

headmaster of S.P.S.C. magnanimously takes upon himself the blame for the ill success of the candidates from that institution at the late examinations, in not having begun sufficiently early to qualify his scholars for the ordeal. This is another proof of the correctness of my prevision that S.P.S.C. was lagging behind "the spirit of the age." If there is one thing more apparent than another it is that the spirit of the age is a spirit of unlimited advertisement and of uncompromising competition, and they have failed in both respects. They have neglected their opportunities of advertising—thrown away their chances of obtaining prestige. To remedy the former is not difficult; it may be more difficult to attain a remedy for the latter. To do so it is imperative they should immediately begin to "prepare" (vulgate "grind") some of their best scholars for the next examinations. If they obtain any of the scholars who have recently won a State school exhibition — prima facie evidence that they are possessed of more than average ability and aptitude, these should be the subject of special attention and at once be prepared in the studies that will form the subjects of this year's examination. Unless this course is adopted and ruthlessly persisted in it will be vain to expect success—the attempt at competition will be as impotent as the attempt of an untrained amateur to run a five mile race against a trained athlete. There is humanly no alternative; it is this or nothing. A competitor to be successful without this training must be a prodigy simply superhuman. The only question to be considered is, "Is the game worth the candle?" Will the training for this mental gladiatorial contest be conducive of or detrimental to the interests of the contestants in their future career? Upon the answer to this question depends the advisability of the "unsuccessful" institution altering its procedure. Whilst it pursues the course it has in the past there will be no reason for "surmises" or "suspicions of favoritism," as "An Old Scholar" says there now is. In conclusion, it is infinitely amusing the cool, calm, and probably unconscious self-sufficiency and adulation with which "An Old Scholar" concludes his letter. He is not surprised at any Prince Alfred scholar passing his examination. Certainly not; the only wonder to him is that any should fail to do so. The unavoidable inference from this statement is that the Prince Alfred scholars, or teachers, or both, are so much more talented than the scholars or teachers, or both, of any other institution. To whom is the adulation, conscious or unconscious, applicable? — I am, &c.,

ARGUS.

Advertiser January 13th 1886

UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Is it possible to invent any further suggestions as reasons for the success of Prince Alfred College in the late examinations? Surely malice and jealousy have exhausted

their stock of venom in the mean and spiteful insinuations that have appeared in your columns on this subject. One writer suggests that the University professors have been unfair; another that Mr. Chapple, in his position as warden of the senate, has some means of access to the examination papers beforehand; another that the printers may have been "got at;" and, lastly, in to-day's issue some wise-acre signing himself "Argus" has discovered some mysterious connection between speech-days in the Town Hall, numerous prizes in gaudy bindings, and success in the University examinations. What genius has arisen in our midst? What wonderful insight into the hidden meanings of things is here displayed! To all these charges little or nothing has been said; these vaporings engendered of spite have been treated with silent contempt, as they deserved. But lest some, not familiar with the facts of the case, may be misled, I will, with your permission, reply. The University professors and examiners need no defence. The results of the late examinations are a proof of their impartiality, inasmuch as they all have no leaning to the school that has been so successful. If there is any such sympathy it is in quite another direction. Mr. Chapple's position as warden of the senate gives him no advantage whatever with regard to the examinations. The suggestion could come only from one who is altogether ignorant of the duties and privileges of the office of warden. The spite shown in the long letter of "Argus" is too apparent, and must surely defeat its own ends. The answers to his sneers and intencoes are very simple. P.A.C. does not hold its annual gathering on speech day in the college school-room for the simple reason that the pupils themselves quite fill it; it is therefore necessary to procure some larger room. This is why the Town Hall is always used. But "Argus" maliciously ascribes the fact to a desire for "unlimited advertisement." P.A.C. does not give "hundreds of prizes—one for every two scholars, and a few over." It is true that a large number of prizes is given, but it is explained by two facts—first that the school is a very large one, and secondly, by the principle on which the prizes are given.

