

Reg. 30th Dec.  
1904.

Reg. 2nd Jan.  
1905.

Ad. 3rd Jan. 1905.

## NOTES AND QUERIES.

### UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOLS.

"Junior" comments:—"The University is, as is usual at this season of the year, placed once more in the dock. I do not wish to sit in judgment upon it, or to pose as course! self-appointed for its defence; but rather, as amicus curiae, to suggest one or two matters for the consideration of its judges, the thoughtful portions of the community. Who, Sir, are the accusers on this occasion? The head masters of the schools. And it will not be forgotten by those judges that in the recent public examinations the Perth schools completely eclipsed the South Australian, and that the head master of a certain school, which made the sorriest show, is the most vehement prosecutor. Let the judges enquire what the head masters of the Perth schools think of this same University and its examinations. It does not do to take the head master too seriously when he is talking to the parent. No head master with any business principles will cry 'stinking fish' over his wares, even though a University Councillor may; and one must pardon him for not admitting that he is at all in fault, and for pouncing on the readiest scapegoat. Has either Mr. Chapple or Mr. Girdlestone (they are both members of the University council) laid before that body during the past two years any scheme for placing the University public examinations on what they conceive to be a proper footing? If not, how do they reconcile their consciences with their utterances as schoolmasters and their inaction as Councillors?"

### UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOLS.

To the Editor.

Sir—The thanks of the community are due to you for your able article on the above subject. It is very evident that the heads of the secondary schools are practically unanimous in their condemnation of the existing craze for examinations. The question naturally arises—"Why have they not the courage of their convictions?" It is well known that for many years the big schools have made their University "successes" the main features of their annual reports, and the source of much self-glorification. But, now that the boys from Perth are evincing a superior "examining" adaptability by wresting the laurels from S.A. candidates, the examinations are here being decried on all sides. It is well to recognize facts. For years the senior institutions have made strenuous exertions to pass pupils, as one can easily gather from a perusal of old lists; and the pity is that they will probably pursue the same course next year. As for Mr. Chapple's "twicers" (a strikingly unpleasing word, by the way), one may find even in the University lists of the early eighties significant examples of such. In respect to the numerous petty examinations, I have it on good authority that several of the examining professors themselves regard them as a farce, and that they tolerate them because they are a source of revenue to the University. Surely an august body like the University should consider it beneath its dignity to sit in judgment on the efforts of mere children, in, for instance, elementary grammar and composition! No doubt it provides amusement for the examiners (vide their published reports), but the point lies here:—When a pupil has scraped through his primary he generally gives his mother-tongue and its literature the go-by, and—probably under the guidance of his teachers—selects for himself in future examinations such subjects as will pay best. It is safe to say that, even in the case of the higher tests, not one in twenty successful candidates, despite a marvellous galaxy of asterisks, can express himself in graceful English on any subject outside his particular text-books, which, as a rule, he more or less memorizes slavishly. The same remark applies to the average University graduate who, in reading for his degree under University regulations, confines the current of his mind to two or three narrow channels. There are two great ideals a schoolmaster should aim at. One is to educate the student to think for himself; the other is to teach him to put his thoughts into correct idiomatic harmonious English. But what does the unfortunate scholar imbibe at school? Practically nothing but "information." His mind is stuffed with "subjects;" he toils at his Greek and Latin; he juggles with the dynamics of a particle; he memorizes mathematical formulae; his thoughts are directed towards asterisks; and his soul remains a stranger to wisdom. In spite of all the advanced theories and cloudland ideals in education, there is not now the same breadth and depth in learning as of old. Modern-day knowledge is superficial, not solid. One cannot help doubting the so-called inestimable boon of a University education. The successful merchant, the successful writer, the successful politician, and (greater than all) the successful editor—how many of these went through a University course? Comparatively none. The fact is that the hallmark of the University is too oft but the sign of spurious culture, for the only real culture is self-culture, which ensures permanent results. I have known scores of graduates from different Universities, too many of them hide-bound in conservatism, most of them surprisingly ignorant in a general sense. Why, Mr. Editor, I venture to say, that not 3 per cent. of all the graduates in the State could write for you half a dozen leading articles possessing the literary charm and grace of diction—to say nothing of the sound sense—so characteristic of those in The Register.

