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THE CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC.

To the Editor.

Sir—In reply to Mr. Howard's letter in your issue of to-day, I do not wish to enter into any controversy with him respecting the Conservatorium of Music and outside teachers. I merely wish to correct an error in his statement respecting the policy of the said institution. I must again give his statement a most emphatic denial respecting the two concerts he mentions. In the case of Miss Felstead's concert, in one letter he accuses the Conservatorium authorities of preventing one of their students from assisting at the concert by finding an engagement for him elsewhere the same evening, but when I point out to him that no fewer than five students of the Conservatorium, all of whom are well-known public performers, assisted at the concert, he seems to contradict himself by saying that no institution in an enlightened country would dare act in a way that would cause itself to be execrated. This, to my mind, is an acknowledgment that the Conservatorium authorities did not interfere except as regard one of their numbers, whose services were required elsewhere the same evening by the University Shakespeare Society, which services I presume they had a perfect right to have. Then, as to Miss Felstead's offer to sing at Mr. Eugene Alderman's concert, I must repeat that neither Dr. Ennis, nor anyone connected with the Conservatorium, have anything whatever to do with the selection of artists. The statement that I received a commission from the Conservatorium to arrange the concert is absolutely correct. The idea of a farewell concert to Mr. Eugene Alderman originated with a few of the personal friends of Mr. Alderman, of whom I claim to be one. If Mr. Howard will look up the pro-

grammes he will find that only two of the Conservatorium students appeared as soloists at Mr. Eugene Alderman's concert, whilst five assisted at Miss Felstead's, which, to my mind, would look as if, supposing the Conservatorium authorities wished to interfere with their students assisting at benefit concerts, outside teachers' pupils should have the assistance of the Conservatorium students, from the fact of so many assisting at Miss Felstead's concert. The arranging of the programme and selection of those to assist at Mr. Eugene Alderman's concert were left entirely in my hands, without reference to anyone. Mr. Howard says he is curious to know who the performers were that offered their assistance who were known, and even more popular than Miss Felstead, and were left out of the programme. If he will call and see me I will with pleasure give him the names. Amongst those who offered were several members of the Conservatorium staff, for whom I could not find room on the programme. I think with these facts before him—Mr. Howard will see that his surmises in reference to these concerts have been altogether wrong. With Mr. Howard I do not wish to quarrel, but I merely wish to correct statements made by him, no doubt without thought.—I am, &c.,

P. A. HOWELLS

Adelaide, December 30, 1905.

Sir—Mr. Edward Howard has had his little fling, and has succeeded wonderfully well—in making himself ridiculous. On "boiling down" the column and a half of complaint with which he favors us in your issue of December 27, the facts of the case appear to be—(a) That Mr. Edward Howard entered the names of certain of his pupils for examination during November at the "associated board" examination; (b) that the examination happened along in due course; (c) that Professor Ennis, a personal friend of the examiner, wished to ask him about having a cup of tea, and did so; (d) that it happened that one of Mr. Edward Howard's pupils was examined immediately before Professor Ennis entered the examination room for the purpose named, and another immediately after he left; (e) that both of Mr. Edward Howard's pupils mentioned (the only two examined) passed the examination; (f) that Mr. Edward Howard, thereupon, for some obscure reason, withdrew his three "advanced" candidates, and would not allow them to be examined; (g) that he on that account applied for a refund of the fees paid for their examination; (h) that he didn't get them refunded; (i) that it served him right. (I think I have gone far enough with the alphabetical tabulation of my remarks, and so will now adopt another system in arranging any further ones). The deductions to be made from Mr. Edward Howard's outbursts and the accompanying circumstances are:—First, that he has effectually "bitten off his nose to spite his face;" second, that he has proved himself over-suspicious; third, that some of his "facts" are quite wrong, as Mr. Howells' letter conclusively shows; fourth, that, not content with the degree of absurdity reached in his first appearance in print, he must needs attempt a greater one in his reply to Mr. Howells; fifth, that in descending upon the "policy" of the Conservatorium he forgets that there is no "policy," or anything else, in regard to what he is pleased to call "the outside teachers;" sixth, that, in a word, the whole question raised by him is unworthy of serious consideration.—I am, &c.,

COMMONSENSE.

THE CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC.

To the Editor.

