

Without wishing to discuss the details of the examination papers, which are always susceptible of diverse criticisms, we would wish at this point to make another suggestion. We believe it is generally acknowledged that where an examination is one and entire it should be passed wholly at one time, and should not be divided. Under the present regulations, however, it is competent for the student, if he meets the requirements in point of age, to pass the greater part of his compulsory subjects at the junior examination, and be exempted from taking up the same subjects at the matriculation. There are many and obvious reasons why this should not be so, and we think that this provision would be far better omitted. If the student still retains his previous knowledge, there is no hardship in making him pass the same subjects again; while, if he does not still retain it, and has confined his studies to the remaining subjects, in that case it is improper to pass him for the matriculation. It is the object of many candidates to merely cram for such examinations, and a system of so dividing the subjects affords a greater facility for cramming. It is a good thing that the junior examination is becoming more popular, and the authorities of the University are to be complimented upon what they have done to promote this result; but the matriculation test is of primary importance in the early career of a University. It is applied as the test of a good school knowledge, and is the preliminary to entrance into the legal and medical professions, as, no doubt, before long it will be in other vocations. It is, in fact, an impartial and trustworthy gauge of a boy's general knowledge. The widespread usefulness which may attach to it is seen in Melbourne, where it has raised the standard of education in the colony and has led to a healthy system of competition, and where the intelligent boy as a matter of course completes his school career by passing the matriculation. In England and elsewhere its students have been conspicuously successful, and the whole character of the Melbourne University is one of widespread usefulness. On the other hand, the difficulties to be surmounted at entrance to our own University, which make the examination far too advanced for the boy leaving school, appear to greatly limit its beneficial character. We repeat that the intention is an excellent one, namely, to preserve a high standard for the University, but the question is whether the entrance-test might not with advantage be lowered considerably. It seems to us that this would be a far better arrangement, and that the University would be fulfilling its purpose more effectually in this way than by bestowing a very extensive education upon a mere handful of students.

From The Register
16th Decr 1852.

THE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I appreciate the general tone of your leading article in this morning's *Register* relative to the Adelaide University and its examinations. In addition to the points in relation to our University affairs which have recently come under public discussion, there is one other matter which calls for attention. I notice in the recent election of gentlemen to fill the vacancies declared in the Council that several of the gentlemen elected possess no academical degree. It is quite true that the five gentlemen elected had previously occupied seats in the Council, but I wish to ascertain upon what grounds gentlemen without degrees, and therefore not otherwise members of the University, are preferred over members of the University? The published list on the calendar shows that there are no less than eighty gentlemen possessed of one or other of the academical degrees. But it seems to me anomalous that the Council should comprise such a number of names without degrees. Take the recent election, for example. It is intelligible enough why Mr. C. Todd, who holds so high a position in the world of learning, should have been elected, but why Sir Henry Ayers and Mr. W. Everard were elected over such candidates as Mr. Frederic Chapple, B.Sc., and Dr. Smith is a curious problem for outsiders to solve. If the defeated candidates in the election had not been deemed the most suitable for positions in the Council, surely there is ample scope for an excellent selection amongst the other members of the Senate. By the series of propositions brought before the Senate at its late meeting it is evident that Dr. Smith takes an active and acute interest in the work of the University. Dr. Smith is quite a stranger to me, and therefore I do not write with any personal interest in that gentleman, but I do feel that the public have a right to know why lay gentlemen are chosen for University Council purposes over the heads of men of high degrees in the University world. It certainly looks as if there was some clique influence at work, or one is forced to the conclusion that men are chosen for the University Council, not for their learning, but by reason of their money. I have been told that it is next to a vain attempt to place gentlemen on the University Council Board unless they happen to be in the confidence of a select few. Possibly, Sir, this has something to do with the unsatisfactory operations in several respects of the University. It is very difficult to suggest a remedy for this, but I am afraid that the fact is the whole University programme is virtually worked by a very small number, and that hitherto even the Senate is very largely an outside body, very little in the confidence of these few. Hoping that more light will be thrown upon this whole subject,

I am, Sir, &c., VINDEX.

December 14.

[Would it not have been the more charitable and the more reasonable view for our correspondent to take that the fact of Sir Henry Ayers having been an office-bearer in, and Mr. Everard a member of, the Council of the University from its foundation had more to do with their re-election than the mere circumstance of their being wealthy men?—

ED.]