

6 From the (London) "Evening
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IRELAND.

DUBLIN, Nov. 8.

A very large and influential assemblage, in which various creeds and denominations were represented, met this afternoon in the hall of the Royal University in its permanent buildings, Earlsfort-terrace, to witness its first act of conferring degrees. The hall, which was formerly the great concert-room of the Exhibition Palace, was specially fitted up for the occasion, the orchestra serving as a platform for the Senate, the body of the hall for the graduates, with a reserved portion for visitors, who, with a large number of students, occupied the gallery. Before the commencement of the proceedings Sir Robert Stewart performed on the grand organ. At 3 o'clock, the graduates in their robes entered the hall in procession and took their places. They were followed by the Professors, members of the Senate, and by the Duke of Abercorn, the Chancellor, and Lord O'Hagan, Vice-Chancellor of the University. Among the members of the Senate and visitors present were the Duke of Leinster, Lord Plunket, Earl of Granard, Earl of Rosse, Lord Emly, the Lord Chancellor, Chief Justice Morris, Dean Neville, the Rev. Professor Porter, Mr. Justice Andrews, Mr. Brooks, M.P., and Dr. Lyons, M.P. His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant and the Countess Spencer honoured the ceremonial with their presence, and drove in state from the Viceregal Lodge to the University, attended by a cavalry escort. A guard of honour of the Grenadier Guards received their Excellencies with the customary salute on their arrival. When the Viceregal party entered the hall the National Anthem was played, and Lord Spencer was conducted to the platform by the Duke of Abercorn amid the applause of the assembly, while the Countess Spencer and the ladies who accompanied her were conducted by Lord O'Hagan to places specially reserved for them. A noteworthy fact in the proceedings was the loyal spirit shown by the students, of whom a large number belonged to the late Queen's University; it was manifested in enthusiastic cheers when Her Majesty's name was pronounced, and in the hearty welcome given to Lord Spencer.

His Grace the DUKE of ABERCORN, who on rising was received with loud cheers, said,—I feel sincere satisfaction in the thought that we are acknowledging, and in part repaying, a debt long due to the Roman Catholic youth of Ireland. When I had the honour of holding the high post of Lord Lieutenant in Ireland I was most anxious, as well as my noble and lamented friend Lord Mayo, then Secretary for Ireland, to discharge the debt, although it was reserved to my noble successor, the Duke of Marlborough, to inaugurate and carry out that object. The higher education of the Roman Catholic youths of Ireland has been subject to many and great disadvantages; they had not the inducements and rewards that Universities in other places were able to offer to their *alumni*, they had not the advantage of degrees conferring a European status, and they had not the more substantial and material inducements of fellowships and scholarships. We know that, whether in courts of law and judicature, Parliament, or in the ranks of science, the names of Roman Catholics have been ever among the foremost of those illustrious sons of Ireland who have conferred honour upon their country; but by the great institution we are inaugurating to-day a still wider field is opened to them, in which they may compete without let or hindrance or disadvantages with the whole body of their fellow countrymen. Let me remind the younger portion of our audience who are now to receive their degrees, that these rewards, all valuable and highly prized as they are, are yet by no means the only result which such success may bring them in after life. In the days in which we live, University successes often forebode the highest posts in Parliament, in literature, and in social rank. The times are changed since little more than a century ago a few families monopolized the whole political power of the State; since Dr. Johnson waited as an expectant supplicant in the ante-room of Lord Chesterfield, and when accomplished literary men felt that the influence of a patron's name was necessary to their success. May we not hope that this University which unites the brilliant talent of the Roman Catholic, the learned scholarship of the Presbyterian, and the learned lore of the Episcopalian, may again take its place in the wide world of education, and that its pupils may see their diplomas earn a European celebrity. But to those who are in earnest in cultivating all the talent which God has given them, I would urge not to be disheartened by difficulty, or dismayed by temporary failure, but ever to keep in mind the example of the illustrious roll of those

who are enshrined in the record of their country's fame, and ever to press forward with the desire and with the aspiration that the time may come when they will be able to say to themselves not without hope, and even with some certainty :—

“ Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur illis.”

