

Elder Scholars help  
Royal College of Music  
Advertiser 25.12.22

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THE UNIVERSITY PROCESSION.

From "SANCTIMONIOUS": -- Oh, "F.K.K." art thou man that in those things wherein all see absurd frivolity and laughter thou canst draw up thy magnificent height and let fall from thy pen the syllables of thy magnificent wrath? Verily thou must be god that thy deified mentality scorns to let the languid laughter of foolishness form round thine Olympian lips! Men pause in wonder to know in what divinity shall this inscrutable being draw on the ardor of their homage. Here is a man whose humor is not of this world. Other poor wits think not out their sallies beforehand, but, acting upon suggestion, foolish fancy speaks from their mouths. Not so, "F.K.K." Could such transcendent genius be satisfied with the banal impulses of a Mark Twain? Assuredly not, for upon the paper whereon he writes spills out the midnight oil of perfection, and each masterpiece of his wit conceals the ponderous excellence that never fails to raise a frown. Is it then to be wondered that when Adelaide splits its foolish sides with coarse hilarity "F.K.K." goes his silent way turning over the grey matter in his head, preparing that procession of all processions of frock-coated humorists that will reduce our fair city to the tremendous mirth of the graveyard.

From "F.K.K.":--After I had posted my last letter, in which I so heroically offered to be electrocuted in the chair on certain exclusive terms, I was seized and well-nigh paralysed by the hideous possibility--na, probability--of the buffoons we are dealing with turning their serious attention to carol singing. This thought so obsessed me that I passed a most restless night, and am trembling all over as I write. Nightmare, bristling with monstrous blatant asses, rudely disturbed my few winks. I am flattened out. Really, what some people can do! As a matter of fact, I much doubt whether I shall ever recover my mere fancy and dream, unless, of course, I am given the fullest assurance by the best authority that this worked-up incubus does not become an actual living reality! May the particular muse, who presides over the care of children, the weak, the helpless, grant it! Before endeavoring to shut out the nerve-racking picture that will recur to my mind, I suggest to the Varsity students the advisability of cultivating "ziffs" and "mous," for these appendages would, at least, give all the appearance of old heads on young shoulders, and appearances are everything.

[This correspondence is closed.]

A UNIVERSITY IN DIFFICULTIES.

The Sydney University is greatly in need of funds, and unless there is an early increase in its revenue its functions will have to be curtailed. There will be a deficit on the year's working of about £7,000, and next year, as far as can be estimated, the deficit will amount to £13,000. A deputation representing the senate of the University waited upon the Premier of New South Wales (Sir George Fuller) and placed the position before him, with a request that the Government should increase their contribution by at least £18,500 a year. Sir George Fuller said that he would place the request before the Cabinet and see what could be done.

Advertiser 23rd Dec.

THE ENGLISH TONGUE.

We are not unfamiliar with enquiries as to what will be the ultimate fate of the British Empire, but at least as much concern may legitimately be felt as to what will become of the English language. The Governor of Queensland, who has been delivering himself this week of some very pronounced sentiments on the subject, is not alone in lamenting the poor use popularly made of "the richest language that ever a people has accreted." A few days earlier at the Adelaide University commemoration Professor Darnley Naylor, in a suggestive address, had taken occasion to show what laziness has done, and is doing, in the corruption of what happily still is with all its changes, when spoken properly, a noble tongue. Like all things human, language is subject to the law of mutability, and if "love of ease" has played sad havoc with some words Professor Darnley Naylor had no difficulty in indicating others which in defiance of the laws of philology have been transformed to their very great advantage. No words could express the gratitude we all ought to feel for the "vulgar custom" which has contracted "idolatry" into "idolatry," and "England" into "England," and abbreviated "cup board" and "black guard" into single words spoken with superfluous consonants deleted.

A language is always liable in articulation to passing corruption, and it is fortunate, therefore, that there are critics who make it their business to sound the alarm when popular eccentricities in pronunciation become too marked to be tolerated. Just as our school inspectors, as shown year by year in their reports, make a point of keeping their ears open to those verbal aberrations on the part of the children, which, through familiarity, are apt to escape the attention of the teachers, so it is well that adult speech, as too frequently employed, should have its censors too. But apparently it was not errors in pronunciation alone, that Sir Matthew Nathan had in mind in deprecating the shameful treatment the English language received from the bulk of its users. "We hoard up our infinite wealth of words between the boards of dictionaries, and in speech dole out the worn bronze coinage of our vocabulary." As inheritors of the Anglo-Saxon name, we should speak the tongue that Shakespeare spoke, and content ourselves with Chaucer's well of English undefiled, or, if we break away from tradition, it should be with good reason, as, for example, from a natural and (according to the best philologists) a commendable desire for simplification and uniformity. There is a healthy, if crude, vernacular which is in no sense a sign of decadence or degeneration. There are unconventional phrases which Professor Darnley Naylor justifies as giving vigor to speech where vigor is wanted. But besides these there is a hybrid form of speech which is not to be explained by any difficulties of pronunciation, though it is not improbable that indolence (or a kind distinguishable from mere laxity or inattention) may have much to do

with it. Why is slang so frequently associated with a low order of culture? Were the cause adequately investigated it would probably be found that this base metal would not go into circulation if it did not supply a need very pressing to those who use it.

