

in three or four languages, before they can properly classify the documents that constitute the material for the history even of this State. The best way for us to make a beginning is by utilising such material and ability as are already at our disposal, with as little expenditure as possible over and above that incurred by the Public Library. And, fortunately, both as regards building and expert service, we are in a position now to make a beginning without any considerable outlay. At the back of the new wing of the Museum building is an old church-like structure, built of stone, recently occupied as a military stores depot. With as many alterations as the Government can afford that building could be made a temporary repository for the original historical material that is now taking up a considerable amount of space in the Public Library. More windows will be needed to let in the light, for the reading of these old documents is trying to eyesight. Shelves will have to be erected, and some furniture provided to enable the students to carry on their work. In a dry climate like ours there is no need to bother about artificial heat, and no artificial light will be required, if, as is desirable for many reasons, the building is kept open only in the day time. One of the officers in the Library would, no doubt, be able to spend some of his time in arranging the material on a rough and temporary method of classification; but that would necessitate the appointment of at least one more cadet in the Public Library, so as to make up for the time lost there, and if in the early stages some supervision and direction were required, I would gladly give a few hours each week of my time if the Government desired to make use of my services in an honorary capacity, and if the University Council and Board of Governors of the Public Library approve. But it must be distinctly understood that my services would only be available until the time at which the Government might reasonably be expected to make due provision for a properly trained Keeper of the Archives. Under the temporary system here contemplated there is no reason why the Department of Historical Records should not remain under the direct control of the Library Committee of the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery, as heretofore. It may be found desirable at a later time to have a committee exclusively for this work, but if so, it could be appointed each year in the regular way by the Board of Governors.

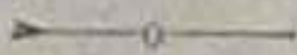
—The Value of Historical Documents.—

Professor Henderson goes into brief but illuminating detail concerning the use and handling of documents and their repair. He states that only those who have investigated archives or tried to purchase original documents have a proper appreciation of their worth. "In the British Museum is a copy of Florio's Montaigne, which contains what was once supposed to be a signature of William Shakspeare. Experts are still divided in their opinion, but if the signature is not genuine it is certainly a very cunning forgery. Only on special application can it be seen, and when the attendant brings the book, opened at the proper place, the applicant is not allowed to handle the volume at all. With the aid of a magnifying glass he examines the signature without touching the page on which it is written, and during his investigations he is under the supervision of a responsible officer in the library. At the Guildhall Library there is a legal document with Shakspeare's signature and seal attached. It is carefully framed, and placed in a fireproof chest inside a spacious strongroom, and it is only displayed on special application. A Shakspearean signature is, of course, a valuable possession for any library, but so are original historical documents, and this is fully recognised in every European country now. No students are admitted to the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum unless they are bona fide students. Any student who removed a manuscript to another room without authority would be prosecuted. In all countries the most elaborate precautions are taken against damage by fire, not only in the construction of the buildings and fittings, but also by regular patrols of police and other officers. Nobody who has visited the archives of the older countries will ever have any doubt afterwards concerning the value of these documents; and in more recently settled countries, such as the United States and Canada, a vast amount of money and time is being expended, not only in preserving their records, but also in supplying students with knowledge of their contents and the way to use them. And, indeed, it only requires a few years' experience in the collection of these documents to realize their value in the opinion of responsible people.

It is known that there are documents belonging to the history of South Australia in many parts of the British Empire. For many years past the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery have been trying to arrange exchanges with the Capetown, Sydney, Auckland, and the Royal Colonial Institute in London, in order to get some of these records into our own collection, but without avail. It has been found impossible to get in this way even the letters and diaries of an Adelaide citizen. This is in itself sufficient indication of the value placed upon even the less important papers, provided they rank as original documents, and it ought to teach us to estimate at something like their real value such documents as we have."

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## CHORISTER FOR FIFTY YEARS.



### A Rare Jubilee.

[By our Special Reporter.]

One touch of the forefinger on the long arm of coincidence—and two notable citizens celebrate their "working" jubilees. This, in the same city, and within an hour or two of each other. Yes, and still more startling—two Bevans! It was only by the incident of the celebration of one jubilee—that of Dr. Llewellyn Bevan—that the other was discovered, namely, that of Mr. Frederick Bevan. To add a still more delicately unique phase of interest to the rare "double," these two notable men, moving in widely divergent circles through half a century of service, had actually come close to contact with each other at the far-away end of their 50 years ago! They just rubbed shoulders, amidst the jostling throng of the world's metropolis, and then the tide of life swirled them apart; it carried them to separate careers of distinction, and then drew them near again as they travelled along the same current to the completion of their half-century of voyaging. Methinks these two men should go forthwith and shake hands over it! I understand they have not yet done so, for the reason that the elder partner in the coincidence is unaware of the romantic facts of the case. I know I had to probe for particulars with some amount of tact and persuasion when interviewing the well-loved Bevan of the Conservatorium staff. It was with typically whimsical relish that he related the contact of the two Bevans 50 years ago. "I was a mere kid at the time, of course. It was when I was solo chorister at All Saints,



MR. FREDERICK BEVAN.

