

## ART IN ADELAIDE

## CHATS WITH MUSICIANS

NO. XXXVIII.—MR. HUBERT WINSLOE HALL

By Presto

One of the most accomplished of Adelaide's resident musicians is Mr. Hubert Winsloe Hall, teacher of singing at the Elder Conservatorium. Mr. Hall has moved in an atmosphere of music practically all his life, as his mother was talented in the art of sweet sounds. His father was in the Royal Field Artillery, and it was in India that Hubert first saw the light of day. From the earliest years the boy showed more disposition to worship Apollo than to follow in the footsteps of Mars, and the possession of vocal ability was manifested before he had attained any considerable age. When the boy was six or seven years old he went with his parents to Hongkong and attended St. Paul's School. While on the island he led the choir at the Hongkong Cathedral, and was also an active member of an amateur operatic society. This latter body produced some of the Gilbert and Sullivan works, and the boy was generally called upon to take part. He was usually requested to don the skirts necessary for the presentation of some female character owing to his possession of a high treble voice.

In 1882 Mr. Hall said farewell to the East, and journeyed to England for the purpose of taking advantage of the higher educational facilities offering in England. He became a student at Lancing College in Sussex, and continued his musical work at the institution until his voice broke. He also studied the piano until music was banished from his mind for a time by King Cricket. It was a proud day when he gained his cap for the first eleven, and then followed a period when musical practice became a terrible hardship.



MR. H. WINSLOE HALL.

When Mr. Hall attained the age of 19 he walked through the advanced spheres of learning at Magdalen College, Oxford. At that famous educational seat he won a tenor scholarship and commenced to work hard at music. From Oxford he went to the Royal College of Music and became associated with Albert Visetti. He also studied under Sir Walter Parratt and Sir Charles Villiers Stanford.

Mr. Hall has had considerable experience on the operatic stage, and was concerned in the first production of Stanford's opera "Shamus O'Brien." He understudied the leading tenor role, and was chorus master and deputy-conductor under Sir Henry Wood. While at the Royal College Mr. Hall was engaged to sing at one of the Buckingham Palace State concerts. The occasion was during the late Queen Victoria's reign, and the young vocalist had the honor of singing before the late King Edward.

During the period of Mr. Hall's studies at the Royal College Madame Kirkby Lunn, Madame Clara Butt, Miss Agnes Nicholls (now one of the leading soloists of the Quinlan Opera Company), and Mrs. Georgina Hall (then appearing publicly under the name of Miss Georgina Bedford) were also students at the college. Mr. and Mrs. Hall were married in 1897.

About the time when "Shamus O'Brien" was first presented Mr. Hall found that public singing was too much for his health and began to take a keen interest in teaching. Shortly afterwards Mrs. Hall went over to Paris for a course of study under Bouhy, and later Mr. Hall visited the famous French master. The result was that the vocalist took a special course of lessons under Bouhy with a view to taking up teaching professionally, and representing the great French teacher in London. Mr. Fuller Maitland, "The Times" musical critic, used frequently to recommend aspiring vocalists to take lessons from Bouhy, but if financial deficiencies prevented their spending the full period necessary in Paris they were sent along to Mr. Hall for a grounding in the celebrated Parisian's method. Mr. Hall gradually abandoned public singing and occupied the whole of his time in teaching and conducting light operas. On one occasion he went to the Canary Islands as musical director of an operatic combination, Mrs. Hall also being associated with the organization as prima donna.

Mr. Hall continued his practice in London for some time. One day he received a telephone call from the Royal College and was obliged to answer the question, "Would you like to go to Australia?" All things being satisfactory, Mr. Hall decided that a voyage to southern spheres was an attractive proposition, and at a few weeks' notice he accepted the position he now holds at the Conservatorium. He arrived in Adelaide early in 1910.

What do you think of musical conditions in this city? I asked during a chat I had with Mr. Hall last week.

"I think they have improved enormously, since my arrival here. At first it was a bit of a shock to find how difficult it was to get many students to approach their lessons with delight and take an interest in learning the better class of music. I don't mean the very ultra-modern class, but compositions similar to those of Brahms. If languages were suggested the pupils held up their hands in horror, but now they nearly all prefer the more serious work and songs that require some practice. And, again, there is the number of concerts we have had lately. Mind you, I think they are overdoing it, but it is a very good sign and indicates that there is a moving spirit in musical matters.

"Until we have a first-class concert hall," Mr. Hall continued, "music is bound to be severely handicapped. They may pull the Exhibition Building about as much as they like and erect soundboards and effect other improvements, but the best thing they can do, as far as concerts are concerned, is to pull it down. The building is suitable for neither artists nor audiences. I cannot understand why the moneyed people do not put their heads together—or, rather, their hands into their pockets—and find money enough to build a concert hall. Until a hall is available for concerts alone and not for pictures musical progress will be seriously handicapped."

Visiting artists have experienced difficulties in obtaining the Town Hall? I remarked.

"Yes," Mr. Hall went on. "I think the corporation might do something for the sake of art. As there is no other suitable hall in the city it should assist artists to obtain dates at the civic building."

Do you think Herr Heinicke's orchestra is contributing to the advancement of music?

"I consider that Herr Heinicke has done wonders in the way of organising the instrumentalists at his disposal. There is not sufficient musical employment in

the city to warrant musicians making Adelaide a place of abode, and consequently the only people who play across, apart from those engaged in the theatre orchestras and those practising professionally, are amateurs. They are mostly men of business, and they do not get very much time for practice. It is small blame to them that they do not devote every evening of their lives blowing down their instruments. Therefore the executives here are not of the first rank, although the efforts they have made are very meritorious. An orchestra is really the chief educational factor in music, and I think the performances achieved by Herr Heinicke in spite of the drawbacks have been excellent."

Mr. Hall is by means unknown as a composer. He has written various songs, and last year he composed the music of a song cycle, "The Garden of Flowers," the words of which were written by Mrs. Hall. The work was dedicated to the ladies' part-singing class, and was produced at one of the Conservatorium concerts last season. Mr. Hall's song "The Sundowner," published by Allan's Ltd., is a popularly known work.

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Miss Milvain Good, who obtained her B.A. degree at the Adelaide University, has been granted by the Victorian Incorporated Association of Secondary Teachers a scholarship to the Bedford College for Women (University of London), and will sail for England on September 5. The scholarship is one given by the League of Empire and Bedford College in furtherance of a scheme for the interchange of teachers throughout the Empire. The Secondary Teachers' Association here is affiliated with the League of Empire. Miss Good is at present second mistress at the Church of England Girls' Grammar School, Geelong. She is a daughter of the late Mr. Samuel Good, of Adelaide, and was the first student to win the Tennyson gold medal for English literature at the Adelaide University. Last month the Queen of England, who is joint patron with Queen Alexandra of Bedford College, opened new buildings from that institution in Regent's Park. There are 350 day students, and in the residential wing there is accommodation for 80 more.