The ordinary plan is to give a prize to the best boy in each subject in the various classes. The system adopted by P.A.C. gives every boy in the school a chance of securing a prize. The condition is that he shall gain four quarterly certificates during the year for obtaining at least 60 per cent. of the marks in the weekly examinations. Thus any boy who works so as to reach this standard will obtain a prize. No one can help seeing that such a plan is more just to the boys than the other, and it is undoubtedly a great stimulus to industry. In all this "Argus" with his penchant for imputing low motives sees nothing but a bid for popularity. The latter part of "Argus's" letter implies that P.A.C. gives "special attention to boys of more than average ability and aptitude." That is utterly false. The boys are all in classes where they receive the same treatment whether clever or dull, except that the dullards get somewhat more help and attention on account of their slowness. He also implies that the school directs its efforts to preparing for examinations to the neglect of the proper mental training and development. To this I give an emphatic denial, and challenge "Argus" to substantiate his charges.—I am, &c.,

VERUS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—The letter signed "Argus" in your issue of this morning being needlessly offensive, is one of which the writer ought to be ashamed. The statements made are not in all points in accordance with fact. For instance, your correspondent says he attended Prince Alfred College examination and saw the same pupil go up "again and again, and sometimes again, to receive and bear away a gorgeous book." I take some little interest in Prince Alfred College, and have attended on speech-days, but have always seen the boys go up in classes for their prizes, and when any boy has been the winner of two or more prizes he has received them simultaneously. Your correspondent is all at sea if he really thinks, as he in his sneering manner wishes to make your readers believe, that a system of cramming is resorted to at Prince Alfred College, and he does the institution he is ostensibly championing no good when he says that unless some few boys of S.P.S.C. are selected and practically crammed "it will be vain to expect success." I confess to being a little disappointed at the apparent want of success of the older school, but I did not think things were so bad as "Argus" makes them out to be. What "Argus" wrote in your issue of 9th inst., except for the unnecessary insinuations, is of more importance. It may be difficult to adopt some method other than printing the questions. They may get out, but the greatest precaution should be taken to prevent this. A great mistake was made in connection with our own University when a professor in distributing the questions for the day gave therewith to one of those being examined the paper for the subject of the following day, and although informed of his mistake just before the latter subject came on, declined to make any alteration; and of course the student who had had the advantage of the questions beforehand passed; but, unfortunately for "Argus," he was not a Prince Alfred boy. "An Old Scholar" has confidence in P. A. College.

Results justify this confidence. No doubt the old boys are jubilant at the success of the school, and the disparaging insinuations of "Argus" will do no one any good and very little harm.—I am, &c.,

QUIDEM.

January 12, 1886.

TO THE EDITOR,

Sir—No doubt folly is contagious. It is considerably more than a month ago that the results of the University examinations for November, 1885, were published. Like many others I was surprised, not so much at the number of successful passes of one high school as at the large percentage of failures of the others. At length appears on the scene a wonderful "Argus"—with his peacock's feathers. One would think his hundred eyes had suffered the penalty inflicted on Tiresias for too much meddling.—Surely the one eye of a Cyclops ought to have seen that there is little excuse to be made for scholastic institutions that in the aggregate send up pupils for examination, of whom two out of every three fail to pass. I apprehend that the question about which the public are most concerned is not so much to know how it happened that forty out of forty-six candidates from Prince Alfred College passed their examination successfully, as it is to enquire how it was that taking in a lump the candidates from all the other schools in the colony, two out of every three failed to pass. Do the professors of the Adelaide University come under Huxley's designation, when he says of college or university examiners:—"Beginners always set too difficult tasks, partly because they are afraid of being suspected of ignorance if they set easy ones, and partly because they do not understand their business." If "Argus" will pray for the gift of prophecy he may then discover the wisdom of keeping silence when by waiting he will see that the fruits of disaster in November, 1885, will ripen into seeds of success in the future, for no one will for a moment suppose that the lessons taught will be unheeded by an intelligent teaching community.—I am, &c.,

SUB SILENTIO.