive in its results. Arithmetic has in consequence become somewhat of a fetish among a portion of the teachers. In some of the schools ten hours are devoted to arithmetic lessons for every one which is given to such a subject as literature. The effort to convert the rising generation into one huge calculating-machine has been equally strenuous in England. Sir John Gorst mentioned having on one occasion heard an Inspector allude to "lower babies' mental arithmetic"—a term which caused the