

"The stimulus of competition has enabled many private schools to compete very seriously with the school, but it has worthily held its place." The fault may be mine, but to me these words have absolutely no meaning. It seems to me the struggle of competition between the private schools and the one the Minister of Education was addressing is made almost a hopeless one to the former by the aid and support given to that which basks in the rays of Governmental patronage. For all that, there are, beyond the shadow of a doubt, as competent, as thoroughly accomplished, as experienced and intellectual teachers to be found out of the pale of that favored establishment as within it. With the low-fee'd model schools on one side, and the fostered Advanced School on the other, private educational enterprise has a hard battle to fight and is rather heavily over-weighted. In conclusion, one cannot but sympathise with earnest and faithful teachers whose pupils disappoint their hopes on their behalf on these examination occasions, frequently failing in precisely the subject or subjects in which their teacher knows them to be fairly proficient. It struck me during the recent junior examinations at the University, that it was rather hard on those candidates who came by train from a distance, and who failed perhaps in the compulsory subjects, to be obliged to return to town twice at intervals of several days to go on with work which must necessarily result in their discomfiture. To two at least of the candidates whose arithmetic papers I saw and knew they had not succeeded in that—a compulsory subject—it would have been a kindness as well as a saving of expense to their parents could they have been informed that not having passed the compulsory subjects their further attendance was futile. Perhaps, however, there may be weighty objections to this course. I only mention the thought as I saw, with a certain amount of pity, those to whom I allude return to their fruitless work again and again.—I am, &c.,

ARRACHNE.

Adelaide, December 22, 1885.

Advertiser January 1st 1886

THE UNIVERSITY EXAMINA- TIONS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Mr. W. Whinham, in your issue of the 29th inst., recommended that “candidates for examination should be known to the examiners by numbers and not by name.” This would be in accordance with the statute of the Melbourne University, which states that “at every matriculation examination the papers of each candidate shall be distinguished, not by his name, but by his examination number.” If this is necessary or desirable in the University of Melbourne how much more desirable here where the names of individuals are personally known to the examiners? I notice also that in Melbourne “if the papers of any candidate be rejected by the examiner they shall be submitted to a second member of the board. If this member concur the decision of the two shall be final. If there be a difference of opinion a third member of the board shall give a final decision.” Here, I believe, the decision is at the *ipse dixit* of the person appointed to examine the papers in the first instance. The examinations in the Adelaide University can never be free from suspicion as long as the headmasters of our principal schools hold positions in the senate and council. Outsiders don't perhaps know, but they uncharitably say that the success of one of the Adelaide schools at the late examinations is due in a great measure to the fact that the headmaster is warden of the senate. Is there a parallel case in the history of any university? If not, then surely it would be advisable for the gentleman alluded to at once to resign his position, as there are in Adelaide many men of higher university standing more eligible for the position, and whose selection would remove all objects of suspicion.—I am, &c.,

SPECTATOR.

Advertiser January 5th 1886

UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Will you in answer to your anonymous correspondents who have lately been assailing the honesty of the University professors kindly print the following extract from Plato, Gorgias, section 77 and 78. It is a literal translation of the words of Socrates as reported by Plato:—"Seeing that the gratification of my hearers is never the object of the discussions that I am in the habit of taking part in; that they aim at what is best, not what is most agreeable; and because I don't choose to do those fine clever things that you recommend, I shall not have a word to say before the tribunal; and the same case may now be applied to me as I have been just describing, for I shall be like a physician tried before a jury of children on a charge brought by a cook. Only consider what defence a man like this would make in such a predicament if the prosecutor were to open his case thus—'My dears, here's a man that has done you all a vast deal of mischief, and even the very youngest of you he maims for life by cutting and burning, and drives you to your wits' end by starving and choking you, administering the bitterest draughts, and forcing you to abstain from eating and drinking; not like me, who used to feast you with every variety of nice things in abundance.' What think you that a physician reduced to such a strait would find to say for himself? Or suppose he were to say the truth—'All this, my boys, I did for your health,' how great think you would be the outcry that such judges would set up? A loud one, would it not?"—I am, &c.,

D. F. KELLY.

Advertiser January 6th 1886.

UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Had the learned professor of classics of the Adelaide University quoted in your issue of this morning the original Greek of Socrates, it would have been quite as intelligible, interesting, instructive, and, to the majority of readers, more convincing than his "literal translation" (by the way students had better make a note of that piece of translation for future reference). My contention is—1st. That candidates for examination should be known to the examiners by number and not by name. 2nd. That there should be at least two examiners for each set of papers. 3rd. That the present warden of the senate should cease to be officially connected with the work of the University. How the literal translation of the learned professor bears upon these points I confess to be too obtuse to perceive. Does Professor Kelly forget that less than twelve months ago he approved of the papers of a certain candidate, the name of this candidate was published in the "pass-list," but upon his applying for his certificate some time afterwards was coolly informed that "there was a mistake, as he had failed in Latin." After considerable influence and pressure was brought to bear upon his case he was allowed to present himself (and very injudiciously, I

think, did present himself) again for examination. Had there been a second examiner a mistake of this kind could not have occurred. As may be gathered from the published report of the year's proceedings of the University the professors are really but examiners for the larger schools of the city, as not more than one out of every twenty candidates presenting themselves for examination intend availing themselves of the instruction of the learned lecturers, or of becoming students of the University. If each candidate upon passing the matriculation examination was required to matriculate we would no longer see the rather anomalous announcement in the University calendar of the same person passing the matriculation three or four years running for the aggrandisement of any educational establishment.—I am, &c.,

SPECTATOR.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—From the letters which have appeared from time to time since the last University examinations it would seem dissatisfaction exists which ought to be allayed. I quite agree with the remarks of "Spectator," published in your paper of the 1st inst., and the quotation he makes from Mr Whinham's letter of the 28th ult., but as the candidates for the S.A. scholarship are nearly always students at the University, who are therefore well known to the professors, and as the papers are usually set by the latter, mere substitution of numbers for names would be insufficient, as the handwriting of the candidates must be also well known to the examiners. I would suggest the advisability of arranging with the sister universities of the other colonies for the papers (numbered only) to be examined and reported on by their professors, and the certificates obtained from them as to the number of marks each candidate secured be advertised through the press. This would remove all suspicion of favoritism and restore confidence. As the grant £800 for the South Australian scholarship is Government money, the public have a right to know all particulars, and it would be satisfactory to many to know if the long delay in disclosing the successful candidate's name was owing to the competing youths being so nearly equal that it necessitated a re-examination of their papers. If so, in common fairness the number of marks first ascertained gained by each should be given with those ultimately awarded.—I am, &c.,
INTERESTED.