

One of your main contentions seems to be that competition between schools and scholars is detrimental to true education. Granted that it may be abused as anything else may be, I still hold that healthful rivalry is the most powerful incentive to excellence. It is in athletics, in business, in every department of skilled work. Even nations find Exhibitions of the products of the arts and manufactures of others provocative of improvement amongst themselves. It is an attractive phrase to say "teach merely for the sake of education." But why does a man teach less efficiently because he knows his boys will be examined side by side with those of other schools and that judgment will be passed on his work, and that of his pupils by an impartial and able body for whose verdict the public feel respect? He will often utterly forget this in the earnestness of his occupation. But where is he hindered by remembering it?

And if there were no public body to determine our course of study it is not likely that it would be improved, nor the works read better selected. If so, committees, Council, professors, each specially acquainted with his own department, are all put together less able than the one man. Nor would the school hours be better employed. There is abundant scope for choice in the Adelaide programme, governed by peculiar taste and endowment in teacher, by special need or liking of pupil. Your principal conclusion is that the matriculation standard here is too high, and should be made lower. You scarcely endorse the view held by Mr. Leary that it is harder than the London, so I will only add one fact on that point, that is, that our best students after three years' good hard work at the University (and my observation of the Adelaide undergraduates and their studies leads me to use those epithets) go home to enter upon professional training in the London schools, compete at the matriculation there, and have never yet, I believe, found their way into the highest or honours class there, that is after at least four years' study after matriculating here. That the standard here is not too high may be shown by one other set of cases. Boys from the top places in the model schools frequently come to us, and in two or three years matriculate, and that without excessive strain, with plenty of time for play and reading. If the standard were reduced boys would pass sooner, leave school earlier with less information and culture for life. They would not go on to the University, for they have their living to earn as soon as they have passed the usual course; while if students were admitted to the University by an easier door, both professors and they would find additional difficulty in securing anything like fair attainments when the examination for the degree came.

That which is most distressing to me, and yet about which I hesitate to write, is the general tone, the underlying assumption, that in these schools we have no high aims and no noble purposes. I deeply regret that you should have come to this conclusion. Every profession has a generous purpose. We repudiate indignantly the charge of being hucksters and tricksters. No man or woman worthy of the name of teacher can be with opening minds, fresh young lives, hopes and possibilities without learning to love them and live for them. To



adopt your own figure we could not make of the Cathedral a stable. Its massive arches ring with heavenly music, heard and listened to as that which lifts us highest. As we enter the porch we must uncover, the *genius loci* overpoweringly possesses us, and even Saul is bound while there to strip off his armour and prophesy. Apologizing for the length of this letter, yet hoping that the importance of the subject under discussion will secure its insertion,

I am, Sir, &c.,

FRÉDÉRIC CHAPPLE.

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TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Your issue of the 28th inst. contains a leading article on "University Reform," and in this article some very misleading and unjustifiable statements are made respecting the public schools of the colony. Will you (with that fairness which characterizes your paper) kindly allow me to discuss some of these assertions? You say "The schools lay themselves out to prepare pupils for examinations. This effect is certainly injurious." If you mean by this statement that the public schools of the colony lose sight altogether of the higher aims of education, viz., the development of the moral and mental faculties of the pupils entrusted to their care, and make everything subservient to attaining success in the junior and matriculation examinations, then I must indignantly deny the aspersion cast upon them. I am well acquainted with the methods of working in most of these schools, and am therefore in a position to judge. But if, on the other hand, you simply mean that the schools are influenced by the curriculum laid down by the University, and work on its lines, then I think your conclusion "that it is injurious" is altogether erroneous. In confirmation of this one indisputable fact can be advanced, viz., that the standard of work in the schools has been considerably raised since the University was founded.



