

Because P.A.C. does not give special attention to "boys of more than average ability," therefore the exhibitioners taught at P.A.C. are not at all indebted to it but only to the State schools. Into what syllogistic mood and figure will "Argus" throw this? The remarkable successes of exhibitioners from the State schools is due mainly to their superior ability and industry; and secondly, to their training wherever it may have been. No one can decide the proportion of merit due to the primary and secondary schools. I happen to know one case where a boy, who has since greatly distinguished himself, spent nine months in a State school and three years at P.A.C. The latter institution might be allowed some little credit in his case. In answer to the sneer that P.A.C. owes all its successes to exhibitioners, I may say that the first boy in the primary examination of last December was not an exhibitioner, nor in the matriculation examination were the first two of those who matriculated for the first time; and further I may say that the majority of boys who pass these examinations from P.A.C. have received the earlier part of their education in the school. The only attempt "Argus" makes to prove the charge of cramming against P.A.C. is what he implies when he says "If the works of a classical author are to form the basis of an examination in classics the pupils are kept religiously grinding at this author's works from year's end to year's end." The acts of the case are that P.A.C. takes the Greek and Latin books set by the University for the December examination as the basis of its study of those languages for the year. Where is any evidence of cramming? The University authorities consider the amount sufficient for the year's work, and are quite as likely to be right in their judgment as "Argus." Even if they were not there is no evidence of cramming. Another correspondent, "Theoretikos," maintains that there is cramming at P.A.C. for a very curious reason, viz.—because the school has been so successful in the examinations. He asserts that "very large percentages of passes in any examination can only be secured by two methods:—1. Remorseless cramming. 2. Remorseless weeding-out of dull and idle pupils." He rightly says that schoolmasters cannot do the latter, and as to the former I can assert from actual experience as an old pupil of P.A.C. (one who has since graduated), and from some acquaintance with its methods of working in later years, that remorseless cramming has not been and is not practised at P.A.C. Its methods of working may be ascertained by any one who wishes to know, and those most intimate with the headmaster are aware that he is a persistent enemy to cram; that it was at his suggestion that a series of discussions were carried on in the meetings of the Collegiate Schools Association respecting the differences between intelligent teaching and cram in various subjects. I have a suggestion to offer regarding the attainment of great success in examinations; a new method altogether which does not seem to have occurred to your numerous correspondents—it is hard work on the part of both masters and pupils. That may perhaps account for the success of P.A.C. At any rate it will be only fair to account for it in that way till sufficient evidence is given to disprove that theory.—I am, &c.,

VERUS.

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THE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—In my previous letter anent the troubles of "Argus" I adopted the rôle of *verbum sap*, and hoped he had taken my word to his heart. However, I regret that such has not been the result. I must therefore diagnose his weakness again. A very excellent authority leaves a good deal to the judgment in the treatment of similar cases, for does not the wise man say "answer a fool according to his folly" in one place; and in another, "answer not a fool according to his folly." So a choice is left open. Let me say that when a fellow struts around and dubs himself "Argus" any man of ordinary reading thinks of the peacock and its tail feathers—while as to Tiresias the poet laureate has just unearthed his ghost. Three cheers for the blind prophet—of our school days! Let not "Argus" delude himself into the belief that I am going to follow him through all the quagmires of evil-thinking that he so madly rushes into. Like most of the half-demented he shows much cunning, for he craftily refrains from noticing the gist of my letter at all. I said that what most concerns the public is how is it that out of all the candidates sent up to the University examinations from all the schools in the colony—except Prince Alfred College, of whose pupils forty out of forty-six that went up passed—two out of every three failed to pass. Now this is a very serious matter to all those parents who send their sons to these schools, as well as to the teachers who secure no better results. The only reply

