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REFORMS NEEDED IN THE ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY.

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On the grounds that all human systems are imperfect we beg to point out what appear to us to be certain drawbacks to the usefulness of the Adelaide University, acting as obstacles to the mental and physical advancement of the South Australian youth. The matriculation course is peculiarly long and fatiguing, when we consider that there are eight compulsory subjects and two optional, or, rather three (as candidates usually take up three in case of failure in one). Those expecting honours will frequently take up five optional subjects, making in their case thirteen subjects for one examination. If it is the object of such examination to cram into the youthful brain as many subjects as it can possibly hold, regardless of the future mental and physical wellbeing of the candidate, the Adelaide system is well framed. As you crowd into one matriculation examination the school work of six or seven years, you might with equal reason press all the subjects of the arts course or those of the law course into one examination. The results in each case would most likely prove that in this great competitive battle of mental energy only the fittest in physical and intellectual endurance would survive. This unnatural system brings its own reprisals. Even the victors in the combat are for the most part so nauseated with the first taste of University work and worry that they frequently say they have had enough of University examinations, and do not proceed with the arts course. We have been informed that some of the students at the collegiate schools sit up to midnight when training for the matriculation examination. A useful suggestion might be thrown out as to separating the examination in the compulsory subjects from that in the optional by an interval of six months. The subjects would thus be better prepared, and with less fatigue to mind and body. Amongst English-speaking communities the Adelaide matriculation is unprecedented for its multifarious oppressiveness. The Sydney and New Zealand Universities require only six subjects in all for matriculation. The Melbourne course for matriculation seems the best as favouring the mental bias of the candidate, and passes the candidate on any six subjects he may select from the following:—Greek, Latin, English, French, German, arithmetic, algebra, Euclid, history, geography, physics. It arranges alphabetically those who have passed matriculation, placing in the first class those who have passed with credit, and in the second those who merely pass. It also grants exhibitions and special honours at matriculation in four distinct subjects—Classics, mathematics, modern languages, English. Another great boon in the Melbourne matriculation

course is the following:—A student who takes honours in one subject has to pass in four others (one honour subject counting for two pass subjects), or gaining honours in two subjects has to pass in two others only. We must not overlook map-drawing in the Adelaide course, which really forms an extra subject, and equally as difficult as any other. This branch is exceedingly oppressive on the memory, which may be called upon to reproduce the leading features of the eighteen important maps in the atlas. Due bounds are set in Melbourne to this exhausting subject, map-drawing being confined to three heads:—1. Map of any of the continents; 2. Map of England, Ireland, and Scotland; 3. Map of any of the Australian Colonies. The Melbourne course is admirable also in setting limits to that illimitable subject—arithmetic—the constant cause of so much wrangling in Adelaide.

The hardships pointed out above as regards the matriculation course in Adelaide, together with the suggested improvements, will apply with equal force to the junior examination. Let us not be misunderstood in the reforms proposed. We do not desire to see the examinations lowered in quality, but rather relaxed in quantity. We wish to see the Latin proverb carried out, which is entirely reversed in the Adelaide system—*Non multa, sed multum*. The objections that might be raised against the curriculum for the pass degree of B.A. in Adelaide are that the individual mental bias of the student is entirely ignored; that scarcely any subjects are optional; that he must take up in each of the three years so much Latin and Greek, so much mathematics, and so much science, whether these are congenial or not. The Sydney course has the advantage here, as it makes the Greek an optional subject throughout the entire course. Cambridge does not, as Adelaide, overload the mind with too many subjects for the pass degree, and favours the natural bent of the student by allowing him to substitute for theology one out of five other subjects. These five compulsory subjects year after year in Adelaide form so many parts of the procrustean bed, on which the short students must be drawn out in spite of nature, and the long-headed men must be cramped, cabined, and confined within the regulation limits of this curriculum. To those students who have spent seven or eight years at St. Peter's, whose Latin and Greek have grown with their growth, the Greek of the first year at the University would not appear difficult; but what regard is paid to those who, having passed matriculation without any Greek, wish to graduate? We maintain in their case that the Latin and Greek solely would be enough, and more than enough, to occupy the whole academic year. We know instances of promising students, who passed with great distinction at matriculation, and who were hindered in the first year by

