

to see that "Verus" has ignorantly or wilfully "jumbled" up two arguments into one, evidently a clumsy attempt to form a basis for ridicule. I gave the fact of the large number of prizes being given in the Town Hall as in my opinion a grand advertisement of the college, and as the ground of my conclusion that the number of the scholars would rapidly increase not of their success in the examinations. "Verus's" statement that "these vaporings engendered of spite have been treated with silent contempt" is scarcely borne out by the fact that four correspondents have thought it necessary to reply to one. "Verus" says the simple reason why the P.A.C. does not hold its annual "speech day" in the college is that "the scholars would quite fill it." The time I referred to was some years ago, when the number of the pupils was about half what they are now. Does "Verus" wish us to believe that the accommodation for P.A.C. scholars has been so inferior to that provided for the S.P.S.C. scholars, or that in the ordinary course of tuition scholars of the P.A.C. are "packed," as the S.P.S.C. scholars are on speech days, that they cannot nor ever could hold their "speech days" in the college? If so, I think the attention of the health officer should be directed to the fact. In the statement that "hundreds" of prizes were given at the time I attended, I admit I was in error, but the proportion of prizes to the scholars I am sure was correct; but what of "Verus's" statement of the present state of affairs? He says "P.A.C. does not give 'hundreds of prizes,' one for every two boys, and a few over." A reference to your report of the proceedings at the last P.A.C. speech-day will show that the headmaster's statement gives a maximum attendance of 404, and an average attendance of 396 scholars, and a reference to the 'prize-list' will show that 211 prizes were distributed. If this is not "hundreds," and "one prize to every two boys" arithmetical calculations have very considerably altered since I was a schoolboy. "Verus" goes into an elaborate statement of the "principle" upon which the prizes are awarded, and proves conclusively that every boy might, and, as "An Old Scholar" thinks, should get a prize. This only justifies the admiration I expressed as to the plan pursued by the P.A.C. in their allotment of prizes, which appears to have given so much offence to "Verus." After this elaborate description of the "principle" upon which prizes are given at the P.A.C., "Verus" says—"No one can help seeing that such a plan is more just to the boys than the other." Seeing that we are not given any information whatever of what "the other" principle upon which prizes may be given is, I must say, that I for one fail to see the superior justice of the "principle" that I am informed of over the principle I know nothing about. It is a pity these clever people do not make their statements more explicit instead of assuming their readers are as clever as themselves. "Verus" further states that I imply that the Prince Alfred College gives "special attention to boys of more than average ability and aptitude." This is another case of fitting on the cap, but taking his disclaimer literally that such is not the case, and collate it with the statement of the headmaster of the Prince Alfred College in the Town Hall that three out of four of the highest honors obtained at the late examinations at the University

were obtained by scholars who had obtained "exhibition" scholarships from the State schools. What is the logical result? These scholars obtained their scholarships by superior talent, received no special attention from the Prince Alfred College educational staff, achieved their success, and after leaving and not being dependent upon the teachers of the Prince Alfred College, continued their career of triumph. What is, I again ask, the inevitable and logical inference? The reply can only be that the Prince Alfred College have been lucky enough to obtain scholars from the national schools who, as I stated in my former letter, are, for the reason that they have achieved distinction in that position, *prima facie*, possessed of more than average ability and aptitude for learning, and that their success is attributable either to their natural ability or to the superior training of our State schools. The fact that only one out of four attaining the distinction so vauntingly paraded by the Prince Alfred College can possibly be claimed by that institution as its scholar throughout his educational course, out of the hundreds of scholars, discounts by more than 75 per cent. the credit claimed by the educational staff of the Prince Alfred College. If this is the case in one instance, how many other distinctions have been obtained by scholars who have had their early training in State and other educational establishments?