"Argus" has to this important question is an owl-like silence, and Minerva was wise. To aid him I suggested, after Huxley, that the papers set might be too hard—in proof whereof only one candidate out of three was able to master them. To an unsophisticated mind this looks very much as if they had been the victims of "cramming"—a process that usually fails when brought to the test. Conversant, as no doubt "Argus" is, with the practice of the universities, I was a little surprised that he does not trot out the more respectable word "coach" from his vocabulary. Mr. Routh, of Cambridge, has the unfortunate habit of getting the students who place themselves under his charge to the top of the lists. Some misguided people think that Mr. Routh understands his business, but if he happened to belong to Prince Alfred College he would be ranked by "Argus" and his friends as the evil spirit of "cram," who added to his other wickednesses that of surreptitiously getting hold of the examination papers beforehand. I have long been of opinion that the doctrine of "cram" is an *ignis fatuus* that alternately attracts and pursues weak minds. They try its effect, and it fails them in the hour of need. They hear of other schools' success and they cry—"Ah, that cram again." If the headmaster of Prince Alfred College and his staff happen to understand the business of presenting knowledge to the minds of the boys under their charge in such manner that they can appropriate it, let the detractors of that institution go and do likewise; they will then deserve the thanks of the community. "Argus" refers to his knowledge of the ways of Prince Alfred College a long time ago. To-day I encountered an old scholar of that institution who remembered that the then headmaster succeeded in introducing into the colony for the first time local examinations in connection with the Melbourne University—the gentlemen who took charge of the examination papers here being Revs. Read, of Mitcham, and Field, of Glenelg. There were six candidates from Prince Alfred College, all of whom passed, and two others who did not pass; so it seems to be in the air that Prince Alfred boys should succeed. Cannot "Argus" and "Theoretikos" get up a ring to suppress the offending institution? In my previous letter I suggested that the other schools should profit by their own failures, calmly doing their best, and hoping that the next eight or ten years that "Argus" looks forward to will be less favorable to Prince Alfred College than the last fourteen or fifteen years have been. It was not till Sir Wm. Jervois with his chivalrous English idea of fairplay appeared on the speech-day platforms of both Prince Alfred and St. Peter's schools that the magnates of the latter institution ever let it pass their lips that there was a competing high school in the colony. I have ever held myself to be a friend to higher education everywhere, and have been specially pleased to hear of the successes of St. Peter's. I therefore much regret that such ill-advised advocates as "Argus" and "Theoretikos" should mislead the public by affording them grounds to think that envy, malice, or uncharitableness finds an abode within the time-honored walls of the older high school. "Argus" prefers to "divinities and snakes." I answer him according to his folly—to men who ought to be divine the words of Virgil may too often be applied—*Tantaene animis coelestibus irae?*—while snakes hidden beneath the grass are still dangerous to wayfarers.—I am, &c.,

SUB-SILENTIO.

P. S.—Since the above

P.S.—Since the above was written the able reply of “Verus” has appeared; the only fault I find with his letter is that he expends too much powder and shot on such small game.—S.S.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I should not again trouble you upon the above subject were it not for the letter of your correspondent “Theoretikos,” referring to a previous communication of mine. He says—“The suggestion that Prince Alfred College owes its success to the fact that Mr. Chapple is warden of the senate is a senseless one. The suggestion is worthless except to prove the meanness of the person who makes it.” Such are the strong expressions of your correspondent. Individually, I am not concerned whether Mr. Chapple is warden of the senate or not, but I do think that it is not desirable but much to be deprecated that the head master of Prince Alfred College or any other like school should occupy such a position. The charge of meanness I hurl back with contempt at the head of “Theoretikos”—I presume I have as much right (with your kind permission) to give expression to suggestions as your correspondent without rendering myself liable to his impertinent charge of meanness. “Theoretikos” briefly touches upon another point brought forward by me—that is the desirability of having more than one examiner for each subject. He says (and he informs us that he speaks from experience) that “an examiner who has the prospect of ploughing through some hundreds of examination papers before him is in a frame of mind in which little room for pity or favoritism is found—and once he has looked carefully through a set of papers he is indisposed to go back and alter his decision.” Surely in these remarks of “an experienced examiner” we have the strongest argument in favor of the necessity of there