

Register of 24<sup>th</sup> September 1890.

**THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION.**—In educational circles there is a growing feeling of dissatisfaction with the character of the University Preliminary Examination, the results of which for this year were published in yesterday's issue. Nominally this examination is of a preliminary and elementary character; but having regard to the comparatively advanced age attained by a great many of the successful candidates it is easy to see that so far as a large proportion of the pupils are concerned the test must come at or very near to the close of their school course. This being the case it is obviously desirable that the Preliminary Examination should so far as practicable be complete in itself, and that it should be as nearly as possible of an even degree of difficulty in all the subjects. Yet exactly the contrary is the fact with regard to the present programme. The standards set up in arithmetic and grammar are far in advance of those required in reading and dictation. Virtually, indeed, so far as nine out of every ten of the pupils are concerned the examination resolves itself into one in arithmetic and grammar. In the former subject very great prominence is given to the arithmetical problem or conundrum which vexes the soul of the average pupil who relies upon his industry in getting up his work, but which gives a great advantage to the naturally precocious intellect. The same may be said with regard to the grammar examination, the principal portion of which on the recent occasion consisted of the analysis and parsing of a passage from Shakespeare's Macbeth. What is the practical result of this arrangement? It is undoubtedly that a large number of the pupils in the more advanced schools of the colony leave school with a very unevenly balanced education. They have been compelled to give to grammar and arithmetic an altogether disproportionate amount of their time and attention. Some of the leading teachers see the evil of the system clearly enough, but so long as the University sets up a certain standard they are powerless to mitigate its effects. Those schools which refrain from measuring themselves against the others in some sort of public test are likely to be discounted in public favour; while on the other hand those which confine their attention more exclusively to the particular subjects prescribed are almost certain to appear before the public as occupying a higher position than they are properly entitled to. The consequence is that to a very large extent the more liberal studies, such as science, literature, history, and geography, are being slowly but surely crushed out of some classes of our advanced schools. Even those pupils who remain long enough at their studies to pass the Junior and Senior Public Examinations suffer very much from the inordinate prominence given to the two main subjects of the Preliminary Examination. They suddenly forsake arithmetic and grammar and betake themselves to the task of getting up a smattering of a variety of subjects in the least possible time. Instead of having to learn the elements of a number of studies in the lower classes, and to proceed with the more advanced portions when they rise to the highest grades of the schools, they are called upon to finish up with certain subjects and then go on with others. But the effect is most serious in the cases of those pupils who leave school at the ages of fifteen or sixteen after having just passed through a period of exceptional attention to grammar and arithmetic. The Preliminary Examination is in short urgently in need of reform. The two subjects mentioned should be made more elementary, and room should thus be left for the inclusion of some of the ordinary subjects of a school curriculum. The matter is of great moment to many thousands of the rising generation. There were at the recent examination no less than 298 candidates, and of these 153, or rather more than one-half, passed. Probably next year there will be quite 500 pupils aiming at presenting themselves in September, and the character of their studies and of those of pupils below them in the scale must be largely influenced by the prominent features of the Preliminary Examination.



Express 26 Sept 1890

THREATENED STRIKE AT THE UNIVERSITY.  
THE NOTICE!

All the students of the University will be called out on Monday, the 22nd inst., unless the following terms are agreed to:—

1. Hockey to be allowed in the library on wet days.
2. The professor's room to be given up to the students as a shaving-room.
3. Armchairs to be provided in the library.
4. No one to be plucked in future.
5. All wages to be increased.
6. The bannisters on the staircases to be made smooth, so that the students may be able to slide down without tearing their clothes.

(Signed) STUDENTISSIAN.

REPLY OF THE AUTHORITIES.

We hear with pleasure that there is some prospect of the present unhappy strike at the University being settled, and that a compromise on the following lines is likely to be agreed to:—

1. Hockey to be allowed in the library, the authorities being of opinion that it is decidedly preferable to the present practice of playing football with the volumes of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica."
2. A shaving-room to be set apart for the students, as a reward for the diligence displayed by them in nursing even the smallest of moustaches.
3. Armchairs to be provided in the library, the present custom of lying at full length on the tables not being, in the opinion of the authorities, either graceful or becoming.
4. As the students at present do no work whatever, the authorities do not see how any reduction in that direction can be effected.
5. The authorities are of opinion that the students are going down hill quite fast enough at present, and therefore decline to make their path smoother down the bannisters.

Register Oct 9<sup>th</sup> 1890

THE LAW COURSE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE.—On Wednesday afternoon the University Senate decided by a large majority that in their opinion the curriculum for the degree of LL.B. should include at least two years of the Arts course. Previous to the passing of the resolution there was a spirited discussion, in the course of which several representatives of the Council strongly opposed the motion, on the ground chiefly that in passing it the Senate would be disparaging the degrees of the University—a singularly disingenuous contention, seeing that the object of the supporters of the motion is to give to the LL.B. degree a higher value, thus ensuring for it recognition by other Universities. Mr. Hartley took the opportunity of rating those members of the Senate—a large majority of those present, as the result proved—who approved of the motion for being in accord with the *Register* upon the question. This gentleman has been so much in the habit of having his own way in the University that it is not perhaps surprising that he should feel sore at the prospect of being out-voted. It is in no captious or fault-finding spirit that we have advocated the course which the Senate has now adopted, and it is a pity that Mr. Hartley, failing to find strong enough arguments in opposition to the view we have taken, should attempt to gain his point by urging matters of prejudice.

Register 26/10/91

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—We are a democratic people living in a democratic age. Why, then, is it that no attempt has been made to popularize our University by the application of the system of extension lectures—a system which has found such ready acceptance in the mother country, and, if I remember rightly, in the adjacent colonies of New South Wales and Victoria? It must be admitted that no University can thrive in a country of popular institutions unless it keeps in touch with the people of that country. Such a University is an exotic in an alien soil. It suffers from want of endowments, and, worse still, from want of students. The remedy as applied in England, if rumours may be trusted, is proving highly efficacious. Why may it not be applied here? It must not be too hastily supposed that the audiences would be thin. Each constituency has its hobby. Colonial hobbies are not generally, it is true, on the æsthetic sides of their natures; but we are immensely practical. *Ergo*, give us lectures on science and history; these will secure good audiences, where lectures on art and literature might fail.

I am, Sir, &c.,

VERBUM SAP.