The truth may be better understood when it is recognised that the human mind is an immense reservoir of latent activity; and that the great purpose of education is to find worthy employment for this energy, which otherwise might seek for itself unfit and even dangerous occupation. This craving of the human spirit for exercise explains that passion for novelty which Shakespeare designates the "one touch of nature" that "makes the whole world kin." It is the function of education at once to curb and guide this craving for something new by opening for its satisfaction the limitless fields of knowledge. But the undeveloped mind denied such a relief from boredom discovers the desired novelty in the cheaper and more effortless form of varying its mode of expression. Unable to entertain itself with the joys of logarithms or the conclusions of learned treatises on physics and dynamics, finding the world of English literature a closed book, and having no taste for theological research, it derives its pleasure from the use of new synonyms for familiar words. While the cultivated mind, otherwise well occupied, would not be in the least degree bored with the eternal use of "yes" and "no," the variants "yep" and "nope" came as a real god-send to the vacant mind when they were coined in America, it is said, by foreigners, who did not feel at home with words with vowel endings. Perhaps such extravagances and idiocies of expression as "terribly nice," "awfully pretty," and others mentioned by Professor Darnley Naylor, may also be explained by this theory of a mind seeking escape from an oppressive ennui. Whatever the cause of the evil one cannot but agree with Sir Matthew Nathan that the very richness of the gift of English speech makes it the more deplorable that such gross liberties should be taken with it. Jacob Grimm, whose masterpiece on phonology, as Professor Darnley Naylor reminded his audience, has just attained the centenary of its publication, had a great respect for the English tongue, to which he accorded the tribute of predicting that it would some day become the common language of the world. "The English tongue," he declared, "which by no accident has produced and upborne the greatest poet of modern times, like the English people, seems destined to prevail with a sway more extensive, even than at present, over all the regions of the globe, for in wealth, good sense, and closeness of structure, no other language now spoken deserves to be compared with it." Yet it is this wealth, as Sir Matthew Nathan complains, that we keep out of our spoken (as too often out of our written) speech, using in place of it the "counterfeit coin" of slang and the jargon which springs from affectation or mere slovenliness of articulation.

B.A. Mander M.A.  
Herald 25th.

Mr. L. A. Mander, M.A., who was appointed organiser-tutor by the Auckland branch of the Workers' Educational Association in March of this year, and who commenced his duties in April last, has returned to South Australia. Under his guidance the number of students increased considerably, and the branch is now doing an important work. Mr. Mander intends to stay in South Australia till about the middle of February.

THE ELDER SCHOLARSHIP.

Mr. Algernon Lindo, the examiner for the Associated Board, has concluded his work in Australia by examining the candidates for the Elder Scholarship, tenable at the Royal College of Music. In the report which he handed to Mr. C. R. Hodge (Registrar of the University) he spoke very highly of the standard of work submitted to him. From among the candidates who competed he selected three, Miss Charlotte Grivell (contralto), Miss Helena Fisher (violin), and Mr. Lionel Albert Bishop (piano), to appear again for the final selection. This took place on Saturday morning, when Mr. Lindo was able to secure the co-operation of Dr. Haigh, who had just returned from an examining tour on Yorke Peninsula. Owing to certain special conditions it has been found possible this year to award two scholarships instead of one, and the unanimous judgment of the examiners has fallen upon Miss Helena Fisher and Mr. Lionel Bishop both of whom give promise of a brilliant musical future. Had a third scholarship been available, the examiners said, it would unhesitatingly have been awarded to Miss Charlotte Grivell. As a result of the preliminary examination Mr. Lindo said he would like to offer a special word of commendation to a young candidate, Miss Muriel Prince, whose work gave promise of ultimate achievement of a high order, also to Miss Alice Meegan, whose interpretation of the difficult G minor concerto of Saint Saens, was marked by much technical and interpretative ability. Mr. Lindo and Dr. Haigh both wished to express their appreciation of the courtesy extended to them by musicians in Adelaide with whom it had been their privilege to come in contact during their visit.

Registered 27.12.22.

ROYAL SOCIETY RECORDS.

From the editor, Professor Howchin, F.G.S., has reached us volume 46 of "Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of South Australia (incorporated)." The book with its copious index, fills 676 pages, and in addition to 66 figures in the text, there are 42 highly instructive plates. Numerous first-class authorities throw valuable light upon the mineral fields, brown coal deposits, the plant and insect life, and so on of South Australia. The latest report of the society states that the total number of members on the roll is 102, and fully half of them have contributed papers which have been published in the "transactions." The editor specially mentions that Mr. Walter Rutt is a "connecting link between the old order and the new." Mr. Rutt was elected a member 53 years ago, when the society was still in its callow youth, and during nearly the whole of that long period he has been a member of the council, chiefly in the capacity of hon. secretary or hon. treasurer. He has also filled the office of Vice President.

Elder Scholarship  
See Register 6.1.22  
Mr. L. A. Mander  
other Elder Scholar