

the meantime through the Press he invites the general public to form their judgment on the treatment he has received. But what will strike the reader, be he academic or not, is the strange unwisdom which may actuate an assembly of persons so distinguished for learning as the Council of the University of Melbourne, as also the remarkable want of consideration for the feelings and the rights of an undergraduate on the part of these same learned persons, who were once, though a long time ago, undergraduates themselves. As we have stated, nothing anything like so bad has yet been urged against examiners in connection with the University of Adelaide.

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THE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Will you kindly allow me space in your columns to call public attention to certain facts in connection with the junior and senior public examinations that have just been held? Many of the papers set were very unsatisfactory. Some of them bore evidence on the surface of having been composed in a superficial and slipshod manner. In some the main idea of the examiner was evidently to so shape his questions that the answers might give him the least possible trouble to correct. Other papers were very one-sided, and left untouched a large part of the work prescribed. Some were so carelessly constructed that those candidates who knew their subjects well had little opportunity of showing their superiority over those of less ability and those who had been not so diligent. So much for generalities; now let me particularise. The English paper set for the preliminary examination was very palpably a lazy man's paper. Most of the questions required very short answers, and the paper was a very inadequate test of the fitness of candidates to pass in the subject, which is proved by the absurdly large proportion of the number of candidates who passed. In the junior English the most difficult part of the subject was the physical geography, for which Geikie was the textbook recommended, but not a single question was set on this part of the work. Further, although a knowledge of general geography is required, nearly all the questions set were on Australia. For the senior Greek and Latin it was necessary to prepare textbooks on the history of Greece and Rome, but the papers did not contain any reference to these books. Now it is an acknowledged principle among all who know how to examine, that the questions set should, as far as possible, cover the whole ground. These papers grossly violate this principle, and teachers and candidates who have worked carefully at their subjects feel that they have just cause for dissatisfaction. The questions on the literature in the senior English paper appeared to be the work of an examiner who had not taken the trouble to make himself familiar with the books set, but had opened the books at random and taken what first came to hand. These criticisms, as far as I know, are applicable only to the English and classical papers. It would be to my advantage as a teacher to keep silence, for these papers are well suited for allowing a large number of my pupils to pass; but in the interests of my scholars and education generally it behoves me to protest against the unsatisfactory nature of these papers. The University examiners wield a great power for directing the work of the higher schools and showing teachers what they should aim at, but many of us feel that if we allowed ourselves to be guided by such papers as I have referred to our work would considerably deteriorate. I trust that the Council of the University will turn their attention to this matter. These are not the opinions of one solitary teacher, for there is a general consensus of opinion amongst the teachers who are directly interested in these examinations that many of the papers were exceedingly poor and inadequate.—I am, &c.,

"OMNIA FERRE SI POTES, ET DEBES."
