

# The Register.

ADELAIDE: THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 1893.

## THE UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS.

The question of the proposed abolition of the University scholarships will come on for discussion at the special meeting of the Senate to-day. These scholarships have hitherto been really the only means provided whereby the poor student can enjoy the same opportunities of attaining the higher education as are given to a youth whose parents happen to be well off. Of course it has been in every case necessary that quite exceptional promise should be shown by a lad before a helping hand is held out to him in order to enable him to attend University classes and qualify himself for taking a high position in one of the professions or in the world of literature or of science. But when distinct evidences of special talent have been shown in the work done by the aspiring student in a competitive test it has been possible for the poorer youth to have exactly the same advantages for climbing the ladder of learning as any one else in the land. It would appear, however, that the scholarships are likely to be discontinued next year unless a vigorous protest be made. If this step be taken it will amount to knocking away the last few rungs of the ladder by the youth without means has hitherto been enabled to mount to the highest elevation. The scholarships certainly are provided for this year, but it is distinctly stated in the calendar that no arrangements for their continuance next year have been made. The regulations on the matter have been abolished without any substitutes being provided, and no subjects of examination are set down for any competitive test next March. In short it is quite plain that unless a very special effort be made by those who are in favour of the principle of pecuniary assistance available for poor students the scholarships at Adelaide University are doomed to extinction.

We do not go so far as to say that henceforward it will be impossible for the student who has to earn his living to complete his University course and take any degree that he may aspire to. But there is a wide distinction between possibilities and opportunities. The opportunities which the well-to-do student possesses comprise, first of all, the leisure time in which to prosecute his studies. It requires some ten or twelve hours per day of close application for any ordinary student to do a good course at the University. No doubt it may be within the bounds of possibility for a lad who has to work several hours per day at his trade or calling to "burn the midnight oil," and, by staying at his books till 1 o'clock in the morning regularly, to keep up with his more favoured competitors in the race. But it is only a very exceptional constitution which can stand the strain of such a double life without serious injury. It has been suggested that night classes should be provided on a much more extensive scale than heretofore as a sort of compensation for the abolition of the scholarships. The School of Mines at present aims at carrying out this kind of work as well as the University. There

is no doubt that valuable assistance may be given to the student who is engaged throughout the day by means of night classes and lectures. But the special province of a scholarship is to pick out from among those who are ardently desirous of entering the halls of learning the brightest and most promising intellects of all, and to give them chances in every way commensurate with their talents.

The ranks of the manual workers may offendments include some one of large brainpower who, if not comparable to the "mute, inglorious Milton" of whom Gray wrote, might yet become, if duly fostered and encouraged, a striking ornament to his country. Is it not a good thing that an intellect of this exceptional calibre should have scope to fulfil its proper destiny? The whole of the democratic tendencies of our age, as well as the voice of those who value culture more than riches, will be found to tell in favour of the principle of University scholarships: and surely it would be an anomaly for South Australia to render its University conspicuous among all the similar institutions of Australasia by the absence of aids to poorer students. The subject certainly seems well worthy the attention of the Senate, which, if it can save the University scholarships from extinction, will do a valuable service to the community.

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## THE UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS.

The choice between University scholarships and night classes would appear to have exercised the minds of some members of the Senate a good deal on Thursday. As a matter of fact the one alternative does not at all exclude the other from consideration, and it is about as unreasonable that such a choice should have been pressed upon the Senate as it was for the waiter at a restaurant to ask a customer whether he would have coffee or rolls. He must have been a particularly obtuse servitor who was described by the American humorist as having put this question, for it seems never to have occurred to him that his customer could have both. Yet the Inspector-General of Schools, in his clover and, from his point of view, extremely effective speech, placed before his hearers an alternative almost as peculiar. It is very desirable, indeed, that night classes should be conducted at the University, so as to give opportunities for instruction to young men who are engaged during the day in earning their living. No real friend of education would for a moment deny that a movement having this object in view is worthy of every encouragement. Experience has shown, both at the University and at the School of Mines, that it is useless to expect continuously large attendances at evening classes which take up subjects requiring close study and careful preparation. Mr. Hartley appears to hold the opinion that if the £450 now annually voted to scholarships which are open for the competition of poor students were spent in providing night classes the rooms would soon be overcrowded. But the experience of the