

Register December 2nd 1889.

THE LAW COURSE AT THE UNIVERSITY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—From the report of the Senate meeting held on Wednesday, it seems that the committee appointed twelve months ago has practically accomplished nothing to assist in bringing the new LL.B. regulations (sent down by the University Council, and thrown out on the casting vote of the Warden last November) into a satisfactory state. The committee awaits the reply of the Judges of the Supreme Court on certain points. Surely their Honors are not so terribly overworked that they cannot find time to answer these enquiries. Their procedure, to say the least, seems discourteous. If some definite action is not taken at once another academical year will be lost. That reforms are necessary in the present law course is felt by all connected with the University, therefore this exasperating delay is most undesirable. Will the Warden galvanize the labours of the committee into life, and call a special meeting of the Senate to consider the results (if any) of their deliberations early in December, and thus put an end to this *laissez faire* treatment of so important a matter?

I am, Sir, &c.,
TALLAGIO.

Advertiser Dec 23rd 1889.

THE SENIOR PUBLIC EXAMINATION—THE HISTORY PAPER.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Like "A Parent" who addressed you on the history paper at the senior examination, I have looked at the questions, and more especially at those which your correspondent cites as specimens to show they are impossible of solution by lads of 16, 17, or 18. Three of the specimens are from Part I., which is for candidates for pass; and the remainder from Part II., which is for those who aspire to credit. The three quoted from Part I. appear to have been set from the text book prescribed. At all events I have found an answer to them in it. Having got on the track I followed it up, and my conclusion is that if I might have a copy of Ludlow alongside I could answer every question of the eight, whereas only six may be answered by a candidate. Now I take it a lad who has had nine months' notice of the subject he is to be examined in, and has been told the best text-book to grind from, is in the same position as "A Parent" or I should be in with the open text-book. With regard to the Part II., I suppose questions for credit are purposely made stiffer than those for pass. I find five are set, but the candidate may not answer more than two. These questions are not easy, but I fancy any lad who has mastered his textbook and reflected upon it, or has been taught the lesson to be learned from the American war, could answer sufficient to secure credit. On the whole I believe any boy fit to be sent from his school for this examination can easily obtain a pass, and the more intelligent or the better taught can earn a credit within the hours.—I am, &c.,

PARENT No. II.

The Advertiser

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1889.

MAN has been defined to be *animal im-plume*, but though, according to this, he has no feathers, there is a stage in his existence when he is liable to be plucked. The analogy between man and the feathered creation holds good in other respects. For just as a reference to any almanac will show that September is fatal to partridges and October to pheasants, so November is pregnant with the fate of those who seek to satisfy the examiners. A year ago we called attention to a vigorous protest against the sacrifice of education to examination. We asserted the broad principle that examination exists for education, not education for examination. Examinations in short, like vaccination and other afflictions which are not for the present joyous, are necessary evils, owing to the infirmities of human nature. They cannot be dispensed with in any system of education any more than the balancing of books and accounts in a commercial business.

They serve, or should serve, a double purpose—First to ascertain the real extent of a man's knowledge in any art, science, or branch of literature, which he professes to have acquired; and, secondly, to ascertain the quality of the teaching power available in the community and the standard of education. The University of Adelaide is to a comparatively limited extent a teaching body. It is to a much wider circle an examining body. The time is yet distant when the number of undergraduates regularly attending lectures will be such as to call into being the collegiate system. But there is no reason to doubt that with the growth of population and the general progress of the province, this, the most valuable factor in University life, will be inaugurated. Meanwhile the University may be an instrument of incalculable good by a wise system of periodical examinations.

Every conscientious schoolmaster will acknowledge that no really satisfactory test of a school can be supplied from within. It must be applied from without, and applied by those who not only are competent for the task, but who have no other interest to serve, and who have no other object at heart than to aid in perfecting the educational agencies of the land. The University of Adelaide is able to supply from its professorial body a certain number of competent examiners. But it has recourse as

well to others who are supposed to have special knowledge of certain subjects, combined with the necessary qualifications to enable them to examine in those subjects. The responsibility of the choice must rest with the University, and it is no light one. It is not every man who has made a particular study a speciality who is qualified to examine in it. He may under-estimate on the one hand the standard and power of the candidates. On the other hand he may over-estimate. In either case the result must be unsatisfactory. For, either examinees will attain a pass or even achieve honors in their particular school too easily, or they will find the particular examiner's test too severe to admit of their satisfying him. What is wanted is a middle term. An examination should not be made the means of showing a candidate how little he knows and how much his examiner knows, which was said to be the central idea of an Oxford examiner in the final schools for honors. Even Mr. John Morley would admit that there is nothing ethically immoral in a certain amount of compromise between the two extremes mentioned. And a sharp line must be drawn between questions meant for pass men and those for honors. But whether for pass or class, the questions must be real tests of what a man has been taught, of what he ought to know, and how he has been taught. We have been led to make these remarks because "A Parent", addressed us recently on the history paper set for the senior public examination, and because we publish this morning another letter from "Parent No II." Our first correspondent gave specimens of the questions set, and he compared them, greatly to their disadvantage, with the questions set by the same examiner in the corresponding subject a year ago, and which latter he describes as a model. "Parent No. II," on the other hand, expresses himself satisfied that the questions are legitimate ones, and that the space of two hours is sufficient for any candidate to obtain a pass, and for a fair proportion to obtain