

JANUARY 18, 1882.

THE UNIVERSITY REGISTRARSHIP.—The Adelaide University is now in want of a Registrar, the present occupant of the position, Mr. Barlow, B.A., only holding it until the appointment of his successor will enable him to deliver up the seals of office. The importance of the position of Registrar of our young University must not be judged by the present circumstances of the institution. It has few students, and comparatively little business has to be transacted in connection with its management. But within a few years it may be hoped and expected that the Registrar will find plenty to do, and if he be an energetic man he must largely conduce in his own person to the increase of his duties. Every University should have a man at the head of its business affairs with something like a talent for organization and method. Without such a business head an educational institution, however distinguished or profound may be the erudition of its other chief officers, will fall into the same state of muddle as did the household of Sir Isaac Newton. College Professors have neither the talents nor the inclination for managing the practical affairs of a University. Nor is it right that they should be called upon to do so. The Registrar, as we have before urged, should be required to devote his whole time to the work of the University, and should be remunerated accordingly. It is perhaps as well that he should be a graduate of some University, or should have been directly connected with educational work. But his chief qualification, we repeat, should be a capacity for organization, and the conduct of such commercial business as is necessarily associated with collegiate institutions. Commercial men often find an opportunity of pointing the finger of scorn at Universities and Colleges for the slipshod manner in which their affairs are managed. Collegiate authorities often seem to believe that because a particular man is fond of University work he can easily manage the business concerns of a University. They appoint him, and find that he is no more fitted to fulfil the duties of a Registrar than Dominic Sampson was for the active work of a librarian. The exclusive scholasticism of some Universities renders the admission of any commercial men into their governing bodies an impossibility. This mistake has been avoided here. The Council contains several members who, being more or less interested in commercial pursuits, may be expected to recognise the necessity for conducting the University on what may be called business principles, and they will do the institution a lasting service if they take care that the only office whose duties properly come within their province is filled by a competent man. If the competition for the place be perfectly open, as it should unquestionably be, and if these gentlemen interest themselves in the selection of the most suitable candidate, there need be no fear that the University will fail to secure the services of an efficient Registrar.

JANUARY 21, 1882.

THE REGISTRAR OF THE  
UNIVERSITY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—In your sub-leader of the 18th inst. you say—and with justice—that the future Registrar of the University should be required to devote the whole of his time to the work of the University, and be “remunerated accordingly.” You proceed then to state what should be the qualifications of the gentleman for the post, viz., that it would “perhaps be as well that he should be a graduate of some University, but his chief qualification should be a capacity for organization and the conduct of such commercial business as is necessarily associated with collegiate institutions.” In other words, that he should be a scholar, a gentleman, and a man of business—three things not always found in conjunction.

Few, I should fancy, would be inclined to dispute your conclusions. There are, however, one or two questions I should like to ask. Is the report true that the salary is to be only £300 a year? And if so, do you, Sir, consider this “remuneration accordingly” for a man who relinquishes all other business for the sake of the University? Permit me further to enquire whether £300 a year is enough to offer a man of whom so much is required, and from whom so much will be expected? The Registrar ought to be on an equality in point of social position with the Professors; but how will this be possible on not six notes a week (the wages received by many clerks) if he be not allowed to increase his income from other sources? I may be told that as the University advances the salary will be increased, but while the grass is growing the steed starves. The inferences to be drawn from my remarks are two—either that the Registrar should be paid a higher salary than £300 a year in order to place him in an independent position, or that he should be allowed to carry on other business together with the Registrarship. Of these alternatives I prefer the first, but only on condition that, as you put it, the Registrar be “remunerated accordingly.” If, however, he is to receive £300 a year only, and “be required to devote his whole time to the work of the University,” then I am in favour of the second, as I am confident the Council will have only a restricted choice (and that of second-rate candidates) if they do not offer greater inducements.

I am, Sir, &amp;c.,

A MAN OF BUSINESS.

[Three hundred pounds a year would not be adequate remuneration for a man who devoted his whole time to the duties of Registrar of the University.—Ed.]