

100 or 120 girls, corresponding in their mental grade and attainments to the fifth and sixth or upper forms of ordinary schools, are brought together, half of them or more probably from the various private schools then existing, to the lasting damage of the latter, just at the period too when University influence was only beginning to be felt throughout the schools. Any thoughtful person must perceive what such a movement as that of the withdrawal of so many of the best girls meant both to the remaining pupils of the private schools, and to the efficiency of those schools; the examples of diligence and thoroughness were taken away, and thus the work of the teacher was made more difficult and onerous, generous emulation was weakened or received its death-blow, and I have been informed that the decline which preceded the extinction of some ladies' schools could be distinctly ascribed to that period. Is this a consummation for a statesman to triumph over? Is the popularity of the Government Advanced School for Girls a token of educational progress? Assuredly it is not. The Hon. Mr. Baker has instituted comparisons. Now, it is manifest that in order to compare the results of the Government school with others we must have schools composed similarly of upper-form girls only, and such schools do not anywhere in this country exist, and according to Mr. Fitch (whose Cambridge lectures I presume the Minister of Education is acquainted with) they ought not to exist. The so-called Advanced School is a non-natural and anomalous school, and bald comparisons made with it are worthless. I shall, however, waive such objections, and proceed to remark that the three lowest forms of schools contain generally, I think, a larger number of pupils than the three highest, and as all the pupils of the Government girls' school correspond to the highest forms of ordinary schools, the 120 girls of that school probably represent say 300 girls, for although the younger ones are not taught in the "Advanced" School, they are being taught elsewhere—they, the younger sisters are taught by the private schools who cannot gain any renown from them by University passes. I ask is this fair treatment from the Government of South Australia? Is there any trade, or manufacture, or commercial pursuit that would brook for one hour such unfair and unscrupulous competition from the Government, which exists not for any such purpose whatsoever? It ought not to exist a day longer in this country. To return: the passes in the University therefore, 25 this year, are but a bare  $8\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. of the 300 girls, counting both those actually attending and those represented in the Government school for girls. But as St. Peter's School passed rather more than an eighth part of its boys recently the Advanced Government School should have passed 38 or 40 instead of 25 pupils. I respectfully invite the Minister's correction of my calculations if I am in error. He directed public attention to the boys' schools, and having himself so confidently appealed to the records of "an impartial (?) and somewhat critical tribunal," to that tribunal I am willing and endeavouring to accompany him. Once more touching "the superiority" of the girls over the boys. What becomes of this fulsome boast when the subjects are considered? Am I right in supposing that a horse with a child for a rider will likely outstrip



one with a man of 12 st. weight upon its back? Girls are allowed to pass with easier subjects than boys, so that all talk even of their equality is idle and vainglorious while this fact remains. His tribunal is not an impartial one after all! Mr. Baker knows well the greater difficulty of Latin and Greek as compared with French and German, and that not one girl of the twenty-five from his school passed in Latin (two of the seven from the private schools did so, however), and all his much-praised pupils are alike innocent of Greek; and so, if a University, Arts, or Law course be desired by them, the unfortunates of the so-called Advanced School will find—they have found—they are finding—they themselves in a *cul-de-sac*. They have to turn round and begin rudimentary school-work over again for years; and all this is happening under the auspices and with the full knowledge of University men. I have known ingenuous youths to pour out bitter maledictions upon their former teachers—unprincipled men who had frittered away the golden years of their pupils' boyhood in useless or aimless and inferior studies. I would not for a very great consideration incur such imprecations knowingly.

In conclusion, I wish to state that I regard it as a very singular fact that both the Government of South Australia and the University of Adelaide have seriously retarded the higher education of women in this country by their interference—not the less because well meant—the former by founding a school for senior girls, the work in which, though but second-rate and third-rate, is passed off by the highest officials as first-class upon the many; and the latter, I grieve to write it, by granting certificates to girls for a lower kind of work than they require from boys for the same certificates. By all this the work of conscientious teachers, at all times difficult, is made so much more so as to be likely to become impossible, unless both Government and University retrace their steps. All that I have just written rests upon what I regard as axiomatic, that to attain intellectual culture both men and women must use the same methods and instruments, and pursue the same studies. I trust that the great importance of the subject will be a sufficient apology for my trespass on your columns.

I am, Sir, &c.,

WILLIAM HOPKINS.

South-terrace, Christmas.

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# The Register.

ADELAIDE : TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1884.

## THE ADVANCED SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

The letter from the Rev. W. Hopkins, which we published yesterday, raises two or three very important issues in connection with the true position and the work of the Advanced School for Girls. Whatever may be thought as to the merits of the strictures upon the speech of the Minister of Justice and Education at that institution on the 19th inst., Mr. Baker cannot complain, because the statements made by him challenged criticism. Moreover, they involve important public considerations which cannot be overlooked. When the idea of the Advanced School for Girls was first stated we had occasion to take strong exception to the manner in which the scheme was placed before the public, as well as to the steps taken at and immediately after the inauguration of the school. Whatever it may be now, it certainly could not then lay claim to be an Advanced School. It was rather a select school, in which the higher branches of study were taught to the elder scholars. Into this question, however, we do not purpose entering now. Nevertheless, seeing that a good deal of soreness was felt at the starting of the school, it is only right that no invidious comparisons should be instituted between it and private schools, and it is especially desirable that the real work of the institution should be fairly appraised. We much regret, and by this time probably the Minister of Education also regrets, that his somewhat unguarded remarks should have started a discussion which cannot but be painful to those whom it most concerns. We believe there is no desire to unfairly depreciate the educational work of the Advanced School or to cast any slur upon those who are responsible for it; but when comparisons are instituted between this establishment and private schools there should be the most scrupulous care



that the data upon which they are based are accurate.

It is fair enough to compare, for example, such a school as St. Peter's with Prince Alfred College, because neither receive Government aid, and both stand on an equal footing with regard to the admission of scholars from the Government schools who have secured exhibitions. No such comparison is possible, however, between the Advanced School for Girls and private institutions. The former receives all the benefit from the bursaries awarded to girls in the public schools, which last year amounted to about a twelfth of the total income. With this point Mr. Hopkins does not deal. He merely takes the figures and statements of the Minister of Education, and endeavours to show that they are not trustworthy. Mr. Hopkins frankly avows that he is personally interested in the matter; but this is no reason why his criticisms should not receive the attention they deserve, and we shall be curious to see what reply the Minister of Education can make. The Minister said—"The Advanced School for Girls had not only done so much better than any other private school for girls, but it had surpassed all the other schools for girls put together." We take it for granted that Mr. Baker had