

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ORCHESTRA.

ST. PETER'S COLLEGE MEMORIES.

A SUCCESSFUL CONCERT.

The third concert of the 1926 season of the South Australian Orchestra, which was given at the Town Hall on Saturday evening, marked an achievement of special importance. The programme consisted for the most part of the works of modern composers, and were of distinctive character, and included a writing by the South Australian composer, Mr. Keith Duffield. Lady Bridges was present, and there was a large and enthusiastic audience. It says a very great deal for the conductor, Mr. W. H. Foote, A.R.C.M., and the whole orchestra under the leadership of Miss Sylvia Whittington, A.M.U.A., that writings demanding so much of all the instrumentalists should be presented with a finish and effect really remarkable after only four rehearsals.

The concert opened with a symphonic poem, "Ultava," by the Czech composer Smetana. The descriptive qualities of the writing were admirably brought out. Very softly the opening movement is introduced by two flutes, then gradually the music widens and deepens, the stream has reached a country of forests. There is a vigorous hunting scene, followed by a village wedding, and a peasants' dance. Then as the stream slides on the sounds of merrymaking fade away, giving place to a moonlit glade and a dance of water nymphs. A tempestuous movement marks the transition of the river to wild rocky country, and then the music drifts away, two short, powerful chords marking the close. This was rendered with remarkable effect, the delicate passages on the strings being delightfully given, and the full volume of tone in the more forceful moments strikingly achieved.

Strongly Russian in feeling, vividly descriptive in its quaint and characteristic qualities, was the second composition selected:—Stravinsky's famous ballet, "L'Oiseau de Feu." The music seems to set the scene—exotic, strongly coloured, fitting the story of "Once upon a time," and to bring the characters upon the stage. Katchel, the evil magician, the enchanted Princess, and Prince Ivan, her rescuer. The curious introduction in which drum and double basses preponderate leads on to wilder and ever wilder orchestral effects, until the horns crash in with the challenge of the bird of fire, and woodwind and strings convey a very whirlwind of movement. Unusual in treatment and rhythm, this writing was performed with all the forceful vividness it demanded, and was followed by emphatic and continued applause. From Czech to Russian was a marked transition, from Russian to Australian even more so. Mr. Keith Duffield's "Ballet fantaque," which followed, dealt also with fairies and moonlight and goblins—but in a different mood. The scene is sylvan, the fairies, waked by their queen, and the music, was in keeping with the restful forest scene, a waltz measure, graceful and melodious. Across this breaks the march of the gnomes and fauns of the forest—there is something most effective in the way the contrasting themes alternate, the strings conveying the fairy music with tiny bells as a high light, the woodwind and brass stressing to influence of the goblins which develops into a war dance. A whirl of arpeggios conveys the influence of the good fairy and the disorder of the gnomes and the music drifts back to a dreamy tranquility. The handling of the whole was distinctly successful, and the performance brought out the quality of the composition delightfully. Emphatic applause continued until Mr. Foote consented to repeat a portion of the writing.

Another descriptive composition was "Shepherd Fennel's dance," a characteristic writing by Balfour Gardiner. Composed in 1910, this depicts a dance from one of Thomas Hardy's stories. "The Three Strangers," a gathering in a dwelling among the hills, with dances interspersed with talk. It conveys the very spirit of English country life. The music is supposed to be supplied by a fiddle and a "serpent," and wind and string play alternately, some of the effects being most unusual. The cor anglais gives it a curiously rustic effect, and there is intense movement in the dance. This was finely conveyed, and as striking was a brief change of mood, the strings conveying the tranquil character of the older folk in something that held the feeling of a plaintive song. Then the oboe and woodwinds generally came in and the dancing was resumed.

The feature of the programme was Saint-Saens's famous "Symphonie in G minor," with which the concert concluded. In this the composer has employed a very full orchestra, including the cor Anglais, bass clarinet, and contra-saxophone, a piano played by four hands, and the organ. Mr. George Gardner, M.A., was at the organ. Dedicated to the memory of Franz Liszt, the symphony is supposed to convey the romantic career of the great pianist. The orchestration of the French composer is remarkable, fine, and the interpretation given by Mr. Foote and his orchestra was particularly striking in every way, the full beauty of the two movements being admirably conveyed, and the quality of each instrument being made to tell right through even the great volume of tone of the climax. The whole was most artistically performed.

By a Correspondent.

