

The Advertiser

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1884.

A CIRCULAR of a very interesting character has recently been issued by the Collegiate Schools Association to the various literary societies of Adelaide and its suburbs. This circular informs us that "the Collegiate Schools Association is endeavoring to bring its influence to bear upon the University authorities to obtain the establishment of evening classes in connection with the various degrees." This information will be very welcome to the general public as affording a striking and convincing proof that the association would not deem any action taken by the University in the direction indicated as hostile to the efforts of private schoolmasters and teachers. It will also, we should imagine, be gladly received by the members of the council, because it will materially assist them in giving effect to wishes that have long been entertained by that body. It must be evident to all, and especially to the professors and managers of the University, that the machinery and costliness of that institution are out of all proportion to the number of students who are taking advantage of its classes or are seeking to obtain its degrees. The remedy for this anomaly is not to be found in lowering the standard of the tuition, or in making the various degrees more easy of attainment. A cheap and an easy degree is worth little or nothing except in the eyes of a charlatan. At any cost the University must resist all temptations to attract students by simplifying its instruction or by making it inferior to what obtains in other Universities. An Adelaide pass B. A. ought to be worth a pass B. A. of Melbourne or Sydney, or Oxford or Cambridge, or it is worth nothing. The honors that may be obtained in different seats of learning cannot be equalised, as they depend on many external causes, but the simple degree of bachelor, whether in science or arts or laws or medicine, should have a common value which may be understood in all countries. In considering this question of popularising the University one thing especially has to be borne in mind. The classes are all held in the day-time, and no man can even pretend to be a student who is engaged in any of the ordinary avocations of business at the same time. This makes the chance of pursuing the ordinary course of study the privilege of those who are able to do without business for three or four years, unless the ambitious youth succeeds in winning one of the Government scholarships which are so liberally offered every year. Some few students have obtained exemption from attendance

at lectures, and have struggled hard to keep pace with the classes in their own private studies, but in these cases success is both doubtful and difficult, and is only achieved at the risk of health.

What is required to meet the case of young men and young women who are wishful to carry on their studies after they leave school is that classes should be held in the evening. "It is felt," says the circular of the Collegiate Schools Association, "that no doubt there are many (now precluded by their daily occupation from attending the University) who would gladly avail themselves of this opportunity for culture if the classes are established." In order to make sure of their ground the association asks for the names of any who "would be willing to enrol themselves for the degree course or for any one course of lectures." We presume that when the secretary has received replies to this circular the list of possible students will be forwarded to the council, accompanied with an urgent request to form such classes if possible. It is not to be expected that very many will enrol themselves at once for a degree, but if the classes were once established there would undoubtedly be a large number of students who were not intending to graduate who would attend one or more of the classes. A University is not a mere place for manufacturing graduates. This idea of the functions of a University has a strong hold on the popular mind, and is not without its influence on those who ought to know better. It is a place where the best teaching can be given to its students on such subjects as they may select. A degree is a desirable and a useful adjunct to a certain course of study, but it is not indispensable. The teaching should be made as wide and as varied as possible, while the degree examinations should always be maintained at a proper standard. If evening classes were established there is little doubt that a number of young men would at once avail themselves of them. The legal undergraduates, the trainees of the education department, the students of the different churches, and others who have but recently left school, would hail an evening class in Latin. The smattering of science which a boy or girl can acquire at school would give a zest for further systematic attainment if it was only within reach. There is so much attention given at schools to what is deemed "useful" that Greek is being crowded out of our collegiate establishments, and many who in late years have come to regret this defect would not hesitate to give themselves some trouble to remedy it if there were such a chance of doing so as would be afforded by a Greek evening class at the University. If any step be taken to give effect to the wishes of the association