To return from this little digression, another prominent evil in connection with the University examinations is the publication of the name of the school from which the candidate entered. What has that to do with the University? If the schools were affiliated there might be reason in it. It simply incites the competing schools to vie with one another in securing the greatest number of passes at all hazards. To come again to the main point, will the head masters whose views you quote in your leader show their sincerity by giving practical effect to their expressed opinions? Messrs. Girdlestone and Chapple could, if so disposed, by the mere force of their example, throttle the present pernicious system and help to introduce more rational modes of training the youthful mind. Let me suggest that the secondary schools and colleges enter into a bond to present no candidate for an examination below the grade of the senior. With St. Peter's and Prince Alfred Colleges leading the way, it is an absolute certainty that no school of importance would stand out. Of course the simplest way out of the difficulty would be to abolish the primary and the junior; but the conservative and collective wisdom of the University would probably be staggered by a suggestion so radical. Besides, £800 per annum in fees! Oh, never! I trust, Sir, that you will return to the attack and exert your widespread influence in a good cause. The Register has been instrumental in bringing about many a reform, and in moulding public opinion on right lines. Here is further scope for it.

I am, Sir, &c.  
SINCERITY.

### MUSIC EXAMINATIONS.

To the Editor.

Sir—I read with great satisfaction the letter of "A Teacher," inspired by the article you republished from London Truth. It is time these examination farces were exposed. The correspondent of London Truth wishes to know if a similar complaint can be made in any of the colonies. I can speak for a part of this State. I know of examinations held last November which were a barefaced success. Every candidate who entered for the Trinity College examination passed; the majority with honors. I know most of the candidates, and not one can play the most simple accompaniment. The violin pupils actually do not know how to hold their instruments correctly. If the examinations were more stringent and the examiner a violinist as well as a pianist, as is usually the case with competent musicians, the country would advance in musical education.—I am, &c.,

J. A. GARDNER.

Port Pirie, December 29, 1901.

Sir—I can heartily endorse all that "A Teacher" has to say. Certainly it is high time the people were made aware of the uselessness—and also the evils, detrimental to the advance of true culture in the divine art—of the so-called "music examinations," which have become almost a complete craze in Adelaide. If any proof is required that these examinations do not answer the purpose of testing the pupils' ability, we have frequent demonstrations of it in the poor attempts at "reading at sight" made by those who have often passed. Why? Because the pieces selected are worked at from one year's end to the other, and are almost the only music practised by candidates, who know if they play those correctly at the examination, they will attain their object and pass, as more marks are allowed for pieces than for other subjects. Now one of the most important tests (from a musician's standpoint) is reading at sight, but as a rule it is almost ignored at "music examinations," for the simple reason that "it would not pay"—examinations would soon become unpopular. No; the idea of the various colleges holding their examinations is to rival one another in procuring the largest number of entries, and they have hit upon an easy method of pleasing teachers by holding the "school examinations" complained of by your correspondent "A Teacher." These "school examinations" seem most unfair, especially to the private teacher, as an examiner is almost sure to be biased as to the importance of passing the pupils, say of an influential school, and retaining their custom for the future. But the most dangerous point of all, to my mind, about these examinations (unless radical changes are insisted on) is the fact that every year hundreds of students, after gaining certificates, consider themselves competent to pose as "teachers of music," and compete against properly qualified, and in many cases, gifted teachers and musicians—students, often like the one instanced by "A Teacher," who learnt the piano for seven years, and holds a Trinity College certificate of 80 marks; "he could not find a note on the piano; could not remember any fingering of the scales; could not play any five-finger exercises at all; never knew when he struck a wrong note; did not know the name or value of any note, &c."—I am, &c.,

A PROFESSIONAL.

Sir—Your correspondent, "Teacher," has fired off a very hot cannon ball at the authorities of Trinity College and the Associated Colleges, but fortunately he has missed the mark. The only word of truth in "Teacher's" statements is as to the high fees charged by the colleges. We take for granted that "Teacher" is a teacher, and has prepared candidates for these examinations, and probably has not gained as high a percentage of passes as desired. The results of the last examinations for Trinity College were published about six weeks ago, just prior to the examiner leaving for England. Why did not "Teacher" place these so-called facts before the public then, and give the examiner, Mr. Edwards, a chance to refute them? Trinity College is one of the first institutions of its kind in England. It has a reputation which is undeniable, and a standard of examination second to none. Here is a comparison of the standard of examinations with our University. Two young ladies who just received a pass certificate in the examination for associate of Trinity College passed this year the third year Mus. Bac. at our University. The Mus. Bac. course is two degrees higher than the associate. Further, at the time of the Trinity College examinations these young ladies were second year Mus. Bac. students. This should convince any sensible person as to the standard of examinations of Trinity College. The instances cited by "Teacher" appear very glowing. Is it possible that a child having learned the piano for seven years, who can produce any school certificate, cannot find a note on the piano? or that a violin pupil who has learned for five years cannot play the scale of G or tune his violin, "even by chance"? These are both remarkable instances, and I am sure are rather inaccurate.—I am, &c.,

MILTON LESTER.