

Advertiser May 8th 1886

EVENING CLASSES AT THE UNIVERSITY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—The attention of the executive committee of the S.A. Literary Societies' Union has been called to a sub-leader appearing in Thursday's *Advertiser* directing attention to the evening classes at the Adelaide University—referring to them as “not an unqualified success;” that whilst last year the classes made a fair beginning, this year's shows a great falling off in the number who have paid their fees. No one regrets more than do the executive of the union that the classes do not promise to be so well attended this year as last, but we think such a condition of affairs is due to two causes: one, that a very large number of young men have either been discharged from their employment and left the colony, or have had to submit to such reductions in their salaries as compel them also to reduce their expenses. Then the other cause may be that so short a notice was given of the date when the classes would be started. The advertisement was inserted in the papers of Saturday, April 3, and it was there stated that the enrolment of intending students would take place on Wednesday evening, April 7, the classes to commence on Monday, April 12. The registrar very courteously sent me full particulars on the day the advertisement first appeared, and I immediately took steps to have them printed in circular form, forwarding copies to the secretaries of all associated societies for distribution among the members, but many societies did not get them until after the classes had commenced. Of course it may not have been possible to make necessary arrangements earlier, but when these were made it would not have involved very great delay to have had the classes commence, say a fortnight later, in the meantime well advertising the fact. With reference to the subjects and their “practical” bearing, it seems far more likely that the average young man would seek to perfect himself in French, German, English and mathematics—such, indeed, having a practical bearing on his everyday life—rather than such ones as Greek and Latin, geology or mineralogy; the two former more suited for a theological college, and the two latter for a school of mines. There are two classes which might be substituted, and would probably be better attended than any other, viz., English literature and political economy. These two were specially mentioned when the desirability of having evening classes was first suggested. And now, with regard to the endowment fund. It is quite evident that the movement would have been an absolute failure from want of funds had not Sir Thomas Elder so generously and voluntarily sent to the Chancellor his cheque for £1,000. At the meeting held on March 5 last year resolutions were passed affirming the desirability of raising £5,000 as an endowment fund, and requesting the committee of the union to collect the necessary funds. This they tried to do. Some 120 circulars were issued, with form of promissory

note enclosed. These were sent to gentlemen who it was thought would assist us—a suggestion being made that if 100 would give £25 each it would be a good start, and the balance would possibly be more easily obtained. To this circular the response was of a most limited nature, the total amount promised being £240 15s., and £1 1s. paid. This was distributed amongst nine names, two promises being conditional. After a lapse of two months a second circular was forwarded to those who had not replied to the first, this time with no response whatever of a practical nature. The executive felt discouraged, but not disheartened. Towards the end of last year they had letters written to six or eight gentlemen asking for an appointment with the committee in order to lay before them the state of affairs in connection with the movement. The result was that one gentleman promised £10, one could not meet the committee as he was on the eve of leaving the colony, and the others took no notice of the communication. There the question of raising the endowment fund stands at present. You will thus see that the executive committee of the union have made considerable efforts to carry out the resolution of the meeting, at no small expense to the union. It only remains now for the union to ask those gentlemen who have promised contributions to send in their cheques, and small though the amount will be, the committee will only be too glad to send it on to the University authorities. We will hope that as times improve, and our financial prospects are better, we shall then be able to realise our desires and raise the endowment fund of £5,000. Whilst we regret the small attendances, we still think that if only fifty students attend regularly the classes will be serving a good purpose, and have no doubt that the number will increase as money and work become more plentiful. Your leader will have done good service if it has the effect of not only calling the attention of young men and others to the existence of these classes and inducing them to attend, but also if it should lead some of our wealthy colonists to spare some of that wealth which they have gained in the colony, but of which the colony is reaping so little practical benefit.—I am, &c.,

GEO. F. HUSSEY,

Hon. Sec. S. A. Literary Societies' Union.

Register May 29th 1886.

IN THE MEDICAL SCHOOL.

[By our Special Reporter.]

The Medical School of the Adelaide University is now in its second year. Some time ago Sir Thomas Elder and Mr. J. H. Angas sent in handsome donations to help in its foundation. As soon as possible the Council of the University gave practical effect to the liberality of these gentlemen. An Anatomy Act was passed by Parliament, and Dr. Stirling was dispatched to England to bring out the necessary instruments and other appliances, and to select a Professor of Anatomy. Both commissions were satisfactorily executed. In due time the doctor, accompanied by Professor Watson, returned with the desiderated mechanism. Presently the Medical School started its work in a modest fashion. Now it has ten students, and so far as it goes it is said to be one of the best-paying departments of the University, and this notwithstanding that the fees are graded upon a very low scale. But the school does not go far enough—that is the misfortune. The orthodox medical course runs five years in a proper progression. Through lack of funds, however, our Medical School can only give instruction of the first two years' courses, the curriculum for which includes for the first year elementary anatomy, physiology, chemistry, dissections, and botany; the second year's tuition dealing with the more advanced branches. It is obviously very much to be regretted that it is impossible in the Adelaide University under present arrangements to receive medical students and take them right through their studies up to the point at which they can claim a diploma. Consequent upon this a student entering at the University after studying for two years has to leave the colony and go to the Melbourne or some other University at which he can complete his course. This fact of course operates prejudicially upon the class in point of numbers and in other ways. Some students will not begin their studies at all, knowing that those studies must be interrupted and that they cannot terminate them here, and even those who go through the two years' course are lost to the University. In this way the University income is diminished, and the reputation of the colony suffers. The dearest wish of Dr. Stirling's heart, as one who has had a great deal to do with the foundation

of the Medical School, is to see arrangements made by which the whole course of study can be completed here, so that the students who are now doing preparatory work in the University may be able to walk the hospitals and carry their studies to the furthest attainable point. The school has all the necessary appliances for the accomplishment of this purpose. All that is wanted is money. A thousand pounds a year additional income would allow the doctor to realize his ambition. The Council of the University are considering what they can do in the matter. They will probably settle the point in June, and in the meantime it is hoped that some other wealthy colonist, emulative of the patriotism of the two gentlemen named above, will assist in securing so satisfactory a consummation of the work of the founders of the school. What may be done should be done before Christmas if some of the present students are to be retained, because they will about that time enter upon the third year of their course. One thousand a year seems a small sum to secure apparently so great a result, but all the necessary lectures could be given by medical men resident in the colony at comparatively little cost. The instruction comes at present from Dr. Stirling, Lecturer on Physiology; Professor Rennie, Angas Professor of Chemistry; and Professor Watson, Elder Professor of Anatomy.

On Friday, accepting an invitation of Dr. Stirling, I visited the rooms which have just been completed for the purpose of the Medical School. When the students first began their duties the accommodation given to them and to the Professors was of the most unsatisfactory character. The lecture-rooms were unsuitable, and the demonstrating-room was utterly unfit