Sir—In his letter of December 30, Mr. Howells appears to admit my contentions. Mere denials, whether simple or emphatic, have no weight whatever in an argument. Certain things occur, and everybody draws deductions from them according to his fancy, interests, and power of judgment. Both Mr. Howells and myself may be allowed to lay our facts before the public; our opinions individually carry very little weight. It is the weight of public opinion that has to be reckoned with. As regards Miss Felstead's concert, Mr. Howells says:—"The Conservatorium authorities did not interfere except as regards one of their numbers, whose services were required the same evening by the University Shakespeare Society," which services he presumes they had a perfect right to have. Yes, the right because the night—the night to prevent the carrying out of a kindly act to a fellow-singer (which could have been done without detriment to themselves), notwithstanding any disappointment or inconvenience which might arise therefrom. Mr. Howells asked me, "Why did they not exercise their authority and prevent the other five assisting?" My reply was that "no institution in an enlightened community dare act in a way that would cause itself to be execrated." Mr. Howells refers to this as a contradiction. It was a direct reply to a direct question. If one man out of six were decapitated by an enemy, would you be sensible to assume for that reason the heads of the other five were safe? As regards the second instance, Mr. Howells avoids my argument, "Why not a contralto?" A variety of voices at a concert is always appreciated by the public. If a singer is not chosen, it is either because there are too many voices of the class, or because the one in question is not good enough. When neither of these reasons operates it is a question of policy. In excluding Miss Felstead, Mr. Howells carried out the policy of the Conservatorium. Everybody knows that her assistance at the concert in question would not have been palatable to the Conservatorium. I should, however, be very sorry to attribute any blame to Mr. Howells for the above, as he was only doing his duty to those for whom he was acting. In conclusion, may I correct a wrong quotation? My letter reads—"It would be interesting to know [not "I am curious to know"] what vocalists there were among those 'who were far better known and more popular than Miss Felstead'" (Mr. Howells omits the word "vocalists"). The public know the names of all local popular singers, and the public are the final arbiters of popularity. With regard to the communication signed "Commonsense," I am sorry I can only characterise it as spiteful, rude, and untrue, and therefore unworthy of reply.—I am, &c.,

EDWARD HOWARD.

January 1, 1906.

[In the letter from Mr. Howells, published yesterday, he wrote:—"The statement that I received a commission from the Conservatorium to arrange the concert is absolutely incorrect." We regret that, owing to a printer's mistake, the word "incorrect" appeared as "correct."—Ed.]

Sir—Thanks are due to Mr. Howard for his letter describing the mode in which the associated board conducts its examinations at the Adelaide University. These examinations should be without reproach, but evidently they are far from being satisfactory at present. The University merely act as agents, collect the fees from people who have the examination craze, charge a commission, and remit the balance to London—merely a money-making transaction. Their troubles as to the value of these examinations! Why will the public waste their money and their children's time in practising all the year to pass? As to the letter from "Commonsense," in your issue of January 1, it is biased in favor of the Conservatorium. If Mr. Howard's complaints were so ridiculous, why should Mr. Hodge (the registrar) and Dr. Ennis (the director) take the trouble to call on Mr. Howard about them? Unhappily this is not the first time complaints have been made concerning these examinations, and there is an uneasy feeling among a large number of teachers and the public. The Trinity College examinations have never been questioned; why should the associated board's be? The difference is that the former are controlled by a gentleman who is not a teacher, or in any way connected with teaching; the associated board is controlled by the Director of the Conservatorium. I trust Mr. Howard will continue his protest, and the South Australian public and teachers will appreciate his efforts. He is a stranger to me.—I am, &c.,

A LOOKER-ON.

Ad. 3rd Jan. 1906

EXHIBITIONS AND BURSARIES.

Every year the Education Department of South Australia confers upon boys and girls under the age of 14 years a number of exhibitions and bursaries. These are all tenable for three years. The six boys and the six girls placed at the top of the respective lists have the right to select any secondary school in the State, approved by the Minister of Education, at which to continue their studies until they have passed the senior examination at the Adelaide University. The holders of the other exhibitions and bursaries are provided for either at the Pupil Teachers' School or the Advanced School for Girls, and there, too, they are prepared for an academic career should that be their ambition. Both the Rhodes scholars so far chosen by the South Australian selectors are State school exhibitors, while others have distinguished themselves in the walks of learning. It has been suggested that now the entrance scholarships at the Adelaide University are awarded in connection with the higher public examination instead of at the "senior" as formerly, the tenure of the exhibitions and bursaries should be extended for four years. Another matter worthy of consideration is the restriction as to age. The regulations state that candi-

