

Ad & Register 16<sup>th</sup> July '09

—Australians to the Fore.—

"How many scholars are there at Oxford now?"—"About 170. There should be 200, but South Africa and America (particularly some of the Western States) have not sent their proper quota. Greek seems to be the stumbling block. There are 18 Australians and three New Zealanders. I think the Australians have attained a higher average in examinations than any other section of Rhodes Scholars. Last year we had five first classes in the examinations, and altogether we have obtained four big University scholarships. Besides the two secured by myself, Mr. J. A. Thompson, of New Zealand, has won the Burdett-Coutts Scholarship in geology; and Mr. Wilfrid Barton (son of Justice Sir Edmund Barton), the Vinerian Law Scholarship of 1907. I am quite certain that no other section of colonials or Americans can show such a high average. That can only be due to the excellence of the training received in Australian universities before we went home.

—Oxford's Educational System.—

"As regards the educational system at Oxford, the principal thing that one notices is the lack of organization as compared with our Australian universities. That may be due to the immense number of interests which are centred in Oxford, and the enormous variety of subjects which they profess to teach. But there is a great want of organization. Quite recently there were several articles in The London Times suggesting various improvements which might be effected, in order to make the work of the university more systematic. The articles were written by several of the Oxford dons in conjunction. As a result, I believe, improvements will be made. There is a suggestion that a royal commission should be appointed by the Government to enquire into the subject and to carry out a reorganization of the whole university. The Daily Mail has thrown out a hint that the reason for the suggestion arising is the shortcomings which Oxford has realized since the advent of the Rhodes Scholars.

—Some General Impressions.—

"My general impressions of England? The most striking thing is the strong line of demarcation between the rich and the poor, and how very much harder is the lot of the working classes compared with those in Australia. It has occurred to me that the possible explanation of the labour legislation in Australia arises from the desire of those of the working classes who have come out here to prevent others from falling back into the almost serflike condition of their forefathers in England. The condition of the agricultural labourers in England is one of almost poverty. Another point that struck me was the great blessing which Australia has enjoyed through the absence of any church establishment. One cannot help being impressed with the unfriendly attitude of the Anglican Church towards the Nonconformist denominations, and vice versa.

"The ignorance among the people of England concerning Australia is only equalled by their indifference. I found that so at Oxford more than anywhere else. I have been impressed with the difficulties in the way of any scheme of Imperial federation for that reason. Close political union between countries separated by the width of the whole globe is practically impossible when those countries are under democratic government. It might be possible under a despotism; but to make large masses of people think the same on any given subject, or even to think about the same subject at all, seems almost hopeless."

Mr. Behan has to return to Oxford before the October term begins to take up his lectureship. He also hopes to do some research and literary work in order to get his D.C.L. degree. When the term of the Eldon Scholarship expires he intends to go into chambers in London, and to be called to the Bar, to which he is excluded during his tenure of that scholarship. It is his present desire to return to his native land in the course of a few years.

EXTENSION LECTURES.

Professor Jethro Brown will deliver the last lecture of the series on "The underlying principles of modern legislation" at the University this evening, when he will deal with "The worth of man" and the "Unity of society."

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ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.

The second students' concert for the season was given at the Elder Conservatorium on Monday evening, when there was a large and appreciative audience present. A good and interesting programme, mainly devoted to modern music, was presented with generally successful results, and all the students gave evidence of sound and careful training. An unusual number of fresh faces appeared. Of these the most striking talent was exhibited by Miss Myra Wilcox, who played Reubke's "Gavotte, op. 2," for pianoforte, with a clear, certain technique, intelligence, and refinement. An almost equally good performance may be credited to Miss Ethel Tod, a young violinist, who presented Scharwenka's "Bacchante in G, op. 52," for violin, with a full, rich tone, satisfactory intonation, and appropriate warmth. Good work was done by Mr. Alfred B. Tonkin in Vieuxtemps's familiar "Fantasie caprice," for violin, which he gave with fair spirit and expression. Of the younger vocalists, special mention may be made of Miss Ivy Jones, who exhibited a soprano voice of promise in Gomez's showy "Mia Picciarella," which was sung in Italian. Miss Elizabeth Ackland, a young mezzo-soprano, presented the recit. "Fear not" and aria "The Lord is risen," from Sullivan's cantata "The Light of the World," with fair success, and Mr. Frederick Hyett was heard in Tschaiikowsky's song, "Don Juan's serenade." Coming to the older students, favourable mention may be made of Miss Vera Goss's treatment of a bracket of Brahms's "Intermezzo" and Schutt's "Prelude in G minor." Good expression was displayed in the first item, and the technical difficulties of the second were overcome with ease and smoothness. Mr. Arthur Williamson played the first movement from Rheinberger's "Sonata in E flat minor," for organ, with clearness, intelligence, and an excellent choice of registers. Miss Ethel Hoche, who has already some good performances to her credit, contributed a bracket of Schumann's "Romance in F sharp" and "Intermezzo in B minor." The former was a good specimen of melody playing, and the more rapidly moving passages of the latter were rendered with a crisp and neat touch. Miss Doris Wylie, who possesses a soprano voice of nice quality and good range, presented Mozart's familiar aria "Botti Botti" with pleasing results, but was heard at her best in German's admirable little ballad "Who'll buy my lavender?" which she rendered in capital style. The programme contained only two specimens of concerted music—the first movement from Grieg's "Sonata in G," for pianoforte and violin, which was played by Misses Vera Goss and Daisy Kennedy with a good ensemble and balance, sympathetic expression, and an effective climax; and Moscheles's duet for two pianofortes, "Hommage a Handel," which served to close the concert. This was performed by Misses Gladys Taylor and Beatrice Wallmann with unity of purpose and admirable judgment. The pianoforte accompaniments were shared by Miss Guli Hack, A.R.C.M., and Messrs. H. Heinicke and Fred Bevan.