The death of Canon Girdlestone revives many memories of former head masters of St. Peter's. The first was the Rev. Theodore Percival Wilson, who was succeeded by Bishop Short for educational and ministerial work in Adelaide. He sailed with the Bishop in the Derwent, which reached Port Adelaide on December 28, 1847. On the Bishop's arrival, he found a grammar school established in Trinity schoolroom. Mr. Wilson was placed in charge of this. The proprietors of this school were willing to incorporate it with the proposed college, so the Bishop bought 37 acres of land near Bailey's Gardens with part of the £2,000 granted by the S.P.C.K. Contributions began to flow in, chiefly through the energy of Mr. G. W. Hawkes, secretary to the governors, and on Queen's birthday, 1849, the foundation stone of St. Peter's College was laid. In 1850, the school was housed in its new building. In 1851, Mr. Wilson resigned on account of differences with the governors. He went to St. John's, Halifax street, for a brief period, after which he held a living near Shrewsbury. He died at Powanham, in Bedford. He was a great temperance reformer, and wrote "Frank Oldfield," a prize tale of some merit, the scene of which was laid in the colony. The second master, the Rev. S. P. R. Allom, became acting head master. The Rev. Edmund Jenkins took Mr. Allom's place in 1853. Fifty boys answered the roll after the Christmas vacation, and £800 was subscribed for a college chapel. The proceeds of a bazaar amounted to £120, augmented by £46 private subscriptions. This went towards the purchase of a bell and clock. Mr. Jenkins held office till the arrival of the Rev. G. H. Farr (1854) by the Daylesford. Mr. (afterwards Archdeacon) Farr was much beloved by his pupils. Mrs. Farr was always to be found in good works, and the initial meetings of the Girls' Orphan Home (now at Mitcham) were held in the college library (1860). Their children were George and Lewis (now passed over) and Coleridge (Professor of Physics at the Auckland University, Mary (now the wife of Canon Heytharpe, of Sydney), Eleanor (wife of E. G. Blackmore), both passed over. (The first woman missionary to Melanesia from South Australia), and Gertrude (now resident at Blackwood. In 1878, when a new head master was wanted, Bishop Short had the selection. Among the large number of applicants was the Rev. William Tuckwell, the Radical parson, who had just vacated Taunton College School. The Bishop, however, chose the Rev. H. Bedell Stanford. The Rev. Francis Wilzen began his long association with the college in 1861, as third master. He successively became second master and bursar, then acting, and finally head master. He married a daughter of Mr. Buxton Forbes Laurie, S.M., of Southport, Port Elliot. The Rev. P. E. Raynor was Mr. Girdlestone's immediate predecessor. Canon Girdlestone married Miss Helen Crawford. Her sister, Mrs. Tom Browne, is resident in this State. Another sister was the late Mrs. Herbert Hughes, of Booyoolie, Gladstone. A third sister is Miss J. Crawford. Canon and Mrs. Girdlestone had two children—Peter Crawford Girdlestone, now at Oxford, and a daughter.

REG. 5.7.26 SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY.

Important Investigations.

Work for the Council.

MELBOURNE, Saturday.

The Vice-President of the Executive Council (Senator the Hon. G. F. Pearce) stated to-day that the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research had submitted to him recommendations for the immediate development of its work. The recommendations, which have now been approved by the Government, include several investigations of great importance to Australian industries.

As regards pests and diseases affecting stock, the first step is to make a comprehensive survey to ascertain exactly what investigations are in progress in various parts of the Commonwealth, how far these investigations have been successful, in what way, if any, the Commonwealth Council can best assist and co-operate, and what facilities are already available for carrying on new investigations. When this information is available, the council will be in a position to determine what new work should be undertaken, where and by whom it should be carried out, and what assistance it is desirable to render to investigators who are already carrying on work on various problems. Some of the matters regarding which special enquiries will be made are contagious abor-

tion in cattle, munitis, braxy and other sheep diseases, the blow-fly pest, the Kimberley horse disease, which is a serious impediment to the settlement of the Kimberley districts of Western Australia, and is also prevalent in parts of the Northern Territory, and the buffalo-fly pest, which is also a very serious pest in the northern parts of the country and which is likely to spread southwards unless suitable measures are taken. Senator Pearce said that he had authorized the part-time employment of a highly qualified veterinary pathologist to undertake the preliminary work.

River Problems. Similarly, enquiries are to be made by competent authorities as to the position regarding the economic importance of various plant diseases and pests, and the investigations which are in progress. It is intended to give special attention to problems which affect the irrigation settlements on the Murray River, and which are of so serious concern to many of the returned soldiers who have settled in these areas. In connection with both animal and plant pests, applications are to be called for immediately for the appointment of an entomologist.

As regards liquid fuels, Senator Pearce said that an investigation is to be commenced at once to ascertain the yields of alcohol obtainable from our Australian hardwoods. During the war alcohol was produced from wood in America on a commercial scale, but it cannot yet be produced at a sufficiently low price to compete, under normal conditions, with other liquid fuels. The matter is, however, of such great prospective importance to Australia that it warrants thorough investigation. No experimental work has yet been carried out to ascertain the possibilities of Australian woods for this purpose.

