

## RETURN OF PROFESSOR IVES.

### MUSIC IN ENGLAND.

The musical public of Adelaide have no doubt awaited with considerable interest the return of Professor Ives, so that they might learn the result of his enquiries into the best method of utilizing the munificent bequest of the late Sir Thomas Elder; and also the nature of any likely changes in the University examinations. With a view to ascertaining all the particulars a representative of *The Register* waited on the Professor shortly after his arrival yesterday, and succeeded in glean- ing a large amount of information which should prove interesting to all in our midst who worship at the shrine of Apollo. Pro- fessor Ives is looking far from well after his holiday, in explanation of which he stated that ever since leaving Adelaide he had encountered a series of summers, and that the Red Sea had proved very trying. This has pulled him down considerably, but he hopes in a few days with rest and attention to recover his usual health and spirits. The conversation, however, drifted from things in general to matters musical, and Professor Ives was soon talking with all his usual animation and en- thusiasm.

"In reference," he said, "to the principal object of my trip—the enquiries regarding the utilization of Sir Thomas Elder's bequest—I think I may say that I had the advice of all the best authorities at home, and some unsought advice from—well, some who are not the best authorities. The principal diffi- culties that I experienced with these gentle- men, that is, those whose advice was worth having, was that, firstly, none of them really understood the musical conditions of the colony, and in the second place each man was more or less inclined to attach the greatest importance to his own particular speciality. Thus, one said, 'Whatever you do, establish a first-class musical library containing scores of the best ancient and modern music.' Another sug- gested that I should organize a first-class orchestra to give regular performances, with the object of exercising a beneficial educational influence; a third authority strongly recom- mended that we should establish travelling musical scholarships. Now, you see, neither of these suggestions could be said to fairly meet the case."

"Who were the principal authorities that you consulted in this matter?"

"Well, let me place first Sir John Stainer, the Oxford Professor on Music, who I think gave me by far the best, soundest, and at the same time most liberal advice. Then my old tutor, Dr. Bridge, of West- minster Abbey, devoted considerable time to my mission; Dr. Hiles, of the Vic- toria University, Manchester, gave me some of the results of his own wide experience; Sir Alexander Mackenzie, of the Royal Academy of Music, laid special stress upon the im- portance of establishing a first-class orchestra, and making the curriculum of the conservatoire embrace a complete professional musical education; and amongst others that I had long and pleasant consultations with, I may mention Dr. C. H. Parry, of the Royal College; Professor Prout, of Dublin Univer- sity; Mr. W. H. Cummings, of the Guildhall School of Music; and Signor Randegger, the famous singing master and conductor. I spent a most enjoyable time with Professor Prout, during which he showed me through his magnificent library, that contains, no doubt, the finest collection of scores in the United Kingdom, and in which he boasts is to be found a score of nearly every work of importance, ancient or modern. He was also good enough to show me the MS. of a new work, not yet completed, on orchestration, a subject on which Prout is an acknowledged master. Judging from what I saw the new treatise will be most full and comprehensive, and should prove invaluable as a work of reference. The illustrations on

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the various uses of the strings, which he had already collected, were really marvellous. Then, I had an interesting time with Mr. W. H. Cummings, the Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, which has now a membership of 6,000 students, and which is by far the largest institution of its kind in the world. Notwithstanding this immense attendance, they are constantly augmenting their numbers, and while I was in London the foundation-stone of some new additional buildings to cost upwards of £20,000 was laid."

"As the result of your enquiries what do you think is the wisest method of utilizing the Elder bequest?"

"I should advise the founding of a Conservatorium of Music in Adelaide as far as possible on the lines of the Guildhall School and the Glasgow Athæneum, but not on the lines of the Royal Academy and Royal College of Music. In these two latter institutions the student must take up the full course for whatever branch of the art he or she enters. This practically takes up all their available time, and inevitably makes professional musicians. Well, I don't think at present we require in this colony to turn out every year a fresh set of persons who must follow music as a means of gaining a livelihood. We have enough for our present requirements already. Now the conservatorium that I propose to establish would allow a student to enter for one subject only, such as the piano, singing, or composition, without having to take up a complete musical course. Under competent masters this would, I think, very much improve our music and not add unduly to the profession. "However," continued the Professor, "as you are probably aware, nothing definite has been done yet, and I may say that the proposed Conservatorium would be entirely a local affair, and have no connection whatever with any English institution."

"You succeeded in affiliating the musical examinations of our University with those of the Royal Academy and Royal College of Music?" "Yes, but I must say first of all that the arrangement is purely a tentative one, for one year only. Whether it will be extended or not depends entirely upon its success."

