

Register September 2nd 1886

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SCHOLARSHIP.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir — Your announcement this morning that the Government had agreed to a proposal of the Council of the University that the Parliamentary vote for the South Australian Scholarship should be diverted to the purposes of a Medical School will, I think, take a good many people by surprise. The wires have been pulled in this instance with a great deal of secrecy. No opportunity, I believe, has been afforded of taking the sense of the outside public on this question, much less of the Senate, to whom it ought to be of the highest interest. Here, almost without warning, the chief prize of the University, the most encouraging reward it has wherewith to tempt young fellows of more than average talent to undergo the labours of the higher education, is wiped out. It looks as if the doctors in the Council, having first persuaded their fellow-Councillors, have found a sympathetic brother in the Minister of Education. To me, Sir, it seems an altogether unworthy thing to take what was most generously given by the country for the benefit of all and for the promotion of every branch of the humanities and science (including medicine), and sacrifice it to the selfish instincts of a class. And for what? Already the supply of doctors from competent manufactories fulfils, if it does not exceed, the demand, and will the public tax themselves to enable an Adelaide School of Medicine to turn out that dangerous product, a second-rate practitioner, seeing that with the machinery it will have at its disposal it cannot possibly do more than convert into a second-class doctor a pupil who elsewhere might have attained to a first-rate standard? If Australian education is the thing desired it would be better for the State for some years to come to spend its money in sending exhibitors to the Melbourne School or to assist in founding some really good central school for all these colonies in a city where the hospital and other resources are sufficiently good for the purpose. Anyway, let the medical gentlemen try to compass their ends without covetously seeking to injure the wider interests of the University.

With regard to the South Australian Scholarship, it is too early to say it has not answered a worthy purpose in arousing the ambition of the brightest wits from our schools to win knowledge and experience which may hereafter benefit their native country, but which it would be affectation to suppose they can gain without foreign travel and education. If the country is too poor just now to continue its gift on the same generous scale, a reduction by one-half would be better than the retrograde action of abolition. I trust, as you seem to do, that this matter will yet come before Parliament for decision. It is not easy to see how it can fail to do so, as the letter of the Minister to the Council of the University says that the money in question is "annually appropriated," and no public money can be appropriated except by the Legislature.

I am, Sir, &c.,

August 30.

H.

The Advertiser

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1886.

FOR some time past rumors have been afloat that the Council of the University was meditating some very sweeping changes in its educational arrangements. In the published report of the last meeting it was briefly stated that the proposed regulations for the junior and senior public examinations were "passed," but no information was given as to the precise nature of these regulations. The new rules will, of course, have to be presented to the Senate, which meets on Friday next, and by that august body either rejected or accepted. If accepted they must then be laid before the Governor, after which they will become law. We have been favored by Mr. Tyas, the registrar, with a copy of the proposed rules, and they will be found in another column. Doubtless they will be eagerly scanned not only by the members of the Senate but by all who are interested in the work of primary education in the colony. A great deal of thought and

labor has evidently been expended upon drawing them up. In all such work the result must of necessity be a kind of compromise. Everybody deems himself capable of forming an opinion as to the best methods of managing education, and the opinions that are held are as numerous and as conflicting and as fantastic as are those that pass current on taxation or theology. The Council of the University is itself a body that represents many different theories on the question of education, and, considering this fact, it is to be congratulated on having evolved so terse, so comprehensive, and so harmonious a scheme. The first thing that will strike a reader of these rules is the disappearance of the time-honored and popular name "matriculation." The reason for this eclipse of a well-known word is not far to seek. The word matriculation has a quaint mediæval flavor about it when we call to mind that it means taking the university as a foster mother. The youth who "matriculates" is no longer to be spoken of as "tied to his mother's apron-strings," because he has gotten a new mother in place of the old. The university—with its chancellor and vice-chancellor, its council, its dons, its professors, and its discipline—is henceforth to the aspiring youth his "alma mater." In plain modern English, to "matriculate" means to enter the university as a student who wishes to obtain her teaching, and to be rewarded by one of her degrees. The word is a misnomer when it comes to be applied to an examination which is looked upon as the crown and finish of a schoolboy's education instead of the entrance gateway to the more select and advanced studies of a university. London has the honor or the dishonor of thus popularising this word. That university arranged a series of progressive examinations for its several degrees, and of course had one which was called "matriculation." This preliminary examination was seized upon by the schoolmasters of England as just what was wanted to serve their purpose as a final test for their pupils to pass, and so hundreds of candidates have been sent up every year for that

examination who never intended to attempt to win any of the subsequent degrees. The same thing has taken place in Melbourne, and here also to a more limited extent. The new scheme calls these school testings by another name. They appear now as the "junior" and "senior public examinations." Matriculation proper will be provided for independently. Passing in certain parts of this examination will probably have to be taken as matriculation for this or that course of graduation. The bona fide student who enters for one of the degrees, and thus takes the university as his "alma mater," will be the only one who really matriculates.

A change of name may not be deemed of much importance, but we note some very material changes in the arrangements of these examinations as compared with those at present in force. The examinations are to be preceded by a "preliminary," which may be passed at any age. This corresponds to what have been known as "compulsory subjects" in the time-table of the present junior and matriculation examinations. It will be a great relief to both teachers and scholars to get these subjects out of the way before the higher test comes on. This preliminary examination is of a very elementary character and carries no certificate, but it is more than likely that it may be made use of by the public and private schools as an earlier test. If so the University halls