Fruit Export Trade. Another matter to which immediate attention is to be given is the investigation of problems affecting the cold storage and transport of fruit. The Commonwealth Government intends to avail itself of the offer made by Sir Frank Heath during his recent visit to Australia and to co-operate with the British Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Efforts will be made at once to obtain on loan from England the services of a highly qualified officer to report on the whole position. As regards the freezing and chilling of beef, further investigations are to be carried out in co-operation with the Australian National Research Council, which has already obtained results of considerable value. Senator Pearce pointed out that, owing to the long voyage to England, Australian beef has to be frozen, whereas a great deal of the beef from the Argentine is chilled. When frozen beef is thawed it exudes an objectionable drip, and its value on the London market is therefore ordinarily about 3d. per lb. less than that of Argentine chilled beef.

Immediate steps are also to be taken to send eight specially selected graduates abroad for training in research. Two of these men will undergo a course at the British Fuel Research Station at Greenwich, two at the Low Temperature Research Station at Cambridge, one in research in pottery and ceramics, two in forestry research, and one in plant diseases. Senator Pearce said in conclusion that the council at its first meeting had carried out a very large amount of valuable work. Necessarily it must take some time before many new investigations can be initiated. It is the intention of the Commonwealth Government to co-operate closely with existing scientific institutions and departments in the several States, and immediate steps to that end are being taken by the constitution of a representative committee in each State.

FUTURE OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH.

Australia.

IV.—By A. L. Gordon MacKay.

The argument which has been put forward, with a certain diffidence, in these articles has been as follows:—That the old British Empire was, mainly, an economic unit held together by financial ties, and that its spiritual mission was the teaching of functional organization; the war threatened these financial ties, and, by implication, the continuance of the mission; in rallying to the defence of the Empire, we found that our governmental structure, though fitted to serve the needs of the nineteenth century, was obsolete in the light of our twentieth century experience; in 1918-19 by a flash of intuitional genius, tempered by common sense, we dissolved the old pre-war Empire and substituted for it the British Commonwealth, and the formula of the day was—"The British Empire is dead, long live the British Commonwealth." We are now faced with the prosaic and difficult task of giving governmental embodiment to our "flash of genius."

We have two tasks to accomplish. We have to carry forward with us all that was best in the old Empire, leaving behind the bad; and we have to incorporate in the British Commonwealth the new ideas which we have evolved, without, in any way, destroying or impairing the best tradition of the past. Such a consummation should not interfere with the individuality of the component parts of the old Empire, nor should it militate against the security of any other nations. This is the task of the Imperial Conferences within the next few years.

The New Synthesis.

In the meantime, as we have seen, Canada, politically British, has become a financial colony of the investors of the United States whose control is mobilized in New York; South Africa is under the financial direction of a small group of cosmopolitan financiers, beset with British, Dutch, and Labour political attachments, one of which, the Dutch, is in temporary control of the machinery of government. When Canadian and South African statesmen gather round the Imperial Conference table they will, if they are wise, have one eye on the financial weathercock in their own dominion, and the other on the British Commonwealth as represented by the Bank of England; it is in the clash of these possible conflicting interests that the new synthesis is to be found.

Our Financial Institutions.

What is the position of Australia? Our financial hub consists of 20 banks organized on an independent basis for the purpose of creating activity and associated for the purpose of defence with a general tendency to centre its ideas round the recreated Commonwealth Bank, which registers the necessary inter-relationships of the various units in our system as these relationships arise. Three of these banks have their headquarters in London, two are New Zealand in their organizations, one takes its rise in Japan, one in Paris, and the remaining 13 are Australian. These banks hold deposits which are mainly British in composition, though it would be difficult to say exactly what is the proportion of Australian to United Kingdom money.

Australian financial centres tend to group themselves round Sydney on the one hand and Melbourne and Adelaide on the other, and these two centres have their outposts in Queensland, Tasmania, and Western Australia respectively. In these two centres operate three financial organizations which we may conveniently call the eastern, the southern, and the overseas. The "eastern" is based on the natural products of New South Wales and Queensland, with one arm stretched out to Tasmania and associated with the raw products, along with coastal shipping and ferries. The "southern" is largely a metal group, and is concerned with Broken Hill, Port Pirie, north-eastern Tasmania working in with the wheat and other primary products of the States concerned. The "overseas," with its headquarters in London, operates through all the banks trading in Australia; and wool, cattle, sheep, importing and exporting interests, as well as shipping in the deep seas connotation, naturally attach themselves to this organization. These three organizations also operate in Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania, though the two firstnamed States have set up their own institutions, so as not to overtax the strength of the bigger organizations, while the primary producers are tending to set up their own institutions, so as to relieve the pressure of fickle seasons upon the already very heavily committed older organizations.

It is desirable, in the public interest, to state emphatically that all these organizations are directed by men of the highest ability and integrity, and that they operate in the interests of the general economic welfare against a background of British Commonwealth advancement. In