

Here, at least for a while, without affiliated colleges, and with the small number of undergraduates, the duties of our professors might fairly include a good deal that in England is done by the college tutor and the private coach. If, on the other hand, the local University lectures simply mean a certain number of hours devoted to the several subjects without any definite regard to thoroughness of treatment, and their importance is further minimised by the examinations going very wide of them, the practical value of our costly University staff will be a matter about which awkward enquiries may be made some day. The fact that in the law school only eight out of forty-one students completed their respective years (and all in the third class) in November last, and that on the present occasion the proportion is six out of thirty-three, must mean one of two things—great want of mental capacity in our law students, or an unsatisfactory system of lectures and examinations. The previous scholastic history of some of the students when at one or other of our collegiate schools does not justify a hasty imputation against them of deficient intellectual power, and therefore it would seem necessary for the law faculty to enquire whether, while they are most properly insisting on a high standard for the degree in laws, sufficient assistance is being given by the University to the students in their course. No one for a moment would doubt the conspicuous ability of the present law lecturer, but the details of his lecturing arrangements, or the fact that he is working single-handed, may give the clue to a condition of things which appears to heavily handicap the students, and at the same time reflects on the teaching value of the University in, at any rate, one of its schools.

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Advertiser March 18<sup>th</sup> 1886.

Law  
Examinations

THE letter of "Student" in another column, on the subject of the recent law examinations at the University, will by many be voted but a growl of disappointment from an unsuccessful candidate. There may be a good deal of truth in this offhand verdict, but our correspondent in airing his individual grievance opens up questions which vitally affect the future of the University. Not a few people are beginning seriously to doubt whether results have justified the so early founding of our *alma mater*. The expense of its maintenance is great, and the fruit it has directly produced has been indeed small. Under these circumstances every care should be taken to commend the institution, so far as this can consistently be done, to the approving judgment of the community. But if the inference from the letter of "Student," that the University is drifting into the position of a purely examining body, be true, there will be found many to urge that examination work only could surely be locally done by arrangement with the older universities of the sister colonies at a comparatively trifling cost. Beyond doubt if our own University is to get through the trying time of its infancy, it must be by demonstrating its right to exist as the highest teaching power among us, and not merely by giving the hall mark to a handful of students. That this latter view of its functions is not altogether absent from the minds of the powers that be on North-terrace is evident from the cynical letter which Professor Kelly published in the *Advertiser*, in answer to some strictures upon the examinations of last November. Quoting a passage from the *Gorgias* of Plato, the professor in effect argued that the function of the University is to administer unpalatable doses of mental medicine in the form of severe sets of questions. Now, although no one would wish to encourage cheaply earned degrees, yet it surely must be true that *alma mater* should feed and build up, and not only physic her children. It is well known that at Oxford and Cambridge the professorial lectures do not, except in occasional instances, fulfil their primary purpose, because attendance at them is by the undergraduates usually regarded as part of the formalities of student life. But in England there are the collegiate system and the recognised coaches to perform the actual instructional course. Here, at least for a while, with the

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## OUR UNIVERSITY AND THE HARD TIMES.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—The lectures and studies of the University will begin on March 23, and it is greatly to be desired that a larger number of students, who are under-graduates properly so-called, should attend the classes there. Hitherto, alas! of the ten or twelve who at the same time pursue the Arts and Science courses not less than nine have been holders of scholarships of £50 a year. This state of things is not creditable to the country, and it has been felt by the writer a shame to relate it. Now, there are many youths who have passed the matriculation examination, and why do they not go on for a year at least to the University? It ought to be the fashion with young fellows who mean to go to business here to finish their education by spending their last year or years in University studies. They will be thereby better prepared for mixing with men in human affairs, since their companions will be found to have a different tone from ordinary schoolboys. The teaching and treatment is of quite another character, and such as will tend to train them for self-exertion and self-reliance. Then, too, in these days of whining and unmanly snivelling about hard times, nothing can be more proper or prudent than the measures I advocate. There is little or no scope or need for junior clerks or assistants in any department of life whatever in South Australia just at the present, and while they are waiting the boys and their parents might reflect that the cheapest school in the land by far is the University. The five subjects required for the Arts and Science courses of the first year are but 10s. each per term, and there are but three terms from now to December, so that in all the fees for the year will be but £7 10s., as against nearly twice as much if they should decide unwisely to spend the year at school, as too many boys do who have passed the matriculation examination, whether from their own choice or by the suggestions of teachers who are of course directly interested in keeping them there. I have been told of some boys who would gladly go to the University, but they say, "Our fathers are not wealthy, and we must not think of it—must not aspire to it." I have stated above what ought to be a practical and sufficient answer to that kind of feeling. Shall we see a large increase of genuine diligent students in our University during this year of panic? Crowded day-classes in our highest seat of learning will show that we have confidence in the future of this land. If we want our coming men of business to be delivered from the simplicity and duplicity of the simpletons and rogues who are bringing reproach upon our intelligence and honesty from every quarter near and remote, then, Sir, we must educate them so highly that they will be able to calculate a reasonable scheme of railway charges, and to understand the common accounts of ordinary Banking business, and that payments of dividends out of capital is dishonest. I beg to state, in conclusion, that nothing I have said above in favour of attendance at the University is

favoured of attendance at the University is intended to apply to the elementary evening classes or night-schools of the University, which are at once, in my opinion, discreditable to the Senate and Council which planned the scheme, to the Government, which gives support to such elementary teaching out of the general revenue, and to those persons who, being in receipt of fair salaries, have either asked or accepted charitable donations and State assistance for their instruction.

I am, Sir, &c.,  
S. S.

March 17.

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THE LAW EXAMINATIONS.—The Law examinations for the Degree of LL.B., which have just ended, seem to have been at least as difficult as they were last year. The class lists are very meagre. For the first year's examination fourteen students went in for a degree and two for certificates only. None passed in the first and second classes, and only three passed in the third. Four candidates gained certificates in the law of property. It is to be supposed that the other subject—Roman law—is the rock on which most students come to grief. Certainly seven out of sixteen is a very poor average of passes. We have no doubt that the papers set were very stiff, and that the University is rightly chary of allowing its degrees to be got for nothing. A degree which is to be had for the payment of fees is worth nothing except to those who regard the magic letters LL.B. or B.A., as the case may be,