Margaret-street. They had given me leave to go home—a matter of once a month, you understand. Well, my homeward way led me past Whitfield's Tabernacle; and there, staring at me from the notice board, was the name 'Bevan.' 'Hallo,' I said, 'That's me! What am I up to now? Oh, I see, I am preaching here next Sunday. You know the sort of nonsense a high-spirited young imp will be talking at that age. But it is a curious fact; the incident has always stood out as quite a prominent feature of my boyhood recollections. No doubt it was the first time I had come upon my own name so blazoned forth; and the preacher was Dr. Bevan.

—Scope for a Book.—

However, this quaint introduction is delaying the truly formidable task of "covering" Mr. Frederick Bevan's 50 years in harness. It required but a minute's fencing with my subject to convince me that anything like a jubilee review of Mr. Bevan's career, in this brief column, would be impossible, even skeletonically. So, perforce, these lines must fasten merely upon the one phase; that in which he has actually celebrated his golden anniversary, namely, his career as a chorister. As for the many other fascinating questions which I had thought to develop, they may be—some day, I hope—the chapter headings of an autobiographical volume. Mr. Bevan is a gold mine of unique recollections. He has been the contemporary and personal friend of almost all the great figures of the musical world in London during the latter half of the Victorian era. He could write—and I endeavoured to point out some measure of obligation on his part—as few other men on myriad sub-headings arising from his acquaintance with renowned personalities. Here am I hastily sketching his lifework as choirboy, leading chorister, professional organist and choirmaster, concert soloist, teacher, and choral conductor; and, of necessity, I leave untouched his recollections of royalty (in baptism, marriage, and death) while attached to the Chapels Royal; his intimate friendship with the great Sullivan; his experiences with English choral festivals and their immortal conductors; his successes as a composer of such songs, among numerous other writings, as "The admiral's broom" and "The flight of ages;" and his viewpoint and outlook after a lifetime of tutoring, both in the old country and here in Adelaide.

—Busy Days.—

As for the last named topic, I suppose Mr. Bevan has had almost, if not literally, thousands of South Australians under his tutelage, as individual pupils and in his University choral class and church choirs. When I asked him if he was not rather tired of it all, he said, "Look at my schedule. I am busier than ever. Here—First pupil, 9 a.m. Monday; last one, 3 p.m. Saturday, with three or four nights a week thrown in to the bargain, and all day Sunday as organist and director of the music at Brougham Place Church. You ask why? Drudgery? Not much! I love it; that's why it isn't drudgery; that's why I am not spending my jubilee in the backwaters of retirement. Let me tell you one other thing. You have never heard me sing a solo; but I could, and I believe I could do so to-day better than ever in my life before, even though I was a pretty considerable bass soloist between the precocious ages of 17 and 18. Provided one's voice has been properly produced and cared for one can sing to the very end. Believe me, a man's voice does not attain to its mellowest fruition until he is hard upon his fifties—that is, I remind you, if his voice had been properly produced and guarded. Why, look at those astonishing old chaps—my contemporaries and earlier—Santley, Davies, Lloyd, Watkin Mills, and the rest of them; singing blithely away in the sixties, seventies, and eighties! Not at their prime now, I grant you, but still with the voice. Take another marvellous example—Jenny Lind, with whom I had the unforgettable honour of singing in a duet; she was then an enchanting old lady nearing, or right in, the seventies; but, believe me, the voice was still there; the charm of a never abused organ, though lacking by then, of course, the robustness of physique and the sprightliness of intellect with which to present it as of yore."

—The Other End of Fifty.—

"Now for the beginning of things, Mr. Bevan. On what fact does your jubilee depend?"—"It is based on my ninth birthday, the third day of July, 1865. On that date my father took me along to begin my career as a chorister at All Saints', Margaret street. In two years I had secured the post of solo boy in the choir. I understand I had a treble voice of some particular quality; at any rate, as early as that I had the honour of singing before royalty, and came in for special marks of favour from Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales. At 12 years of age I was being taken on tour as concert soloist. I can recall me-