dates for exhibitions or bursaries must be under the age of 14 on December 31 of the year in which they go up for examination. That means that children who by the "accident of birth" come into the world in the third or fourth quarter of the year are handicapped. A child born on January 1, for instance, has practically a year longer in which to study for a scholarship than one who is born on December 31. There is, indeed, a case on record in which a child born on December 31 was not permitted to compete for an exhibition, although under 14, the statutory age at the time the examination was held. There are in Adelaide at present a pair of twins, one of whom was born just before midnight on December 31 and the other just after midnight on the first of January. It would be anomalous if one of those two were allowed to compete for an exhibition or bursary a year after the other had been ruled to have passed the statutory age. If the competitions were held half-yearly the handicap would be less heavy on children who, without any fault of their own, are born at the wrong season of the year so far as these examinations are concerned.

Ad. 4th Jan. 1906

MELBOURNE STUDENTS FOR ADELAIDE.

In an article on "New Courses of Study at the Melbourne University," the "Argus" writes:—"It is to be regretted that the University cannot undertake the teaching of electrical engineering beyond the second year. Students must consequently go to Sydney or Adelaide to complete the third and fourth years of that course. To provide proper training for the students in each of those years would involve a capital expenditure of about £4,000, and an annual outlay of about £800. Until, therefore, either the Government, or, as in the case of

the Sydney University, some wealthy public-spirited man provides this amount, students must continue to complete the third and fourth years of the course of electrical engineering elsewhere."

Ad. 4th Jan. 1906.

THE CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC.

To the Editor.

Sir—The letters of Mr. Edward Howard and "A Looker-On" in "The Advertiser" of January 2 are very funny reading! Mr. Howard says that my former letter was "spiteful, rude, and untrue, and therefore unworthy of reply." A very easy, and almost the only, way out of a nasty corner, certainly, for I am afraid Mr. Howard would have had almost as much difficulty in answering or confuting those "spiteful, rude, and untrue" remarks as he has had in dealing with the University Council and Mr. P. A. Howells. From what has been published (and presumably Mr. Edward Howard has let us have the whole of his "complaint" against the Conservatorium, such as it is) it is quite apparent to anyone in an unbiased, non-suspicious frame of mind, that all the circumstances in connection with the examination in question were absolutely usual, and such that no exception could reasonably be taken to them. In fact, it is not too much to characterise complaint of any sort as entirely unjustifiable—more particularly coming from Mr. Howard, both of whose pupils examined passed. This, I say, is judging from what has been published. Of course if Mr. Howard has in reserve some real tangible grievance in connection with the examination, let him out with it, so that the "public," whose opinion and sympathy he evidently courts, may know where they are! I think, however, that I am fairly safe in assuming that Mr. Howard has put before us all the facts of the case from his side, and going on that basis his "complaint" is merely trivial. All the way through his remarks appear to be the result of an overwhelming prejudice against the Conservatorium, and all matters connected therewith, although this little question of the "associated board" examination (rather disconcertingly for Mr. Howard) cannot be included in such a category. The prejudice referred to has evidently allowed to overrule his common sense and precipitate him into print about nothing in particular; but the Conservatorium is not receiving the obloquy, nor Mr. Howard the sympathy, he desires, as the public have an inconvenient habit of looking at things from a sensible standpoint. He will, however, get a certain amount of advertisement from his literary efforts, and a little kudos, emanating from such as your correspondent "A Looker-On," who is very easy to deal with. He says I am "biased in favor of the Conservatorium," but the only direction in which I am biased is that of common sense. It would, of course, be quite ridiculous to state that "A Looker-On" (or even Mr. Howard) is "biased against the Conservatorium!" I hold no brief for the Conservatorium with which institution (is it necessary to repeat?) the matter "complained" of by Mr. Howard has nothing to do. The associated board of the Royal College and the Royal Academy of Music, London, conducts the examinations, and the gentleman sent out representing them is the sole examiner. This in itself is quite sufficient reply to the amusing statement of "A Looker-On" that "the associated board is controlled by the director of the Conservatorium;" and I hope it may enlighten his pathetic ignorance of the subject he presumes to discuss. (Possibly Mr. Hodge and Professor Ennis called on Mr. Howard in the same hope!) It certainly was a very unfortunate and amazing mistake on Mr. Howard's part to withdraw his "three advanced pupils" from the examination, and if I were one of them I should be virtuously indignant at my opportunity of passing being thus ruthlessly torn from me; but in any case Mr. Howard has only himself to blame for the whole fiasco.