(Cheers.) His Grace then read a statement of the proceedings of the University for the last two years, and concluded as follows :—“ No time was lost by the Senate in throwing open to the people of this country the benefits which the Legislature intended for them, and on the 6th of December, 1881, the first matriculation examination of our University was held. For that examination the extremely large number of 728 persons entered themselves as candidates; 614 actually presented themselves for examination, and of these 508 were reported by the examiners as qualified to pass, 114 obtaining places upon the honour lists in one or more subjects, and to the most distinguished of whom there were awarded 10 first class exhibitions of £24 each, and 20 second class exhibitions of £12 each. A further special examination to which only candidates who had obtained honours were admissible was then held, and six University scholarships of the annual value of £50 each, and tenable for three years were awarded, two in classics, two in mathematics, and two in modern literature. On the 3d of February of the present year the Queen's University in Ireland was dissolved by an order in Council. This event rendered it desirable for the convenience of existing students of that University that we should take steps for the holding of the various University examinations in the several faculties which had been theretofore held by the Queen's University. We, therefore, in the months of June and July last held the usual examinations in the faculty of medicine. The number of candidates who entered for these examinations was 307, and of these 167 satisfied the examiners in the various subjects in which they had presented themselves. As a result of the degree examinations then held, the Senate, on the 13th of July, admitted to the degree of Doctor of Medicine 29 gentlemen, and to that of master of surgery 28, and they awarded the University diploma in obstetrics to 14. The greater number of those who obtained the degree of M.Ch. and the diploma of obstetrics were among the 29 on whom the degree of M.D. was also conferred. The statutes of the University having provided for the foundation of fellowships, and having given to the Senate the power of appointing the first set of fellows by selection, we have to some extent availed ourselves of the power so intrusted to us, and we have already appointed 21 gentlemen, all of whom may be regarded as highly qualified in their own special departments. The question as to the persons who should be selected to fill certain other fellowships which are still vacant is under our consideration, and we hope very shortly to complete the list in such a way as to insure for the entire body that cordial public approval which is so well deserved by, and has been so readily given to those already selected. It now only remains for me to mention very briefly the statistics of the annual examinations which have been recently held. The entire number of candidates was 1,515—viz., 11 in the Faculty of Law, 519 in the Faculty of Medicine, 350 in the Faculty of Arts, 27 in the School of Engineering, and 608 for Matriculation; of that number there have passed in the Faculty of Law 10, in the Faculty of Medicine 256, in the Faculty of Arts 251, in the School of Engineering 17, and for Matriculation 487. Honours have been awarded to four of the candidates in the Faculty of Law, to 13 in the Faculty of Medicine, to 79 in the Faculty of Arts, to four in the School of Engineering, and to 82 at the Matriculation. We have also awarded to the most distinguished answerers at the various examinations a large number of valuable prizes, and exhibitions ranging from £50 down to £12 each. Some of those exhibitions and prizes have been adjudged to students who are this day to receive the degrees to which they have attained, others go to candidates who are still in, or are just entering upon the career of undergraduates, and they will, we hope, serve as incentives to further exertion. It may, perhaps, be interesting to her Excellency, Lady Spencer, and to the other ladies who have honoured us with their presence to-day to be informed that in this University ladies are allowed to appear among our candidates. At our first matriculation examination 28 of the fair sex availed themselves of the privilege and at the matriculation which had just concluded the number had increased to 51, while among the exhibitioners in December, 1881, are to be found the names of three ladies, we find that in 1882 the exhibition list includes the names of four ladies. It is also noteworthy that among the candidates who have obtained high honours in the various subjects, including Latin and mathematics, ladies are to be found. In conclusion, I can only on behalf of the Senate express a hope that it may be found that this University has already done something towards the great object of its foundation by extending the benefits of University education in Ireland, and we have every confidence that in its future operations it will fully maintain a character and a reputation worthy of the united scholastic intellect of Ireland.