

“Oh no, I am not to be got rid of in that way. If you ring off I shall keep at the telephone all the morning, or until I get an answer. Remember that this is a serious matter, and that you are a public servant. I don't for one moment say you are to blame. I only want to discover who is the culprit. Here are six months of the year gone and two of the principal works to be studied not procurable. Wigg and Rigby have not got them, and I understand they blame the University authorities for not giving sufficient notice. One of the books is out of print, and the other has to be bound. What are the student to do?”

“Ask me something easier.”

“Yes, my friend, it is all very well to be flippant, but the public will want to know whether this is the usual way in which the University transacts its business. We hear occasionally of the stupid questions asked that they could not themselves answer. Do you remember that arithmetic problem, for instance? I defy you or anyone else to work it out. Well, the gentle public is becoming sick of this sort of thing, and the little affair I am now investigating will be the last straw on the camel's back. If certain books are requisite to carry on an examination the University should see that they are procurable. Are the men who are not up in their 'Greene' or their 'Payne' to be plucked? That is what I should like to know.”

“I wish to goodness you would not mix yourself up in University matters. What on earth can you know about them?”

“Not much, truly. There seems to be a good deal of mystery about the whole of your proceedings, but I am going to probe this mystery to its core. Remember there is a large amount of dissatisfaction amongst the students.”

“Stuff and nonsense. I'm going.”

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Educational.

OUR "PILL AND BRIEF SHOP."

[BY AN ADELAIDE ARTS GRADUATE.]

IT is deplorable that in South Australia liberal education has declined, or at any rate has not had a vigorous growth, in spite of the fact that our system of State education has been brought near to perfection. Liberal education does not include the special training for the liberal professions, but rather the study of subjects such as classics, philology, modern languages, and literature (especially that of our own country), logic, mental and moral philosophy, political economy, and others of a cognate nature. It will be profitable to consider—1. The position which such branches of study as I have indicated hold in our educational system in the State schools, the private colleges, and our University. 2. The reasons for that position. 3. A summary of a few of the advantages to be derived from such a course of study. 4. Some suggestions as to remedying this defect in our system. In relation to other branches of study in South Australia liberal education is unfortunately very subsidiary. In our model schools, which are only designed as the basis of the structure, it is of course wholly shut out; the State rightly contents itself with imparting knowledge of a purely elementary character. But the Government also generously provide annually stepping-stones in the way of exhibitions to those boys and girls who have shown themselves worthy and capable of receiving the higher education offered by our collegiate institutions. The wisdom of this step is amply evidenced by the brilliant roll of names of those prizetakers who have subsequently graduated here and in the oldest Universities of England with credit to themselves and to the colony. In the colleges, though some of the subjects I have indicated are taught, the teaching is not done in that scholarly manner which would engender a love of the subjects themselves. The only object in view seems to be the getting through a certain quantity of work in a year in order to gain a high percentage of passes in the public examinations at the University. In our University the lack of interest displayed in this branch of study is even more clearly shown. The Arts School, that which trains the undergraduates for Bachelors of Arts, though having the advantage of all the others in the matter of age, of well-endowed professorships, and capable professors, is yet the most poorly attended of any. And though the doors of the University have been thrown open more widely than those of any similar institution in the world, by the scheme of higher public examinations and the institution of evening classes, not one of these evening lectures is delivered on any of the subjects indicated above, though had there been any demand the supply would have doubtless been forthcoming.

Why are we in this respect so different from the other colonies and the mother country? The first great cause is undoubtedly the want of a leisurely wealthy class who can turn their attention to these subjects, and who are not averse to allowing their sons to spend at least three years of their lives in qualifying for the degree of Bachelor of Arts. A second reason is the utilitarian spirit of the age, which, if allowed to go unbridled, develops into a lustful greed of gain. A liberal education has no commercial value when compared with the material advantages to be derived from the study of the physical sciences and of law and medicine. But perhaps the greatest reason rests with the University, who year by year fix certain textbooks and a certain range, within which the questions on that subject at the annual examinations will be set, thus crippling the efforts of the schoolmaster and binding the examiners down to a fixed rule of thumb and preventing them from