

NEGLECT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Having been engaged in scholastic work in this colony for some 14 years I would ask a small portion of your valuable space to say a few words on the present state of education in South Australia, more especially to the parents of the rising generation, and I do so with the greater diffidence and a certain amount of hesitation, inasmuch as I may lay myself open to two objections. First, I may be accused of advertising my own occupation; and secondly, the extreme sensitiveness of colonials to having the truth plainly said has always struck me as being dangerous ground to meddle with, a sensitiveness peculiar to the very young, and I suppose to all young nations. To the first of these objections I must risk; to the second I may plead a long residence marking appreciation of the good qualities of the colonies and their inhabitants. No doubt in the infancy of the colony there was little time and less opportunity for sound or ornamental education however much desired. Now, however, that manhood has been attained it is not nearly time that these citizens who can afford it should begin to set a little higher value on the establishing of a more highly educated generation and a little less on the prospect of an immediate return for educational investments in the shape of L.S.D. The fault I would draw attention to arises chiefly from the extreme tendency to superficial, technical, and so-called practical education; a fault from which unfortunately the University authorities themselves are not free. The amount of importance and money devoted to the professional schools, the placing our law degree on a lower level as regards general culture than that of the sister universities, the admission of practicing barristers on a few certificates, the allowing students who have crammed a few dogies to compete on equal terms with students who have spent years in acquiring sound education (and in this semi-charitable institution, the Advanced Schools for Girls, is much to blame), and above all the neglect of the only true foundation for a finished education, viz., the study of Latin and Greek—in all these points the University has been weak in pandering to the rough and quick return required by utilitarian parents for the nimble misapprehension. Surely it is indefensible that the whole colony can only supply three candidates for the B.A. degree at the University with its able professors and great facilities for teaching? Again, how many of the students who have joined the Law School since its foundation have carried out their first intention of taking the LL.B. degree, and instead dwindled down to certificates of admission picked upon by one and all long intervals? You may take the whole field of educational or quasi-educational subjects from higher mathematics to plain sewing, and if you omit the good old system of the "Humanities" you may turn out a good seaman, but in other respects you have a rough, unfinished and inferior article. And what has been the result? What is the effect on the cultivated mind of hearing gentlemen learned in the law, writing Q.C. after their names, gravely arguing on what they are pleased to call an *adversus querela*? If once I have received a dozen letters in which profligate is honored with two B's. I say nothing of the common and apparently recognized mispronunciation of such words as laudatable and despicable; octopus and philologist are perhaps excusable, but why not pronounce them correctly? Only last night on Glenelg jetties everyone was talking of the Aurora Australia. All these matters may appear trivial if taken individually, but when added to the thousand other similar ignorant errors they argue the absence of care and a decided retrogression from the higher standard attained to by the educated of older civilisation. I have in past days heard a Minister of Education at a literary contest expatiating on the benefits of extempore (in three syllables) speaking, and repeating the word so often that it became difficult to restrain a smile. A gentleman who passes as a scholar (minus the Humanities) and a musical critic held forth to me as a recent Continental concert on the beauties of what he called a fugue (in two syllables), and if you venture to suggest an alteration you are pedantic and hypercritical, and are told that ninety-nine people out of a hundred call it so, and usage warrants it all. In fact the people of the colonies have established a prescriptive right to talk how they like. Now what is the remedy for all this carelessness and illiberal English, a carelessness which I believe is also the cause of the colonial drawing manner of speech? Certainly not sitting down to read books by oneself without communion with higher intelligence and friction with educated minds. Such learning only produces the scabby dogmatism of the self-educated, the aerial person who squashes you with "I read it in a book." I cannot help being forced to the conclusion that it is to the Humanities that we must look for a remedy, and that as we must look for it satisfied that they are long as parents are satisfied that they are doing their duty to their boys and girls if they pay for them to be made a doctor, or a lawyer, or a minister, or give the girls botany and object lessons in bonnets of dusters, so long will they lessons in turning out the semi-finished article. I say again it is incumbent on the parents of the rising generation to take more advantage of the rising generation to the facilities afforded by the and earlier of the facilities afforded by the University; and for the youth of this colony to spend more of the time they can spare from the cricket and football fields in the study of subjects which expand the mind, enlarge ideas, and render them less open to criticism in their daily intercourse; and I say that such a recommendation is only to be attended to by the much despised classical education.—I am, &c., F. A. D'ARFENBERG.

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THE UNIVERSITY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I went yesterday with a friend to the University to enter my daughter's name as a first-year student in Latin, while my friend wished to enter her daughter's name as a first-year student in physics. We enquired the hours for the respective studies, and the Registrar named hours in the evening. I replied that we wished our daughters to attend the day lectures, and was simply amazed to be told that this year there would be no day lectures for first-year students in Latin, physics, or mathematics. Those who wished to attend the day lectures could either attend the night ones or leave it alone. I pointed out that we resided four or five miles away from the city and could not possibly send our young daughters to evening classes, especially as they did not close till 9 o'clock. The reply was that we were the first who had expressed dissatisfaction with the arrangement. I believe this is because the public at large are not aware of the alteration. Do you not think that it is throwing a great and unnecessary difficulty in the way of girls profiting by the immense advantages that the University offers, and that for the young men students it is far less healthful to have their work in the evening?

I am, Sir, &c.

A MOTHER.

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MUSIC SCHOLARSHIPS AND UNIVERSITY CLASSES.—The important question to which we called special attention the other day respecting the South Australian Scholarship in the Royal College of Music still remains unanswered. Why is it that no steps are being taken to fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of Miss Porter and her return to Adelaide? Professor Ives in a letter which we published the other day essayed to give a reply to the enquiry, but so far as we can ascertain our correspondent is labouring under a misapprehension. There is no correspondence pending between Sir Thomas Elder and Sir George Grove to justify delay in appointing another scholar. The letters that have passed between the gentlemen named had reference to the return passage-money of Miss Porter, which it was contended should be paid out of the interest which had accrued to the scholarship subsequent to the discontinuance by that lady of her course of study. Sir George Grove refused to endorse that view, and the money was otherwise provided for. Nothing therefore stands in the way of carrying out the preliminaries necessary for supplying the existing vacancy. It is true that the successful candidate, whoever he or she may be, will, by reason of the view—the liberal view, as we feel bound to regard it—of their obligations under the foundation taken by the College authorities have to arrange for meeting the cost of the voyage to and from England, and of maintenance during vacations, but that should be no serious obstacle. The requisite funds for these purposes have, thanks to the generosity of the founders of the scholarships and of other gentlemen, been forthcoming in the past, and there is no reason to suppose that it will be impossible to meet the requirements in the future. It is in the highest degree desirable that provision should be made for keeping up a regular succession of scholars. Absolutely nothing is gained and a good deal is lost by delay. While the vacancy continues the interest accruing from the £3,000 so liberally contributed by Sir Thomas Elder is being absorbed into the funds of the College, which also has the power of appointment. Professor Ives is of opinion that it will not exercise that power, but we are at a loss to know upon what he bases his conclusion. It is hardly credible—indeed it would be a grave reflection upon the College authorities to assume—that the proceeds of the endowment will be allowed to pass into the College treasury for an indefinite period, and the only alternative to this, if a scholar is not supplied from Adelaide, will be to fill the vacancy on the spot. This certainly