

## THE SCHOOLS AND THE UNIVERSITY.

The Public Examinations at the University have been very successful this year. Notwithstanding the fact that the standard was well maintained there has been a most marked increase in the numbers of the candidates who passed both in the Junior and Senior Examinations. In the former division the successes have been 147, whereas last year they were only 111; while of those who sat for the Senior Examinations 74 passed, as compared with 45 in 1898. It is worthy of note also that on the present occasion twenty of the "Seniors" have secured first classes, although last year there were only 10 who achieved that coveted distinction. For the Junior Examination the honours list is necessarily smaller proportionately than that for the Senior, because, according to the regulations, all candidates who were above sixteen years of age on November 1 last must be excluded from participation in the advantage of being classed. Of the 147 who passed 60 were in this position—the University not recognising them as Juniors, and yet admitting them to the Junior Examination. It may be open to question whether on the whole it would not be better either to direct each pupil's attention to the Senior Public Examination as soon as the age of sixteen has been passed, or else to abolish the distinction of age at present made. Parents and others can always draw their own inferences whether a candidate has done well or ill, in consideration of age and other advantages. Besides, the existing system offers an important premium to those candidates whose birthdays come just after the first of November. In view of the extensive nature of the Public Examination list it is disappointing to find how few proceed to complete a course at the University. The programme of the Commemoration which is to take place next Friday has just been issued, and in the list for the conferring of degrees from the University of Adelaide only ten names appear—four for the Bachelor of Arts and six for the Bachelor of Science. This is certainly an improvement upon last year, when only two graduated in arts; and two medical degrees gained at Melbourne this year, and now appearing on the Adelaide list for "ad eundem" admissions, would have reckoned as local degrees but for the Hospital trouble. Making allowances, however, for every counterbalancing element in the position, it is not satisfactory that a quarter of a century after its establishment the University should not be giving instruction to a larger number of students. The eagerness for passes in the Public Examination list stands in strange contrast to the paucity of those who proceed to take degrees. Perhaps the fault may to some extent lie with the University; but the main part of the difficulty arises from a lack of appreciation amongst parents of the immense value which attaches to a liberal education as a factor in promoting the success and happiness of the individual.

The question has been raised by Dr. Bickle and others, whether an improvement might not be made in the practice of holding the Public Examinations in November—the time when the heat of an early summer is most severely felt by young people. Of course, in some years the rule of the weather calendar is reversed, and cool days continue into November; but no one can visit the examination-rooms during really warm days, when the candidates are struggling with their questions, without feeling that the conditions for

work are very trying. September is the month in which the Preliminary Examination is held, and there is no reason why the Public Examinations should not take place at that time of year, or at least before the middle of October. In the neighbouring colonies the recent tendency has been to fix the examinations for earlier dates than formerly, and where the change has been made it has met with approval. However, the Head Teachers of the various secondary schools will now be in possession of the facts relating to the success or failure of their pupils in the common ground of competition. Speech-days will be the rule for some time; and in the annual leave-takings with which the pupils are dismissed for their well-earned holidays the victories of the campaign will be duly noted. On the whole, it is evident that there has been a very healthy process of action and reaction between the University tests and the higher schools of the colony, each stimulating and promoting the other. Every year the army of those who intend to press forward at least to the very gate of the University becomes larger; and this means that the proportion of the parents who are not satisfied to limit their children's education to the modicum given in the State School is becoming larger. The need for a superior education is now far more generally admitted than it was even so recently as a score of years ago. Many parents then asserted that the best thing to do with a boy was to take him away from school as soon as he had gained the barest elementary knowledge of the "three R's" and to apprentice him to the trade or business by which he had to earn his living. The fallacy of this has now, however, been generally admitted.

Old colonists who rose to positions of influence, notwithstanding their early educational deficiencies, may feel that their training was in the circumstances necessary, and, in the end, wholesome; but competition now is keener, and the standard of training and general knowledge expected of business men is higher than it formerly was. When two boys of equal capacity leave the State School at the age of thirteen, if one goes to business immediately and the other has the advantage of two or three years in a secondary school, the latter will probably be further advanced at the age of eighteen or twenty than the other, even though he has not been so long engaged in learning the business of his life. The difference does not affect merely the question whether an examination has or has not been passed. A recent writer has declared that the British nation possesses, in what is known as the public school system of training, "absolutely the best form of education for administrators, for statesmen, for soldiers, and for high officials." The men who distinguish themselves in later years are not by any means invariably those who have done best at examinations. Some boys, although not specially apt at their lessons, have during their school days already proved themselves to be born leaders of men. The playground is a sort of microcosm—a world in itself; and the social life which the boys live in it has its strict code of honour and its gauges of success or failure. If any one would be a man among men he must first learn to be a boy among boys. In schools for girls a similar benefit may be derived from the intercourse of young minds with one another. The best years of a youthful life for educational purposes are those which lie beyond the ordinary State school limit. Then the faculties