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THE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I read with some amount of interest, but with a much greater degree of astonishment, your leader on the above subject in the issue of to-day. My reasons for the former need not be adduced, but it may be necessary to state why I should be surprised. It seems strange that the writer of an article such as this, whose statements will be undoubtedly taken as correct by the uninitiated—the general public—should not make sure of his facts before penning an article dealing with the work of the year of an institution, which is bound to play so important a part in the welfare of the community as our University. The article is full of misstatements, inaccuracies, and blunders, the most important of which I shall proceed to point out, and which show conclusively that the writer is unacquainted with the inner working and the regulations of that institution whose operations and their results he attempts to criticise.

After remarking that two candidates passed for the M.A. degree and one the final examination for the B.A., you go on to say, “the roll of graduates in Arts is therefore increased by two, who have passed the M.A. degree and one who has passed the B.A. degree.” This statement is *ridiculous* in the extreme, as it ought to be a well-known fact that every candidate for the M.A. degree must be a graduate in Arts of at least two years’ standing, and as both candidates are B.A.’s of the Adelaide University the roll of the graduates in Arts is therefore not increased by the success of these gentlemen, and only one more name is added to the list this year—that of the gentleman who on Wednesday next will take his B.A. degree. You then go on to speak of the love of knowledge for its own sake, and regret that there are so few of our students who aspire to culture without any ulterior motives. In this I agree with you, but still we must submit to the inevitable, and the reason of this is not difficult to find. The utilitarian age in which we live and the desire of all to be rich in this world’s goods are the prime factors. The love of knowledge for its own sake is all very good in theory, and many an aspiring graduate, who has proudly stepped forth from his Alma Mater with a B.A. degree, can testify to the fact that unless some professional career is mapped out it is exceedingly difficult to obtain any employment in accord with the tastes and culture of the individual, or for which the remuneration would be at all commensurate with the time and money spent in obtaining the degree.

To pass on to your criticisms on the examination for the L.L.B. degree, your complaints are well founded, and some of the reasons you adduce as the probable causes are undoubtedly correct; but the reason why none of the candidates obtain first-classes is that whereas in all the other degrees 75 per cent. is sufficient, yet in the L.L.B. course for some good reason doubtless known to the examiners, candidates must obtain 80 per cent. of the marks to entitle them to a first-class. This is all the more difficult to understand when we consider that year after year the interest on the money subscribed by the public for the purpose of founding a scholarship to perpetuate the memory of the late Judge Stow is allowed to accumulate, and no prize is awarded, because no candidate has obtained a first-class, although the regulations say that it shall be given to the most successful student of each year if the Examiners think him worthy. When we also consider the great width of the subject, and that unlike the students for other degrees, the undergraduates in Law have to attend their offices all day, it is not so difficult to understand the poor figure cut by the aspirants for academical distinction in this direction. Later on you say, “we believe we are correct in saying that at present there is no one entitled by examination to hold the Mus. Bac. degree of the Adelaide University.” This is a very grave error, as on Wednesday next Mr. T. H. Jones, the well-known musician, who has passed his examinations with very high honours, will be admitted to that degree. This is a fact of which we may well feel proud, as ours will be the first University south of the Line to confer that distinction, and Mr. Jones may congratulate himself that he is the first graduate in Music of the Australian colonies. The next mistake to which I intend to direct your attention is perhaps the most glaring of all, and is one which any person having any knowledge at all of the regulations on the subject could by no possibility have fallen into. In speaking of the Senior Public Examination you say—“It is only just to say that a fair proportion of these passed in English, and that credits for that subject are by no means uncommon.” When we remember that there is only one compulsory subject in this examination, that that compulsory subject is English, and that every successful candidate must have necessarily passed in it it can be seen that a very rudimentary knowledge of the regulations would prevent any one making such an obvious blunder. In conclusion I might say that I feel sure that the authorities of the University, the pro-

fessors and the students themselves, do not object to criticism as long as it is honest, though it may be unpalatable, and anything which you may from time to time bring forward as likely to raise the status of the University will be listened to with respect, and will receive their earnest and attentive consideration. The University of Adelaide may fairly congratulate itself on the result of its work for the academical year just closing, as it will admit its own graduates for the first time to three new degrees, those of Master of Arts, Bachelor of Medicine, and Bachelor of Music, Apologising in expectation for taking up so much of your valuable space,

I am, Sir, &c.,

J. M. SOLOMON.

North Adelaide, December 16.

[We are not quite sure whether we are to take Mr. Solomon's letter in earnest or as a laboured joke. He says, "the article is full of misstatements, inaccuracies, and blunders, the most important of which I shall proceed to point out." He objects to our statement that the roll of graduates in Arts is increased by two who have passed the M.A. degree, and by a very odd process of reasoning attempts to prove that the roll is not increased, because these two gentlemen had previously taken their B.A. degree, of which of course everybody is aware. In the next error he points out he admits he agrees with us so we are content to err, if error it be, in such illustrious company. As to the next error Mr. Solomon points out that some of the reasons we suggested for the comparative failures of the law students are undoubtedly correct. He does not say that any of them are wrong, but he adds two others which may or may not be correct, and winds up with one of our own. As to the Mus. Bac. degree our remark was strictly correct though it was not asserted positively. There was nothing to identify the T. W. Jones in the pass list of the Senior Public Examination with the gentleman who has passed in all the musical subjects, and we suppose that when we wrote even he had not obtained the certificate of having passed in the subjects other than musical, which must be produced before a candidate is entitled to the degree. With regard to the Senior Public Examination the sentences just before relating to the junior examination make it clear enough that it was the passing with credit to which we call special attention. If law students are accustomed to answer their examination-papers in the manner in which Mr. Solomon attempts to criticize our remarks we are not surprised that first-class passes are not obtained.—ED.]

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I certainly trust that the German papers will in all future years be set and corrected by an Adelaide gentleman. The few credits and passes obtained this year in this particular subject are due no doubt to the fact that the papers were set and corrected by a gentleman belonging to the Sydney University. I do not wish to criticise in detail the paper set by this gentleman for the Senior Examination; but I certainly must say that the second extract taken from "Die Jungfrau von Orleans" was a most difficult idiomantic passage, and more adapted for grown-up people than for boys. From the "German Reader" only a few lines were given to be translated, although over a hundred pages of this book had to be prepared by boys presenting themselves for examination. Again, it is an acknowledged fact that Sydney examiners do not mark with the same amount of leniency which is so characteristic among some of our local examiners. Therefore I hope for the sake of those who are responsible for the teaching of modern languages that the examination in this subject may in future be carried on in our own city, where I am sure there are plenty of competent examiners.—I am, Sir, &c.,

GERMAN.