utterly breaking down in the first year by reason of this stumbling-block—the Greek language. There are also cases where students have naturally failed from the difficult mathematics imposed upon them. We would not banish Latin and Greek from the curriculum, but would make Greek optional, and after the first year would allow for Latin the substitution of English or some modern language should the student prefer it. The marks also appear to be unduly favourable to the dead languages, Latin and Greek, to which are awarded almost as many marks as to the three leading modern languages combined, and nearly to the sum total of the five subjects in natural and physical science. The Melbourne course for B.A. will compare favourably with that of Adelaide in fostering the natural mental bent of the candidate. In Melbourne Greek and Latin are compulsory only in any one of the three years, and in the first year the student may select four subjects out of nine. In the second year the candidate has the option of selecting four out of ten subjects. In the third year the student will gain credit for the year who passes in four subjects out of twelve. On theoretical grounds, then, the academic course at Melbourne seems to commend itself to any intelligent mind as following nature, and not wasting the student's time on uncongenial pursuits, but rather encouraging him in those studies to which he has a strong proclivity. In practice also the system referred to gives general satisfaction, and, best of all, produces the most satisfactory results. The Melbourne system advances to its various degrees over 80 per cent. of its matriculated students, whilst Adelaide, sad to relate, falls below this standard 50 per cent. What does this terrible 50 per cent. really mean? Does it signify that the Victorian youth are more intellectual, are fonder of science and literature, than the rising generation in South Australia? We believe that both Victorians and South Australians would repudiate this interpretation. The curriculum for B.A. in Adelaide seems a concoction, in which five specialists insist upon throwing in their own favourite drug, which the unfortunate student-patient must swallow, *volens volens*, no matter whether he can digest and assimilate it or not. Hence it happens that scarcely any but scholarship holders have either the hardihood or capacity to imbibe such an unnatural and disagreeable cup of bitterness. We pronounce the Adelaide curriculum for B.A. more unbending and making less allowance for mental idiosyncrasies than the London University itself, and it stands alone as a horrifying chimera amongst English-speaking Universities. The Greek and Latin for the B.A. course is equal in quality but greater in quantity than are required in the London University. The latter University is also lighter than that of Adelaide in mathematics, demanding nothing higher than plane trigonometry. It also allows in the final examination mental and moral philosophy to be substituted for pure and mixed mathematics. Indeed, the whole of the Adelaide system, root and branch, is extravagantly at variance with the natural fitness of things. The student who, with gigantic efforts of work and cramming, has passed a wearying and worrying examination in twelve subjects is so disgusted with the first introduction to the University

that he probably exclaims, "Thank heaven that's over: I have had enough of the Adelaide University to last me a lifetime." We believe that the University loses scores of promising students by this unnatural forcing system. The student of literary tastes, perhaps some Max Müller, must forsooth be dosed against his natural inclination with mathematics and science; or the mathematical student, some Newton or La Place, must be nauseated with what he considers mere word philosophy, the study of the dead languages. In the Adelaide University course Latin, Greek, and mathematics are compulsory in each of the three years, and we believe to the disadvantage of each of them. True progress in each would be greater were this not the case. It is found by experience that men are seldom strong both in mathematics and classics. How can we expect a student to excel in his favourite study when he is trammelled during the whole of his course by some uncongenial subject hanging like a millstone about his neck? Is it advantageous for either mathematics or classics that the mathematician shall be largely engaged in deciphering the difficulties of an author he has no regard for, or the classical scholar in cramming reluctantly into his memory elegant methods of the transformation of formulæ? Hence in any University the best method of exalting genius and making it productive, and advancing literature and science, is to grant to the student full liberty of selection. In the cruel process of forcing the square men into round holes few students are there who have not been pinched by the mould and original genius to the greatest degree, giving the most unsatisfactory and shapeless results. "The stupidity of the average boy or girl," says Huxley, "in nine cases out of ten *fit non nascitur*, and is developed by a long process of parental and pedagogic repression of the natural intellectual appetites, accompanied by a persistent attempt to create artificial ones for food which is not only tasteless but essentially indigestible."

