

at the recent examination, and not without reason. If the matriculation is, as it professes to be, the threshold to a university career, it is manifestly unwise to make it so difficult that none but the very cream of our schools can hope to undergo the test successfully. On comparing the standard here with that in Melbourne it will be found that the conditions of success here are far more stringent. Not only are the candidates here compelled to pass in a greater number of subjects, but the standard in each is uniformly higher. Now the Melbourne University has seen fit recently to alter the scheme of matriculation examination, and the result is that to pass is much easier than formerly. This easing of the stringency is the less to be expected there as the number of candidates is every year becoming larger. At the last examination upwards of 850 presented themselves. In a colony like ours, where the number attending school is so much less, we cannot hope to equal this for many years, and by raising the standard when the present educational agencies are so much younger and fewer, the University is acting unwisely. In Melbourne candidates have a choice of fourteen subjects, of which a pass in any six is all that is required, while a special advantage is given to those well up in the classical or mathematical subjects by the provision that a "credit" in either branch is equivalent to two ordinary passes. Thus a boy with special proficiency in either classics or mathematics, by taking four subjects only, if two are passed well, is put on an equal footing with the boy who just takes the whole six subjects without showing marked excellence in any one of them. The present Melbourne regulations have been drawn up like those of Adelaide in compliance with a generally expressed wish for reform, and it is satisfactory to find that the changes have been made on common lines of improvement. But though the intention of our University authorities has doubtless been, by raising the standard of the great school-testing examination to raise the character and efficiency of the education imparted in the schools, it may be questioned whether this commendable desire has not carried them to an unwise extreme. As proof of this let anyone compare the number of pupils who entered and were successful in the examinations of 1880 and 1881. Reference to the calendars shows that in 1880, out of 40 who presented themselves for examination at matriculation, 38 passed, and out of 56 for the primary, 30 passed. In 1881, out of 59 for matriculation, 38 passed, and out of 55 for the primary, 35 passed.

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It will be seen that the increase in the number of students for the matriculation is only 19, while there is a decrease of one for the primary. The number of passes for matriculation is also less in proportion, though the candidates are a trifle more numerous. Though the results of the present examinations are not yet made known it is generally thought that owing to the greater number of compulsory subjects required and to the higher proficiency and range exacted the number of passes will be relatively much smaller. But even if this be not the case it is justly contended that in the present educational position of the colony the present examinations are too severe, and that the effect of the present high standard will be to debar from the advantages of a University education many boys who, if the present stringency as to matriculation were a little relaxed, would be in a fair way to take up and succeed in those learned professions to which a University training is regarded as both the avenue and the only proper preparation. The difficulty of preparing boys for this examination renders it possible for only the very best colleges to successfully train for it, and so shuts out from it all those boys whose parents are not wealthy enough to send them to first-class schools. Our object should be to make it possible for every boy of talent and perseverance, whether of rich or poor parents, to avail himself of the benefits of a University education. The University was founded, as the Act of Incorporation states, "to promote sound learning in the province of South Australia," and was intended to be "open to all classes and denominations of Her Majesty's subjects;" and if by the stringency of its preliminary examination it debars so many from the benefits it is intended to confer, it is manifest that it is not fulfilling its purpose. While so much is being done at the present time to affiliate the lower with the higher education by means of the exhibitions and scholarships in the public schools, and by making the University the test and the crown of both, when at the same time the learned professions are beginning, as is shown by the scheme for the establishment of a school of law at the University, to regard the University as conferring the hall-mark or *imprimatur* of a truly liberal education, it is only right that the entrance examination to its portals should not be too severe and too exacting.

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JUNIOR EXAMINATIONS.—Elsewhere will be found the results of the recent junior examinations in connection with the University. Fifty-six candidates passed out of ninety-three.