"Did you find the combined Board willing to listen to your proposals?" "Yes, they were very cordial, and at the Board meeting where the matter was finally settled there were present such well-known musicians as Sir Walter Parratt, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Dr. Parry, and Signor Randegger."

"Will this new departure cause the standard to be raised for the examinations in November next?" "I imagine not. I have seen nothing that leads me to think that we should raise our standard. I may say, however, that if we continue with the two Colleges the choice of pieces in practice of music is likely to be more restricted than it is at present. The custom of these English institutions is to issue a list of only about half a dozen pieces, from which the candidate must select two, and this list is varied each year. The object is to prevent cramming. If we continue with the Colleges we shall probably have to fall in with this idea for our future examinations."

"Can you tell me something about the new examiner?" "Mr. C. Lee Williams is a thorough all-round musician who occupies a high position at home. He is a scholarly and successful composer, a good organist and recital player, a first-class conductor, and I believe a very capable pianist."

"Are you going to have more than the two examiners?" "No. In the English examination it is customary to have only two."

"What would I do in the case of a deadlock? Well, I don't think that is very likely to occur. We shall probably follow the custom of last year, each examiner allotting separate marks without consulting the other. Then if there is any little difference it can be easily adjusted."

"What are the principal subjects of interest in the musical world at home at the present time?" "I think that which is creating the greatest interest is the controversy which is going on between the tonic sol-faists and the old notationists regarding the disposal of the

Government grant for teaching singing in the public schools. At present practically the whole of this goes to further the teaching of the sol-fa, and as this section of the musicians run their own books, printing, and everything connected with it, they have really a very fine monopoly. For a considerable time they have been allowed to go on unmolested, but now the old notationists are wakening up to the fact that instead of being a stepping-stone to the ordinary system of music, as it was originally intended, it is trying to entirely usurp its place. A very representative body of musicians, headed by Mackenzie, Parry, and Cummings, waited upon the Government to urge that some of this grant should be devoted to teaching the old notation, but the matter was shelved for the time being. Still, I believe this course will ultimately be adopted. However, the controversy wages fast and furious in home musical circles at present."

"Do you think that any great advance has been made in systems of teaching since you left England twelve years ago?" "Yes; particularly with regard to piano technique, and one of the best things that I saw for this purpose was the Virgil practice clavier. This is really a light and portable dumb piano, which at home costs about thirteen guineas. For the first six months' study I consider it to be invaluable, so perfectly does it mould the hand into its proper shape. The advantage of this new invention is that it entirely separates the mechanical portion of a pianist's training from the emotional, so that undivided attention may be devoted to laying the foundation of a good and correct system of technique. In this instrument the touch may be regulated from a weight of 2 oz. to 10 oz. to depress the keys, so you see it is most useful for children with weak hands. So highly do I think of this invention that while in London I took a course of lessons on it so that I might thoroughly understand the system, and I am also importing some of these instruments for use in my own family. I made enquiries about the Deppe system of piano technique which is so ably advocated by Amy Fay and others, but think its principal features are embraced in the Virgil system. I investigated the Macdonald Smith method; it is a certain course of gymnastics practised away from the piano, like this," and forthwith an ocular demonstration is given of some somewhat alarming contortions of the hand, arms, and wrists, which are supposed to exercise a most salutary effect on those particular muscles used in piano-playing.

"What do you think of this system?"

"Well, perhaps I had better say that I have not had sufficient experience of it to offer an opinion."

"Have you anything new to relate concerning the Elder Scholarship of Music?" "No, nothing, except that I both saw and heard the present holder, Mr. R. Wallage Kennedy."

"Did you find systems of teaching singing as much advanced as those for the piano?"

"I think not. The old Italian system still seems to be by far the best. And I might add concerning vocalists at home, I was delighted to find Australian singers, such as Melba, Miss Saville, and Ada Crossley, holding such a very high position."

Amongst many other interesting musical functions, Professor Ives attended the great Handel Festival recently held at the Crystal Palace, several performances of the leading orchestras of London, and all the principal operas presented during his visit. Of the latter he was particularly charmed with a rendering of Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet" at Covent Garden Theatre. This work is lyrical and simple throughout, yet, notwithstanding the Wagner success of late years, was taking all London by storm. Then on his journey homewards he heard an organ performance at the Cathedral Church of Lucerne, where there is what tradition asserts to be a famous organ, containing an even more famous "vox humana" stop. The *pièce de résistance* at the numerous recitals given in this Church is the "Storm," by the organist, F. J. Breitenbach, who kindly presented a copy of his work to Professor Ives. It is a