Let us now discuss the question whether Latin and Greek ought to hold that proud eminence assigned to them in the Adelaide curriculum for arts. Butler, in speaking of the Erewhonians, attacks, in his usual droll style, classics, acknowledged then as now as the indispensable foundation of a liberal education:—"Thus are they taught what is called the hypothetical language for many of their best years—a language which was originally composed at a time when the country was in a very different state of civilization to what it is at present—a state which has long since exploded and been superseded. Many valuable maxims and noble thoughts which were at one time concealed in it have become current in their modern literature, and have been translated over and over again into the language now spoken. Surely, then, it would seem to be enough that the study of the original language should be consigned to the few, whose instincts lead them naturally to pursue it. If the youths chose it for themselves I should have wondered less, but they do not choose it—they have it thrust upon them, and are for the most part disinclined to it." Professor Seeley, an excellent classical scholar, thus speaks of classics:—"The more you exalt literature the more you must condemn the

classical system. I think that the exact knowledge of the meanings of English words is not very common even among highly educated people, which is natural enough, since their attention has been so much diverted to Latin and Greek ones." Professor Bain gives his opinion:—"A pupil who has mastered English grammar has in point of reasoning power gone a step beyond Latin or Greek grammar, and should therefore be relieved from further labour of perfecting his reasoning faculties in the grammatical field." Huxley, after informing us that he would as soon think of using palæontology as classics, says:—"It is wonderful how close a parallel to classical training could be made out of palæontology. In the first place, I could get up an osteological primer, so arid, so pedantic in its terminology, so altogether distasteful to the youthful mind as to beat the recent famous production of the head masters (he refers here to the new Latin grammar) out of the field in all these excellences. Next I could exercise my boys upon easy fossils, and bring out all their powers of memory and all their ingenuity in the application of my osteological rules to the interpretation or construing of those fragments." Hazlitt spoke truly when he said:—"We shall be better when our natural use of speech is not hung up in monumental mockery in an obsolete language. The habit of supplying our ideas from foreign sources enfeebles all internal strength of thought, as a course of dram drinking destroys the tone of the stomach." "The ordinary schoolboy," says Huxley, "finds Parnassus uncommonly steep, and there is no chance of his having much time to look about him till he gets to the top, and nine cases out of ten he does not get to the top." "What avail," exclaims Professor Seeley, "all the merits and beauties of the classics to those who never attain to appreciate them? If they never arrive what was the use of their setting out? That a country is prosperous and pleasant is a reason for going to it, but it is not a reason for going half-way to it. If you cannot get all the way to America you had better surely go somewhere else." We are not one of those who would remove classics from the University course, but we believe that they ought not to receive any especial favour above the three leading modern languages—English, French, German—all of which we would place on the same footing with respect to marks. Let, then, classics be studied, and thoroughly studied, but let them be taken up as voluntary subjects, along with modern languages, by those who have a natural aptitude for such forms of mental discipline and refinement.

A PLEA FOR SPECIALISTS.

The world is improved, and science and literature are advanced, by specialists. Nature seldom endows all men with evenly balanced minds, equally fitted for science and literature. When she makes a man supereminent in any particular faculty she also renders some other faculty correspondingly weak. The framers of a University course, acknowledging this fact, should avoid all unbending severity as regards a fixed and definite line of study for all without exception, but rather should allow as much latitude as possible in the way of optional subjects, so as to suit the capacity of erratic genius. This opinion is supported by Matthew Arnold, an authority on matters educational, who says:—"The University or superior school ought to pro-

