

HIGHER EDUCATION.

Two celebrations occurred on Wednesday which may not inaptly be classed together. The one was the University Commemoration and the other the speech-day at the Advanced Schools for Girls. The proceedings at the University were similar to those with which previous years have made us familiar, and were witnessed by a very large audience. The Chancellor gave an elaborate and exhaustive statement of the progress of the University during the year, and of the legislative and administrative labours of the Council. In the performance of this task he displayed not a little wisdom. He contented himself with a very brief allusion to the discussions on University matters which have appeared in the Press and to "the controversial character" of the work in which the Council has been engaged. Instead of entering into the controversy he gave a clear and explicit statement of what had been done with that enthusiasm which is so natural to him, and which for the time being disarms all criticism. As all the points mentioned by the Chancellor have been criticised in these columns repeatedly, it is unnecessary to deal with them at length now. It is significant that a discordant note was sounded when the Chancellor referred to the abolition of the South Australian Scholarship and the transfer of the amount to the endowment of the School of Medicine. The Chancellor prudently took no notice of the interruption, which may be taken as the expression of a feeling that is, we believe, more common than the University authorities may be willing to admit. The objection is not only to the abolition of the scholarship, but to the appropriation of the funds to the Medical School. There is a strong feeling in many quarters that if the amount of the

scholarship had been divided into several exhibitions or bursaries for the scholars at the State schools, it might have done more good than will be accomplished by the appropriation of it to one school in connection with the University.

The central feature of the proceedings was the address by Professor Tate. It is open to question whether it is a wise thing to have as part of the Commemoration programme a set address which is almost certain to introduce more or less of controversial matter; but the custom has been established and probably will be continued. The winding up of a year's work, especially in such weather as we generally have about Christmas time, is a more fitting occasion for the utterance of pleasant platitudes and the exchange of cheerful congratulations than for an elaborate address on one of the much-debated subjects connected with education. It is, however, due to Professor Tate to say that he performed the task assigned to him exceedingly well and selected a topic about which there has been much discussion of late. The misfortune is that most of these discussions are generally, like theological discussions, strifes about words, or else they approach the same subject from different points of view, and create the impression that the difference of opinion is much greater than really exists. The real student gets

rather weary of these interminable discussions, and is inclined to say with the publican in "Silas Marner," "You are both right and you are both wrong, and the truth lies between you." What is really wanted by those who talk about technical education is that the student should be taught to think and to turn his thinking to good account in his daily life, so that he may have a larger and more beautiful world to live in than the man who is a merely imitative animal. The curse of the world is amateurishness and making believe, and the reason why there is such an outcry for technical education is that so many boys and men are turned out into the world who can neither think well nor work skilfully. The points taken up by Professor Tate are very suggestive, and his remarks will well repay perusal; but the end of the discussion will not be reached for a few centuries yet, and in the meantime every honest independent contribution to the solution of the best methods of education is to be welcomed. Those, whether they are teachers or students, who are puzzled and perplexed by the pendulum-like nature of these discussions, will do well to remember that one of the surest roads to personal enlightenment is the steady and faithful and intelligent discharge of the duty that lies nearest to hand, and the adoption of the sound maxim, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

The address of the Minister of Education at the Advanced School for Girls was in marked contrast to the speech of the Chancellor at the University. The Advanced School for Girls has been subjected to a good deal of friendly and to no little hostile criticism, and the attitude of the Minister towards those who look upon the school with no friendly eye was decidedly pugilistic. Of this it is unfair to complain. As Minister of Education Dr. Cockburn is bound either to defend the school and its work or to recommend its abolition as a State institution. A feeling of chivalry and, it may be taken

for granted, a careful consideration of all the circumstances have induced him to become the ardent advocate and defender of the school. It would have been more satisfactory, however, if the Minister had answered in detail the specific complaints that have been made against the school. It is due to the school itself and to the teachers that these charges, which have been made in explicit terms, should be answered in detail, and as the Minister has all the facts within reach it is to be regretted that he did not make use of them. It is but fair to say that the teachers appear to perform their duties well and conscientiously, and if the system under which they work places them at some disadvantage that is their misfortune and not their fault.
