

# The Advertiser

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1889.

THE University of Adelaide held its commemoration yesterday afternoon in the Town Hall. It is a matter for regret that there is not in the University buildings on North-terrace a theatre suitable for academic functions such as those of yesterday. A hall of this character is urgently needed, and its erection would be a lasting memorial to any citizen who wished his name to go down to future ages as one of the founders and benefactors of the University. It is by no means certain that, on occasions when the University has to migrate to the Town Hall, the afternoon is the best time to select. A large number of persons are prevented from attending commemoration proceedings who would feel it a privilege to be present, and for whom a later hour is more convenient. The Town Hall is not the best place in the world for sound, and it requires a full attendance to rectify its acoustic defects, more especially when one end of it is occupied by a set of young gentlemen who apparently deem their contributions to the business of more importance than what goes on at the opposite end of the hall. Commemoration would lose one of its most characteristic features if undergraduates did not disburden themselves, and relieve feelings exuberant at the prospect of release for a time from lectures and examinations. But there is a time for all things, and these young gentlemen might select opportunities for indulging their spirits without delaying the business for which the convocation is held. The degrees conferred yesterday were few in number. His Excellency, who on a former occasion was admitted to an *ad eundem* degree, has more recently had conferred on him by the University of Aberdeen the degree of Doctor of Laws, and the Adelaide University took occasion to admit him to a similar degree. Lord Kintore can claim an historical connection with the Scotch University. Marischal College, which will be tolerably familiar to the readers of Scott's novels, was founded in 1593 by George Keith, fifth Earl Marischal, and constituted by its founder independent of the University in Old Aberdeen, being itself both a college and a university with the power of conferring degrees. We may echo the wish of the Chancellor that his Excellency's connection with the Adelaide University may be as beneficial as his ancestor's was to Marischal College.

One of the principal features of commemoration is the oration delivered, generally by a professor or lecturer, on a topic connected with the University and its studies. On the present occasion the duty was entrusted to the Vice-Chancellor. The Chancellor, in the few words with which he, with his usual felicity of diction, commended Dr. Farr to the audience, congratulated the Vice-Chancellor and the University on his unanimous re-election to that honorable office of academic distinction. It is difficult to follow so great a master in the art of paying graceful compliments as the Chancellor is *omnium consensu*. But there is no doubt that the public of South Australia will endorse every word he uttered. It was Dr. Farr's singularly good fortune to be headmaster for many years of St. Peter's Collegiate School when there was no other school to com-

pete with it for the higher education of South Australia. It was not less his good fortune to resign the headmastership when he had still powers of mind and body equal to doing good work, and a ripe experience to bring to bear on the early beginnings of a nascent University, with which he has sympathised from its first stirring to its present vigorous manhood. The University, about which not a few doubts existed at its inception, has justified the patriotism and generosity of its founders, and we hope it may be justified of all its children. It has done and is doing a good work in the State and for the community, and there is no reason to question that it will grow and expand from year to year, and fulfil those high functions which Bishop Barry suggested in his memorable address on the eve of leaving Australia. Presumably it would have been possible for Archdeacon Farr, from his Cambridge associations, from his experience of a quarter of a century as a public schoolmaster, and from his connection with the University, to pour forth a stream of ripe experience, and dwell upon the true functions of a University in an age which in so many respects reflects the worst features of Imperial Rome. But the Vice-Chancellor selected for himself a less ambitious theme. He gave something like a sketch of those earlier movements which, perhaps unconsciously to those who took part in them, contained the germ of the University that was to come into being in the fulness of time.

It would be a pity if no record were made of endeavors to supply, in a comparatively small population, and at a period when the foundation of a University was out of the question, some portion of the work for which academic institutions exist. And Dr. Farr did well to bring up the recollection of the day of small things. The Vice-Chancellor pointed to the popularity of the three schools of Law, Medicine, and Music, and was no doubt correct in his judgment of the cause. To use an expressive phrase, these schools pay best. In other words, they equip for paying professions. On the other hand, the Arts School wants fostering. It does not attract an equal number, because its influence upon the future career is not so tangible, so direct, and so appreciable. But a University should be something more than a mere factory for turning out so many lawyers, so many medical men, so many musicians. It is above all and before all a place of liberal education. The man whose education from the time he has fixed on his future profession has been limited to what only concerns his special line may be a good specialist. But he can hardly help being narrow even in that. The readers of Darwin's biography will remember how that great specialist—perhaps the greatest English man of thought since Newton—lost by degrees all power of appreciating and enjoying some of the most refining influences and sweeteners of life. It would be well if the University would insist on a liberal education as antecedent to the selection of special schools, and take care that graduates in what may be called professional faculties should be also men of arts and parts.

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