

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." And this rule is to apply to chairs already filled for quinquennial terms. Under this system, in the event of a first appointment to any vacant chair the council will still be in a position to grant such a fixity of tenure as is necessary to attract a desirable candidate. And there is nothing to complain of in the prospect then placed before the occupant. Professor Boulger regards the rule entirely as it presents itself to his view, and translates it as equivalent to a sword of dismissal constantly impending, a thing not calculated to enliven the professorial banquet. As disinterested critics we venture to suggest that it is at least open to translation in a less objectionable sense. The effect of the rule, we take it, is—that a professor having held the chair for the fixed stated period of his original appointment, remains in office unless and until the council considers it to the interests of the University that his tenure of office should cease, in which case he will receive

six months' notice. And the council go further, and that in the interests of its professors. By the letter of the registrar it is only on December 31 that the office can be voided, and the notice must be given not later than the preceding June. Consequently if not given then the professor, who may feel uneasy in his seat, is safe for 18 months at least. We observe by reference to the statutes, as set out in the calendar, that the council already has the power at its discretion to dismiss or suspend a professor for sufficient cause, dismissal requiring the visitors' confirmation.

Register February 9th 1888

UNIVERSITY PROFESSORSHIPS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—The correspondence lately published in your columns is not pleasant reading, for although the Council of the University seem to be acting strictly within their legal rights in refusing to renew Professor Boulger's term of office for another quinquennium, yet it does seem as if this really is a case of *summum jus, summa injuria*.

Is it fair to an o'd servant who has nothing alleged against him to send him packing at six months' notice by virtue of a resolution of the Council which seems to have been passed *ad hoc*? It surely is a fair presumption for any man to make that entering upon an engagement of a term of five years he should on good behaviour have it renewed for a similar term. At any rate he would expect to have some advantage among fresh competitors. But no, a new applicant would secure a lease of the office for five years; a tried Professor is liable to six months' notice. In effect the Council seem to say—"Professor Boulger, we are every way satisfied with you, your work your qualifications; for five years you have been a faithful and diligent servant. It this were not the case we would reappoint you for another similar term to that which you have served, but as it is we shall offer better terms to an untried man, but to you six months' notice." Were I Professor Boulger I should say to the Council,

Perhaps it is right to dissemble your love,

But why should you kick me down stairs?

And the case which the Council have selected, apart from the injustice, is an unfortunate one. Professor Boulger's attainments and qualifications are of so high a character that it is unlikely the University will again secure his equal; he is one of the few University Professors who seek to exercise influence outside of the walls of his lecture-room. He supplied many able articles to the "Shakspeare Journal;" he has often given some most admirable lectures to the young men of the city, and has shown himself on his public form a meritorious and conscientious citizen. Nevertheless, he is to be the first sacrifice, specially selected, it is presumed, by the Council on the ground of his superior merit. Truly the self-denial of that august body is wonderful and noble indeed.

This new and, I venture to think, rash experiment is to be objected to on the ground of economy and public utility; of economy, for, *ceteris paribus*, it is cheaper to re-engage a man who is on the spot; of public utility, since one who has lived some time in the country, and who is acquainted with the methods (in some respects most singular) of the Adelaide University, will be able to continue his work at once, while a new man will have much, perhaps very much, to learn. Further, the new regulation will tend to degrade considerably the prestige of the Professorships. Is it likely that any well-placed man of high attainments, such as we should always wish to secure for the position, would look at an office in an obscure University of which he could only feel secure for six calendar months? In the case of a five years' Professorship at Oxford or Cambridge a man would feel that the honour he derived from the appointment would more than outweigh the disadvantage of curtailed tenure; but is the glory attached to a five years' Professorship at Adelaide sufficient to outweigh the very solid disadvantage in question? I trow not. Able men can always command the market. They look for something like fixity of tenure, and would decline in their wisdom to be summarily dismissed at the whim (for it might be no more) of a majority of the Council.

In the older Universities a candidate for admission as an undergraduate has to bear with him from some graduate of good standing a certificate that he is qualified in both manners and learning (manners coming first) to become a member of the University of X. We have abolished this wholesome custom at our young University; no doubt for good cause. I should be sorry, however, if the qualification ceased to be held by every member of the Council. The unnecessarily harsh and abrupt manner in which this objectionable regulation is brought to bear upon Professor Boulger rather suggests that the Council (owing perhaps to the warmth of the weather) laid aside their members and forgot to practise the gentle courtesy which ought, according to an old Eton Grammar maxim, to be the outcome of a faithful study of the arts and sciences. Might I ask the Council, in face of the dissatisfaction with which this alteration has been received by many of the well-wishers of the University, that the new rule should be considered with a view of making it applicable only to those who receive their first appointment after its date of authorization?

I am, Sir, &c.,

EMERITUS.