vide facilities, after the general education is finished, for the young man to go on in the line where his special aptitudes lead him, be it that of languages and literature, of mathematics, of the natural sciences, of the application of those sciences, or any other line, and follow the studies of this line systematically under first-rate teaching." Shakspeare, Goethe, Gibbon, Dalton, Faraday, Joule, Sir William Hamilton of Oxford, and Sir William Hamilton of Dublin were specialists, and advanced science or literature; yet each of these immortal characters might have failed either at matriculation or in the undergraduate course in some one uncongenial subject inexorably demanded by the Adelaide University. Let us take an instance. (Sir William Hamilton of Oxford whose *forte* lay in classics and mental science, had a natural antipathy to mathematics. Fortunately for him he was not troubled at Oxford with any mathematics, taking his first class (*facile princeps*) from his classics, ancient history, and mental science, in which last branch he was considered the greatest prodigy in the British Isles. If a similar genius had the misfortune to attend such a University as that of Adelaide, with its hard-and-fast rules, allowing no play for special aptitudes, he would have met with considerable difficulty in the mathematics of the first year, and in all probability would have broken down with the mathematics of the third year. He might have been so worried with the curriculum as to leave the University in disgust, departing from the threshold of his *Alma Mater* or rather *Injusta Noverca*, not as one of its brightest ornaments, but as an academic abortion. By your sternness you might have broken the spirit of one who illumined Europe by the brightness of his genius, and have sent him forth sickened with academic studies for all future time. Considering the manysidedness of the human mind and its special idiosyncrasies and aptitudes, we entreat the classical men and the mathematical men on the Council of the Adelaide University to banish all petty favouritism as regards their own special lines of thought, and generously admit other branches of learning on the same terms as their own favourite studies.

A PLEA FOR THE ADULT STUDENT.

Let us say a few words on behalf of the adult student who desires to pass matriculation with the view of entering the legal or medical profession. His case is one of extreme hardship as regards the Adelaide University. He may probably have left school at 14, entered an office, and wishes to brush up his former studies, now wellnigh forgotten, and which at the best were not very extensive. Engaged all day at the desk, he must begin his studies afresh, stealing from the hours of relaxation and exercise time to get up his eleven subjects for examination. Classics and mathematics are probably unknown regions to him. Such a student should receive every encouragement, labouring hard under the greatest possible disadvantages. It would be the most valuable boon to him to have his examination divided into two parts, the compulsory being separated from the optional by a fair interval. Such students might generously be allowed to pass in the junior examination subjects without in any way entering into competition with the bona-fide juniors, by having their

names placed in the third class. Again, the Melbourne privilege of granting a certificate for any subjects passed in by the candidate less than the whole number might be usefully adopted in Adelaide, thus saving the candidate the laborious inconvenience of passing time after time in the same subjects, on the condition that all those receiving this or similar privilege should be placed in the last class, whatever that might be. Since, therefore, it is an undoubted fact that the Melbourne University is based on the scientific principles in relation to mind and body enunciated by modern philosophers, and adapted to the various phases of the youthful mind, it ought to be a subject of great satisfaction to South Australia that a sister colony has elaborated in a quarter of a century an academic system giving entire satisfaction to the colony and productive of the highest educational advantages and results. On such grounds we hope that South Australia, banishing all petty jealousy and rivalry, will not be reluctant to inaugurate such reforms as will in all likelihood produce the same happy results as now attend the University system adopted by our neighbours and cousins the Victorians.

LEADING MODERN THINKERS ON EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS.

J. S. Mill on the value of physiology as a school study:—"An acquaintance with the leading truths of physiology is one of those acquirements which ought not to be the exclusive property of a particular profession. The value of such knowledge for daily sanitary uses has been made familiar to us all by the sanitary discussions of late years. There is hardly one amongst us who may not in some position of authority be required to form an opinion and take part in public action on sanitary subjects. And the importance of understanding the true conditions of health and disease, of knowing how to acquire and preserve that healthy habit of body which the most tedious and costly medical treatment so often fails to restore when once lost, should secure a place in general education for the principal maxims of hygiene." Herbert Spencer on the superiority of science over other studies.—Spencer asks the important question—"What knowledge is of most worth?" The uniform reply is science. This is the verdict on all the counts. For direct self-preservation, or the maintenance of life and health, the all-important knowledge is science. For that indirect preservation which we call gaining a livelihood the knowledge of greatest value is science. For the due discharge of parental functions the proper guidance is to be found only in science. For that interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen cannot rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key is science. Alike for the most perfect production and highest enjoyment of art in all its forms the needful preparation is still science. For purposes of discipline, intellectual, moral, and religious, the most efficient study is, once more, science." Contrasting the study of language and science, Spencer says:—"In all its effects, learning the meaning of things is better than learning the meaning of words. Whether for intellectual, moral, or religious training, the study of surrounding phenomena is immensely superior to the study of grammars

and lexicons." On the authority, therefore, of such men as Mill and Spencer we claim for physiology and other branches of science a more dignified and respected position than that which these studies now occupy in the curriculum of the Adelaide University.

