

dent of yours, with reference to the same subject, is a person calling himself "Lex." From his signature and general style it appears that he is only a law student, though he seems to think that a position from which he can challenge the learning of the Professors and make the most unwarranted assertions about the University Council. He says that each of the Professors could be easily ploughed in any branch of learning except the one which he has made his specialty. Of course, when a man takes up his especial bent, it follows naturally that other subjects grow rusty by disuse. But if "Lex" infers from this that the result is the same as though those subjects had never been studied he is totally wrong, for when a specialist goes through a regular course of different subjects, as for a B.A. degree, his mind and reasoning powers are strengthened, and he is enabled to take a wider view of his particular branch of learning. And though these subjects may be afterwards forgotten tis only like the soapsuds which disappear when they have done their work of cleansing. What "Lex" seems to object to is what he calls the introduction of foreign matter into the law course. Since he was so uncertain about his grievance that he could not specify the "foreign matter," I suppose I may be allowed to presume that it is the Latin, in which a great part of the Roman law is written. Of course this would be ridiculous, for the Latin is only up to the standard of the matriculation Latin, which every law student has to pass. But let us be charitable and not criticise poor "Lex's" utterances too much, on the ground that he has perhaps been unfortunate in failing in this subject and wishes to vent his spleen on it in some way.

I am, Sir, &c.

W. ROBERTSON.

Kent Town, May 25.

Register May 27th 1885.

UNIVERSITY REFORM--REPLY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—We have read with considerable interest and attention the letter of "Theoretikos." The number of fallacies in that production, artfully concealed, has amazed us, and we have come to the conclusion that the writer is not in sober earnest, but is acting the part of an astute barrister, holding some unlucky brief. Such an advocate, assuming for the occasion a grave face, but laughing in his sleeve all the while, Mephistopheles-like, does his best to make the worse appear the better cause, like the Sophists of old (a much maligned race), by throwing dialectic dust into the eyes of Judge and Jury. Our learned opponent being well versed in logic

could take either side equally well, and we should not be surprised to hear him again offering us an example of his argumentative subtlety in the humorous character of *Praktikos* refuting *Theoretikos*, surpassing his former mighty effort, simply because he would have a better cause to defend. Our dexterous opponent says—"Mr. Leary seems very anxious to make out that the Adelaide University examinations are unfairly hard, but he must be aware that they are not so hard as those of, say London University." Any one who will take the trouble to compare the subjects for matriculation in Adelaide and London will see that those in the former are quite equal to, if not more numerous, than those in the latter. In London the history and geography (most trying to the memory) being both on the same paper (fifteen questions assigned to history, and five to geography; ten questions only to be answered in all, two only in geography being exacted), with no map-drawing, give a wide selection to the candidate, a privilege unknown to Adelaide examinations. Our astute opponent can take that nut to crack, and prove by some ingenuity or other that even there Adelaide is superior to London.

The framers of the curriculum for matriculation at London had a good reason for making it more stringent than those of the older Universities, because a candidate could obtain his B.A. degree two years after passing his matriculation examination. In Adelaide no such reason can be offered, as the B.A. course extends over three years. Again, we are told that should the examinations be made "easier" the degrees would not be equal to corresponding ones in the older Universities. The fallacy in this reasoning lies in the word "easier," in the assumption that the curriculum for B.A. in Adelaide is only at present on a par with other Universities. In fact its course is harder and more stringent than that of Oxford and Cambridge and the Australasian Universities, and equal to, if not more severe, than London itself. The Latin and Greek course for B.A. in Adelaide is more extensive than that of

London, the quality being the same. This makes the considerable difference of four books, as an author in prose and verse is required in both these languages. We did not, in our former paper, recommend the throwing out a number of subjects, which would really have eased the candidate's examination, but claimed for the candidate some choice of his subjects, a privilege allowed in other Universities. Is it lowering the standard of the examination to give a candidate the right of selection between mathematics and mental science in the final examination (a privilege granted in London)? Our logical opponent can take that nut to crack, and prove that Adelaide acts wisely in refusing a privilege granted elsewhere. We challenge our talented opponent to point out any University but Adelaide in the civilized world where in the B.A. curriculum fifteen compulsory subjects are demanded, and no right of substitution permitted the candidate. That is the very point on which we laid the greatest stress, but which our opponent thought it wise to overlook. Another beautiful statement presented to us is that the matriculation cannot be hard because a great many pass it. Yes, they do pass it, by having the examination considerably and conveniently divided for them into two, the one called the junior and the other the matriculation examination. About nine-tenths of those who pass the matriculation examination have passed the junior. Our contention was and is that the same privilege should be extended to others, on condition that they should be placed in the third class, thus not entering into competition with bona-fide juniors.

In this matriculation question the trouble lies in granting all the privileges to those who less need them and none to those who most need them. The pupils at the Collegiate schools having had a five years' special training for the University are pampered mortals when compared with their seniors, who have enjoyed no such opportunities, handicapped at the same time by having to work hard for a living during the day. I think "Theoretikos" will astonish most candidates when he tells them that the standard of examination is practically set by the students themselves. An examiner, true to his trust, ought not to take his standard at all from the students, but from his own conscience and common sense. If a reasonable paper is set, a reasonable percentage ought to be demanded, the examiner not caring whether all fail or all pass. If an unreasonable paper is set, many of which we have seen in Adelaide, an examiner may probably lower his standard to save appearances. Our opponent says:—"Many men who are very distinguished in one subject have no inaptitude for others." That word "many" is highly ambiguous. Forty out of fifty might be justly considered many; but forty out of forty million would not be thought so. If the above sentence has any meaning at all in connection with this question, it means that, because some very distinguished men in some speciality have no inaptitude for other subjects, we must therefore demand five compulsory subjects in each of the three years of the B.A. course, Adelaide, but found nowhere else. That is a nice bit of reasoning, in which our opponent is well versed. Now, a University pass

curriculum is not framed for "very distinguished men," but for plain ordinary mortals. The very distinguished men of "Theoretikos" are favoured in most Universities except Adelaide with a separate honour examination for themselves.

There was a time, some three years ago, when the Adelaide curriculum for matriculation was lighter than now; and the B.A. course more reasonable in giving a selection to the student of either the classical or mathematical side. That unfortunately was all changed, and for the worse, in our opinion, as results will testify. The present University curriculum looks perfection itself on paper. It is a potent Utopian method for training and polishing the student's mind in all the leading branches of a learned education, but unfortunately it breaks down in practice, and cannot work. It reminds us of a model tramcar we once saw, having two centre wheels instead of four side ones. A Company was started, and everyone was going to make his fortune. The model was shown to an experienced engineer. "Yes," said he, "it will look beautiful in a glass case, but it won't work on our streets. It's all friction." Such is the Adelaide University. Our logical opponent reminds us of that distinguished logician, Sir Hudibras.

He was in logic a great critic,
Profoundly skilled in analytic.
He could distinguish and divide
A hair 'twixt south and south-west side,
On either which he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute.
He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,
And that a Lord may be an owl,
A calf an Alderman, a goose a Justice,
A rook Committeemen and Trustees.
He'd run in debt by disputation,
And pay with ratiocination.
All this by syllogism true
In mood and figure he would do.

I am, Sir, &c.,

J. LINDSAY LEARY.