

Advertiser February 14<sup>th</sup> 1888.

## PROFESSOR BOULGER AND THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Will you allow me a few words in reply to your article on this subject? Like you, I do not desire "to deal with this question except upon the basis of the correspondence." From this it appears that Professor Boulger received the first intimation of his appointment to his present office by cablegram, which was naturally not explicit as to details. When he had resigned his position as Professor of Greek at the Cork University, and was making arrangements to come to South Australia, he received a letter from the registrar of our University, from which he for the first time learned that his appointment "was for the term of five years, renewable at the pleasure of the council." With some hesitation he decided, the matter having gone so far, to accept these terms, subject to certain conditions which he afterwards waived. But from the expression that his appointment was "for a term of five years renewable at the pleasure of the council," he was clearly entitled to assume that if he gave satisfaction in the performance of his duties, the term, *i.e.* of five years, would be renewed; no proposition could be clearer than this. That the council are satisfied I assume from their offering him a tenancy from year to year. Under these circumstances they are not treating him fairly by springing upon him at this stage their resolution "That the appointment to chairs shall be for a fixed term of five years, and that on the expiration of such term the office shall continue and run on and be terminable only on December 31 in any year (not earlier than the term of appointment) by six months' notice on either side." By the way, the wording of this resolution suggests some interesting problems. Can an office "continue" without "running on," or can it "run on" without "continuing?" Is it necessary to provide that a power which does not arise until the expiration of a term of appointment shall not be exercised earlier than such term? What does "earlier than the term" mean? Does it mean "earlier than the commencement of the term," or "earlier than the expiration of the term?" If the latter, then, in the historic language of the Lord High Executioner, "why not say so?" But leaving these questions, which have for a moment diverted me from my main topic, I now ask, is it fair to put Professor Boulger in a worse position than a new candidate? Is it fair, having led him to believe that his term of five years could be "renewed" if the council were satisfied with him, to offer him now a more uncertain tenure? He is at a disadvantage as compared with new candidates. He has resigned the life professorship he previously held, and if he do not come to terms with the council he will be under the necessity of either finding other work here or pulling up his stakes and departing to fresh woods and pastures new. Perhaps this accounts for the action of the council; but I hope not. I say nothing of the brilliant attainments and high qualifications of Professor Boulger, or of the prestige which a man with his record must necessarily assist in imparting to our infant University. These are matters which the council have no doubt fully considered. But I venture to challenge your remarkable assertion that "experience proves that nothing is more calculated to demoralise a man in the discharge of his duties than the knowledge that he is master of the situation for a period of years, except perhaps the knowledge that he is there for life." The judges of England and of the colonies supply a ready refutation of this audacious statement. It is provided by the Civil Service Act in Victoria, and will be by the Civil Service Act here, that no servant of the Crown shall be dismissed except for incompetence, or misconduct, or because his department is overmanned, and there is no room for him elsewhere in the service. Why should a University professor be placed in a worse position than a Civil servant?—I am, &c.

E. PARISS NESBIT.

Register February 23/88.

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE.—On Wednesday, February 22, at a meeting of town members called by circular an Association was formed called "The Adelaide Graduates' Association," and a committee was appointed to watch over the interests of the graduates and to convene the Association in time to consider the resolutions necessary to be offered to the Senate. Dissatisfaction was expressed at the present state of the legislation, which did not include matriculated persons and graduates as members of the University.

Calendar

THAT which the City of London has not, but which it desires to have, the City of Adelaide can boast to have enjoyed for no inconsiderable time in its short history. The University of Adelaide is a learned corporation which teaches, examines, and grants degrees. The University of London, as is well known, is simply an examining body. The older organisation does not answer all the needs of the present day. It is admitted that it has failed to carry out the intentions of its founders. It is clear that a change must take place, and an association is in existence to formulate a scheme for promoting a teaching University in the chief city of the Empire. Doubts are rising and daily gathering strength as to the unmixed benefit of examinations. And if a University exists for nothing else, or to all intents and purposes for that only, it is a question if it is justified of its children. Fortunately for South Australia there was no such mistake in laying the foundation of the local University. Teaching was made a principal branch of its work. And if from the force of circumstances it has been unable to combine the collegiate system, for the loss of which nothing can compensate, with that of the University proper, and so can never hope to put on its graduates that peculiar stamp and impression which makes an Oxford or Cambridge man recognisable, and which he never completely loses, still the Adelaide University is doing in its own field and for its own people more than the London University has hitherto contemplated. We have before us the Adelaide University Calendar for the academical year 1888. The Calendar proper gives the division of the year into terms, days of entry for various academical events, and the meetings of the Council and Senate respectively. The Letters Patent, which may be said to give the hall-mark to degrees conferred, the Acts of Parliament referring to the University, and the University Statutes, are set out at length. The latter, by-the-way, are not composed in that peculiar Latin which wraps the Oxford Statutes in mediæval garb, nor is the mind of the undergraduate exercised to ascertain the special tint which will answer to the requirements of that "*sub-fuschie*" which alone is deemed meet for a reading man by the banks of the Isis. Nor does University discipline, as at Cambridge, take cognizance of such demoralising practices as playing marbles on the steps of the senate-house, or whatever is its South Australian correlative. By the Act of Incorporation the Council or Senate is bound to make in January of every year a report of the proceedings and the financial transactions of the previous twelvemonth. This document appears at the end of the calendar duly signed by the Chancellor. It will be remembered that the office of Chancellor became vacant on November 9 last. The then holder was re-elected on January 6 this year. Consequently there was what the old classic commentators used to designate in imperfect manuscripts an *hiatus valde deflendus*. But the Chancellor solved the difficulty, by giving to himself "perpetual succession" till he was properly and legally re-elected. It is a maxim applied to a constitutional sovereign that "he reigns but does not govern." But the reverse applies to the Chief Justice in this case. He governed but he did not reign. So far as his Chancellorship was concerned he was a shadow and a phantom. He was but the reflection of glories passed away, though possibly from so elevated a position he caught the first rays of the rising sun before they reached the dwellers in the plain. But for all that he manifested a visible corporeal presence, and exercised the functions of the office.

It is surprising to learn that no candidates presented themselves in the years 1886 and 1887 for the Angas Engineering Scholarship. Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since the then Robert Lowe, bewailing the wasted years which made him one of Oxford's most brilliant scholars, said that the future of the world was with the civil engineers. The two