There are reasons which it is useless to particularise, but which are patent to any thoughtful person, which would justify the conclusion that the Prince Alfred College will obtain the majority—for some time at least—of the scholars from the State and other schools, and therefore, presumably, will obtain the greater number of examination distinctions; but as people do not sow and reap in the same day, neither is it reasonable to look for the results of an educational training in one year—eight or ten years hence will probably more effectually and conclusively prove the value of the system of education pursued at the present time than the result of the University exami

nations of this or several subsequent years "Verus" denies that the P.A.C. "directs its efforts to preparing for examinations to the neglect of the proper mental training and development." The correctness of this statement depends upon the interpretation placed upon the word "proper." Possibly what some people would call "cramming" or "grinding" others would call "proper mental training and development." If the Government gave a prize or prizes for the best footballers, to be tested by matches played at a stated time, and for the whole scholastic year previously the pupils of any institution were fed upon half-raw beefsteaks and other aliments affected by professional athletes, does "Verus" think the pupils of other institutions would not know of it? In the same way, if the works of a classical author are to form the basis of an examination in classics, and the pupils of one institution are kept religiously "grinding" at this author's works from year's end to year's end, does "Verus" wish us to believe that the pupils of other institutions will not become aware of the fact? Is "Verus" so ignorant of what has happened — or has he the effrontery to say such has not been the case? There is very little in the letter of your correspondent "Quidem" to answer. Virtually he endorses my view of the necessity of taking every precaution that the questions submitted to the candidates should not by any means be attainable beforehand. His statement of the manner in which the prizes are now distributed at the Prince Alfred College speech day may be correct; the occasion I alluded to was some years since, and then I am quite sure the circumstances were as I stated. Of course, if "Quidem" says I ought to be ashamed of my letter I will be, provided he will furnish me with what should be the cause or causes for shame, which hitherto he has failed to do. I am at a loss to conceive for what purpose the letter of your correspondent "Sub Silentio" was written, unless it was to air his acquaintance with heathen mythology. He affects to think that, like Tiresias, I have been smitten with blindness "for too much meddling." As the legend varies as to the cause of this affliction, would "Sub Silentio" oblige me by stating whether in his opinion the infliction in my case is attributable to my meddling with "divinities" or "snakes?"—I am, &c.,

ARGUS.

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THE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Will you kindly allow me space in your columns to reply to some of the statements advanced in your issue of the 26th inst. by "Argus" and "Theoretikos." "Argus" resumes his attack on P.A.C. after a fortnight of silence, which time he speaks of (with his usual accuracy) as "a day or two." Is it by some such method he calculated the "hundreds of prizes" given by P.A.C. each year? He writhes under the well-merited castigation which he received in your issue of the 13th inst., re-

proaches his opponents with want of Christian charity, and pitifully appeals to you, Mr. Editor, as a witness of his innocence of the charge of having made "mean and spiteful accusations." But facts are stubborn things, and the fact remains that "Argus" made a wanton, unprovoked, and unnecessary attack on P.A.C., contrasting it favorably with a sister institution, and that this was done not in a straightforward direct way, but by means of side-hits and innuendoes, of which the meanings were evident to all conversant with the matter, although they were veiled under the guise of general statements. The tone of the letter was unmistakably spiteful and offensive. P.A.C. might well say in answer to his protestation of innocence—

It's all very well to dissemble your love,
But why did you kick me downstairs?

I thoroughly agree with "Argus" about the need for reform in the University examinations, both as regards the substitution of numbers for names and the appointment of examiners outside the professorial staff. I know too that most of the masters of P.A.C. are in sympathy with these changes, although "Argus" implies that such changes would be "very distasteful for very sufficient reasons." The Collegiate Schools Association not long since sent in a memorial to the council of the University that numbers might be substituted for names, but their request was refused. "Argus" is very sarcastic at my expense, because I did not explain the ordinary principle on which prizes are given at schools. It was not (as he says) because I assumed extraordinary cleverness on the part of my readers, but because I did not attribute such crass ignorance of a matter so generally known to any of them. If "Argus" will question the first school-boy he meets he will probably obtain the information he lacks. In writing of exhibition boys from the State schools and their relation to P.A.C. he flourishes the phrases "logical result" and "logical inference." I suppose this is done to supply the want of logic so conspicuous by its absence from his remarks. His argument runs thus:—