You say further "it is not easy to find in our principal schools subjects of education which are taught merely for the sake of education." And, pray, why should any such subjects be taught? Does not the University prescribe the very best subjects that can be taught for educational purposes? Do not mathematics, classics, modern languages, science, and English literature afford sufficient means for mental development? The University curriculum contains far more than our boys can thoroughly prepare, and, as a matter of fact, none of them attempt all the possible subjects. What other subject, then, is needed "merely for the sake of education?" Therefore the attempt to cast reflection on the schools because they teach no subjects outside the University course is groundless and unmeaning. Again, "If Latin or Greek is taught it is the particular book which is down on the curriculum for matriculation." And why not that particular book rather than one chosen by the master of each school? Is not the collective wisdom of the Senate and the Professors likely to make a better choice than the individual teacher? The books chosen from year to year, together with the necessary drill in grammar, syntax, and prose composition, furnish abundant material for exercising the minds of the pupils.

In another place you say—"The boys are prepared for examination, but their minds, as a rule, are not sufficiently cultivated." I protest against such a statement. It is a libel on our schools. It is only another way of saying that our boys are generally crammed and not educated. As a teacher, and one well acquainted with many other teachers and their work, I indignantly repudiate the assertion. Any one who says that preparation for an examination and thorough mental training cannot exist side by side knows nothing of practical teaching. It depends altogether on the teacher whether the pupils are educated or only made the receptacle for a mass of undigested knowledge. I assert that the teachers in our public schools are, as a rule, educators and not crammers. There are other statements in your article equally misleading which I would like to combat, but will not encroach any further on your space. Trusting that you will make room in your columns for this protest,

I am, Sir, &c., DIDASKALOS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—In your issue of the 27th a correspondent—Mr. W. Robertson—said with reference to the University examinations—"Surely we might expect from one who intends to become a University student some knowledge of history, geography, and grammar without their being considered irksome;" and of the student he says—"His mind and reasoning powers are strengthened, and he is enabled to take a wider view of his particular branch of learning." With regard to the first statement, I think it depends entirely upon how much knowledge the word "some" covers, whether its acquisition is "irksome" or not. For instance, I have before me a copy of the questions put on the "outlines" of geography at one of the primary examinations at the Adelaide University. They run thus:—1. Draw maps showing the course of the Rivers Danube, Mississippi, Murray, Severn, and Rhone, marking their



principal tributaries, and the chief cities or towns situated on or near them. 2. Give in geographical miles the approximate distance, as the crow flies, between Singapore and Batavia, Formosa and Timor, St. Helena and Cape Town, Socotra and Aden, San Francisco and Vancouver's Island, Sydney and Cape York, Wellington and Melbourne, and describe the geographical position of each. 3. Draw a map of New Zealand showing its principal towns, and marking the latitude and longitude. What is the latitude and longitude of Fremantle, Albany, Port Darwin, Hobart Town? 4. Describe the position of the following islands, and state to whom they belong:—Porto Rico, Hainau, Cape Breton, Trinidad, Crete, Hawaii, Skye, the Bermudas. 5. Name the four most populous cities or towns in the Russian Empire, the Chinese Empire, the Austrian Empire, England, France, South Australia, and state their population. 6. Give the capitals and largest towns of the following American States:—Michigan, Illinois, West Virginia, Tennessee, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin. 7. Where are the following capes:—St. Lucas, Comorin, Wrath, Lopatka, Colonna, Corso, La Hague, the Naze, Malin Head?

Take the second question. There are hundreds if not thousands of places in the world of equal or greater importance than those named, and to be prepared to answer such a question the student must know the latitude and longitude of every such place, and as a degree of longitude varies from nothing to over sixty-nine miles, he need carry in his head a table of the distance of a degree of longitude in every degree of latitude to enable him to work out an arithmetical as well as a geographical problem. The same remarks will more or less apply to the other questions. I cannot say whether Mr. Robertson would consider it "irksome" or not to have to acquire and retain sufficient knowledge to answer such questions as the foregoing, but I think most people would. I doubt, however, whether the acquisition of such knowledge would greatly strengthen a student's reasoning powers, or enable him to take a much wider view in any other branch of learning. It might, however, improve his memory, provided it did not break it down. There can be little doubt, however, that he would become a hopeless idiot, or a magnificent specimen of a walking gazateer.

I am, Sir, &c.,

COCKER'S GHOST.