

few candidates for the entrance examination, and that its classes are attended by only about fifteen matriculated students. It may be premised that when the Adelaide University was founded and munificently endowed by public-spirited men in the interests of higher education it was meant to supply the deficiency of proper test examinations for public and private schools. In addition to this it was intended to open up resources to those students who had not the means enabling them to secure the advantages of an outside University. Many of our youths had been sent to England, Scotland, or Melbourne, and many others had been deprived of a University training, either through want of money, or because it was not always advisable to send them away from the advice and protection of their friends. It was among other things to meet such cases that the University was founded, and we can only judge how it has fulfilled this purpose by the extent to which its opportunities are made use of. If we find that the number of its students is stationary or retrogressive we are bound to infer that the University does not adequately meet the circumstances of those who wish to avail themselves of its resources. In no other way can we account for the fact that only twenty-nine candidates entered for the matriculation this December as compared with forty-three last December. One of the chief reasons no doubt is that the new regulations have increased the difficulty of passing this examination. The intention of the Professorial Board to preserve as high a standard as possible is very laudable, but it is obvious that the standard can be raised only gradually, and not by impulsive steps. Another reason probably is the improved status of the junior examinations, which now are recognised as a distinct step in the University course; but neither of these considerations can counteract the disappointment which must be felt at the smallness of the number of students offering themselves for examination.

Moreover, in what is expected of the candidates there is a limit, which should not be overpassed, and it is a question whether the University authorities have not striven for and expected too much. They have apparently adopted for the most part the curriculum of the London University; but it should be remembered that here there are many reasons why we should not follow the most difficult matriculation standard to be found among the home Universities. On the other hand, to compare our matriculation examination with that of Mel-

bourne, which is the most successful in Australia, we find that it is far more difficult than theirs. In Melbourne the student has a wider choice, and his special proficiency in certain branches gives him decided advantages. In Adelaide, on the other hand, taking the subjects as they are in Melbourne, a candidate has to pass in eight compulsory subjects, as to which he has no choice whatever, and in two so-called "optional" subjects, which are dealt with from a comparatively high standard. To give an instance of what is expected from a candidate, we may mention that one of the compulsory subjects is Latin, in which, besides the grammar and translation, a book of Livy is to be construed; and another is geometry, in which the student must not only know thoroughly the first two books of Euclid, but must also be able to work out deductions from them. These subjects, again, are placed among the "optionals," and a greater knowledge is required of them than at matriculation in any other University that we are acquainted with. It is a doubtful policy to require so much from a student before he is allowed to enter the University. Matriculation is only a preliminary to the enrolment of students' names in the University books, and it is sufficient to require a sound elementary knowledge from the students so enrolled. Every school teacher knows that it is an exceptional thing to find a boy who can with equal readiness construe a chapter of Livy or work out a geometrical exercise, and that it does not by any means follow that a boy capable of this is endowed with the best ability. Every candidate in order to pass should be expected to be conversant with the knowledge which is required in every-day life with arithmetic, geography, history, and the various branches of English; and in addition to these he should be expected to show a proficiency in classics, or mathematics, or other special subjects—but scarcely in those combined. The desirability of studying the dead languages is a fruitful subject of discussion in England, and whatever force the arguments against it possess there is even more applicable in this colony. But, however that may be, it is clearly unreasonable to compel a candidate to have a knowledge of so many and such diverse subjects at the mere entrance-examination of the University; and the success of the Melbourne University, which acts upon a different basis, is a strong argument against the present system.