Herbert Spencer on the worthlessness of ordinary history as a branch of school instruction:—"The information commonly given under this head (history) is almost valueless for purposes of guidance. Scarcely any of the facts set down in our school histories, and very few of those contained in the more elaborate works written for adults, illustrate the right principles of political action. The biographies of monarchs (our children learn little else) throw scarcely any light upon the science of society. Familiarity with court intrigues, plots, usurpations, or the like, and with all the personalities accompanying them, aids very little in elucidating the causes of national progress. We read of some squabble for power, that it led to a pitched battle; that such and such were the names of the Generals and their leading subordinates; that each had so many thousand infantry and cavalry and so many cannon; that they had arranged their forces in this and that order; that they manœuvred, attacked, and fell back in certain ways; that at this part of the day such disasters were sustained; that in one particular movement some leading officer fell, whilst in another a certain regiment was decimated; that after all the changing fortunes of the fight the victory was gained by this or that army; and that so many were killed and wounded on each side; and so many were captured by the conquerors; and now, out of the accumulating details making up the narrative, say which it is that helps you in deciding on your conduct as a citizen." "That which constitutes history, properly so called, is in great part omitted from works on the subject. Only of late years some historians commenced giving us in any considerable quantity the truly valuable information. As in past ages the King was everything and the people nothing, so in past history the doings of the King fill the entire picture, to which the national life forms but an obscure background. While only now, when the welfare of nations rather than of rulers is becoming the dominant idea, are historians beginning to occupy themselves with the phenomena of social progress." J. S. Mill on geography and history as school studies:—"It has always seemed to me a great absurdity that history and geography should be taught in schools, except in elementary schools for the children of the labouring classes, whose subsequent access to books is limited. Who ever really learnt history and geography except by private reading? and what an utter failure a system of education must be if it has not given the pupil a sufficient taste for reading to seek for himself those most attractive and easily intelligible of all kinds of knowledge! Besides, such history and geography as can be taught in schools exercise none of the faculties of the intelligence except the memory. A University is, indeed, the place where a student should be introduced to the philosophy of history; where the Professors, who not merely know the facts, but have exercised their minds upon them, should initiate him into the causes and explanation, so far as within our reach, of the past of mankind in its principal features. Historical criticism also, the tests of historical truth.

is a subject to which his attention may well be drawn in this stage of his education." In the above extracts such philosophers as Spencer and Mill appear to be clearly opposed to overloading the minds of students with several thousand dry and isolated facts in history and geography, not to speak of the additional absurdity of carrying in their memory a whole atlas of maps, some of which are to be reproduced at a moment's notice at examination time.

Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., Professor of Physics, University of Cambridge, in his address as President of the British Association, Montreal, August, 1884, referring to classics, says:—"From the general spread of a more scientific education we are warranted in expecting important results. Just as there are some brilliant literary men with an inability, or at least with a distaste, practically amounting to an inability, for scientific ideas, so there are a few with scientific tastes whose imaginations are never touched by merely literary studies. To save these from intellectual stagnation during several important years of their lives is something gained; but the thoroughgoing advocates of scientific education aim at much more. To them it appears strange, and almost monstrous, that the dead languages should hold the place they do in general education, and it can hardly be denied that their supremacy is the result of routine rather than of argument. It is useless to discuss the question upon the supposition that the majority of boys attain either to a knowledge of the languages or to an appreciation of the writings of the ancient authors. The contrary is notoriously the truth, and the defenders of the existing system usually take their stand upon the excellence of its discipline. From this point of view there is something to be said. The laziest boy must exert himself a little in puzzling out a sentence with grammar and dictionary, while instruction and supervision are easy to organize and not too costly. But when the case is stated plainly few will agree that we can afford so entirely to disregard results. I believe that French and German, if properly taught, which I admit they rarely are at present, would go far to replace Latin and Greek from a disciplinary point of view, while the actual value of the acquisition would in the majority of cases be incomparably greater. In half the time usually devoted without success to the classical languages most boys could acquire a really serviceable knowledge of French and German."
