

*Calendar for 1887.*

# The Advertiser

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THE calendar of the University for 1887 has just come to hand. It would be a public convenience if the publication of the calendar could be hastened, so that it could be in the hands of intending students and anxious schoolmasters early in January. This, however, is difficult, if not impossible, as long as the clause of the constitution exists which fixes the end of January as the time for submitting the University balance-sheet to the Governor. At the close of the calendar is published as usual the report and balance-sheet for the year that has just closed. A glance at that report will explain the reason for the great differences that exist between this and all former calendars. We there read that "during the year the statutes have been amended and consolidated, and the regulations for the various examinations have been carefully revised." The accretion of statutes and regulations passed at various times had made the study of the calendar a work of no small difficulty. It was almost as bad as the proverbial Bradshaw's Guide in England, and was as tantalising to the uninitiated as the crumpled and inverted strata of a volcanic district are to the tyro in geology. The present calendar presents an orderly and logical array of codified rules, which have at all events the merit of being intelligible, even if not such as to meet with approval. Many of these changes are mere alterations in name, but others are of a more serious and vital character. Foremost among these must be placed the radical alteration in the arrangements for matriculation. Entrance upon the honorable career of a student is now open to all who are fitted for it by previous training or ability. If anyone has passed certain parts of the senior public examination he may claim the right to enter upon the undergraduate

course for law, arts, medicine, or science, according to his preference; and if he has not passed any part of that examination he may become a matriculated student if he can satisfy the professors that he is fitted to take advantage of the lectures. It will take some time for the public to get used to this change. We have been so accustomed to associate "matriculation" with the attainment by examination of a certain status, that it will be difficult to learn to look upon it as merely an entrance upon a certain course of study. This radical alteration will not, however, deprive the schools of the opportunity of obtaining a proper certificate as to the work of education. The junior and senior public examinations will provide for their wants much more efficiently than the quondam matriculation did.

The past year has been one memorable in the history of the colony for financial difficulty. Most of our charitable and public institutions have had to exercise unusual care and economy to enable them to weather the storms and to steer clear of the rocks of insolvency. It is a satisfaction to find from the report of the University that the financial troubles of the colony have not seriously interfered with its usefulness. Financially the year closes with no real increase to its indebtedness. A large amount has had to be expended in permanent additions to the property in the erection of additional premises for the medical school, which after deducting

£950 contributed by the Government reaches more than £1,000. The fees from students have risen from £1,392 in 1885 to £1,608 in 1886. The amount from interest has been increased by about £100. There is some falling off in rent, only £2,355 having been received from the tenants, against £2,769 last year. There is a huge item of £4,432 headed "rent in arrears." In the previous year this amount stood at £3,922, showing an additional loss of £510. It would be better to strike this amount out of the balance-sheet altogether, for everybody knows that arrears of rent for farming property in the dry region of Wirreanda, which are already three or four years old, are as difficult to make straight as if the property were in the moonlighting regions of Ireland. The University has evidently been more fortunate in the exercise of its functions as a landlord than many private individuals, and it is to be hoped that its good fortune may increase during the current year. The number of students shows a slight increase in spite of the wearisome cry of "depression" and "stagnation." The undergraduates in the various courses have increased from 95 to 108, but the non-graduating students who attend what classes they please have diminished from 94 to 89. Those who came up from the schools for the matriculation examination show an increase from 87 to 95, but the number who passed is less than in the previous year. It is not easy to account for this result. Doubtless the candidates themselves would have a very ready and sufficient explanation, and would tell us that the examination has been made stiffer and the marking more stringent. We do not presume to offer an opinion on this point, but hope that it does not result from deterioration in the methods of training. The junior examination shows an increase both in the number who entered and the number who were successful, the figures being 128 in 1885 with 67 passes against 159 with 78 passes in 1886.

The movement for the establishment of evening classes has met with only a moderate amount of success. The exodus of our young men over the border and the general difficulties of the

times have told more seriously on this department of University work than on any other. It is satisfactory that the movement has not been carried on at a loss to the University. "It is hoped, however," says the report, "that the number of students attending these classes will be increased as a result of the new Higher Public Examination which gives additional facilities for graduating in arts and sciences." This Higher Public Examination is the most noteworthy new feature in the arrangements for the year. It will do more to extend the usefulness of the University than any other plan that could have been devised. It may not be easy to read between the lines of the paragraph in the report which describes it. It means neither more nor less than that students may reside anywhere, or may or may not attend lectures, and may nevertheless be approaching nearer and nearer to the attainment of the coveted prize of an academic distinction. Candidates may enter for one or more subjects each year, and obtain credit for what they pass in, and so may take their degree piecemeal. This concession only applies to the two faculties of arts and science, and does not extend beyond the first two "years" of the course. We hope that busy schoolmasters, both in town and country, ministers of religion,