

them. These questions are—1. "What was the probable number of judges in this trial?" 2. "Explain the calculation of Socrates with regard to the thirty votes changing sides." 3. "Write what you know of the Sophists, and compare their work with that of the Socratic school." For translation into Greek prose are given four short sentences, which are mere translations of the Greek of the set subjects. Now first of all I contend that these papers are quite unsuited for their principal object, which is to test the soundness of candidates in an elementary knowledge of Latin and Greek. In these days of a dying classical system, no university in England or the colonies feels itself strong enough to demand from its students more than the most rudimentary knowledge of the above-mentioned languages, and it seems to me that the subjects selected by the University of Adelaide are very sufficient for their purpose if properly treated. But in neither of these papers is the most distant allusion made to grammar, a correct knowledge of which is so essential to and so unusual among those who are plodding along the lower paths of literature. Yet in these papers accident and syntax are alike ignored, and students are tacitly encouraged to believe that by a steady fidelity to the translations of Mr. Bohn, and the word-for-word renderings of the late Mr. Giles, may be obtained that proficiency which the University of Adelaide delights to honor. The passages for translation into Latin and Greek prose are too trivial to demand criticism, but I am perfectly ready to admit that for matriculation purposes they are not essential. But I find that these papers are not merely meant to test whether students are in a position to benefit by the advantages of a University career; they are also a test, and I believe the only test, of the classical proficiency of the candidates for the University entrance scholarships, and if inefficient for matriculation purposes they are far more unsuited to test those whose abilities should be more than respectable, even if—as is likely in a young community, where the apparatus of education may still be imperfect—their absolute knowledge is not very considerable. What practically is asked of these young scholars? Merely to show that they have prepared their subjects with a dictionary or a translation. In only one paper are they asked to translate passages with which they would possibly have no previous acquaintance; in the Latin paper a few lines of particularly easy Latin prose can alone show their grasp of Latin idiom and their knowledge of Latin grammar, while their critical and historical knowledge is absolutely untested. The Greek paper is only relieved from the same criticism by the three questions I have quoted earlier in this letter. Of these the first two are merely cram questions, good enough for pass men, but below the powers of scholars. The third is, I think, a good question for scholars, but too hard for the pass men. The sentences for Greek prose afford some test of the memory but none whatever of the knowledge of the candidates, and on these two papers depend, as far as classics are concerned, a candidate's chance of obtaining one of the University scholarships, distinctions which are no doubt as warmly prized here as elsewhere. It is unfair to the candidates, for upon such papers their merits cannot be efficiently differentiated;

but it is for its general effect upon the education of the colony that such a miscarriage is most to be deplored. It will not do for the University to say that it examines up to the standard of its candidates. If teaching is inefficient, which I believe it distinctly is not in this colony, the University must lead the way towards something better, and insist by the papers which it sanctions in its examinations upon a better system of instruction in the more advanced schools of South Australia. But if these schools are doing a good and ever-improving work—and this I believe to be the case—it is most incumbent upon the University, the head and centre of the education of the colony, to show in the way which I have just indicated that it sympathises with such endeavors, and will only set the seal of its sanction upon such a system as shall tend to the discouragement of mere cramming and the acquisition of real knowledge, in whatever subjects it may include in its curriculum.—I am, &c.,

M.A., Camb.

Advertiser March 22nd 1886.

THE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I am glad to see that the applicability of the University law papers to the students is now being fully ventilated. At present the fact of a man getting through his year is more a matter of chance than anything else. For the degree it is requisite to pass in three subjects at the same examination. I have noticed a student go up and pass in two subjects; he goes up again after three or four months bona-fide hard reading and he passes in only one; he goes up again after about nine months further incessant grinding, and he passes in none at all, which furnishes conclusive proof to my mind that his former passes were instances of pure luck. I contend also that the standard for passes, &c., should be about the same in all degrees at the same university, so that an ordinary comparison could be made between a graduate in acts or in laws, or in science, &c. At present for difficulty and peculiarity the law courses will not bear comparing with any other. In spite of a few expressions not to be understood in one of your correspondent's letters, I feel confident that no present student would wish to impute any favoritism on the part of the examiners or lecturers in law. There is no doubt some reason for all this excessive plucking, and I am sure there is no student that would wish the papers made easier in his own interests, but there is a great difference between a hard paper to test a man's knowledge, and a paper meant to trip a man up at every stroke of his pen. In fact, it is quite evident that the papers set were set to pluck, and it has always seemed to me to be hardly the thing to set questions which are expected to be on general principle and to theoretical students out of the last issue of Fisher's Annual Digest. I must disagree entirely with your correspondent, who thinks the examination paper should be set entirely out of the lectures; this is simply impossible. The lecturer has not sufficient time to touch on half the matters connected with any branch of study in so wide a subject as law, and the evils resulting from this would be worse than the present ones, for the lecturer might and no doubt would spend his ability in arguing out some erudite point to his students, while those who were exempt or for other reasons had not attended the lectures though better up in the general subjects } would know nothing about these learned expositions. The matter seems to me to lie in a nutshell. In all good systems every one thing is a check on every other thing. Let us have therefore examiners chosen outside the University without any reference to the lecturers at all; two for each paper, and men of known skill in their profession. Let them set sufficient questions for passes that could be answered by any student who had diligently studied his text books, and any greater and general knowledge outside the text books might be set for honors. The authorities are not limited to the number of text books they may prescribe, and as long as the questions set for examination are to be found somewhere within the text books I do not think any student has a right

to complain, and the results would plainly show if the lecturer had done his work, or that the students were lazy or dull.—I am, &c.,
PLUCKED.

March 19, 1886.

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TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I am glad to see by this morning's paper that the subject of the law examinations in our University is not being allowed to drop. The late examination in the law of obligations, as mentioned by your correspondent "Student," was altogether too severe, as proved by the fact that out of the nine candidates not one was successful. If the examinations were not too severe, then it must be that the candidates were either unprepared or lacking in ability. This is evidently not the case, as three or four of these candidates have already obtained certificates in this subject, and two of them last Christmas, since which time there have been no lectures, so that the examinations ought to be similar. Another grievance of our law students is that while there are supplementary examinations in the arts, science, and medical courses there are none in laws. The effect of this is that the students in the first-named courses who have been unsuccessful in the November examinations may present themselves in the subjects in which they failed in the following March; but the law students are not accorded such a privilege, and are bound to pass again in the whole of the subjects. So that there are some of the LL.B. students, who have obtained certificates in the whole of the subjects for their year of the degree, but are not allowed to reckon as passed in that year, because the certificates were not all obtained at the same examination. Again, by the rules of the Supreme Court and the University, anyone who has passed the intermediate examinations in the Supreme Court before the 31st December last may attend the University and obtain the LL.B. degree, omitting two of the subjects (law of property and jurisprudence), and such degree will be sufficient to entitle him to admission as a practitioner of the Supreme Court. There is also a rule which says that students passing in a certain five of the eight subjects required for the LL.B. degree (property being one of the five) shall be entitled to admission as practi-