

Register March 12th 1888.

Calendar

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE.

The Senate of the University, which is to meet on the 28th of this month, will have work of the most important kind to do. Seven gentlemen will have to be appointed members of the Council; five in place of those who retire in terms of the provisions of the University Act, and two in place of the gentlemen who, for reasons not made public, have voluntarily resigned the positions they held. But, besides this, the Senate will doubtless have a word to say as to two at least of the recent acts of the Council. Members will certainly express an opinion as to the advisability of hedging round Chairs with the limitations which the Council proposes. It will be inclined to ask how it is that our young University should set itself to disregard the method and practice which are still observed by institutions of great fame and abiding influence. It may point out that tenure of an office under a possible notice to quit in six months is not an attractive ingredient in an advertisement asking good men to direct our schools, any more than it is an inducement to good men to take up their permanent residence amongst us in connection with the University. It may perhaps remind the Chancellor—who has had experience of both political and judicial office—that the better work was not done by the holder of a position of which he might be deprived by an adverse motion at any moment, but by the holder of an office which was accepted on the condition that it should be held *quam diu bene gesserit*. We should, however, be sorry to see the importation of any strong feeling into the discussion of this question. Personal considerations will doubtless have to be introduced, but only, let us hope, to point a general and impersonal moral. Another question which the Senate is in duty bound to consider in some shape or form—if only for the purpose of asserting the position of the University—is the recent appointment to the Lecturership in Laws. The school over which the gentleman who now holds Mr. Phillips's place presides is the most important, numerically speaking, of all in the University. A majority in the Council has appointed a gentleman whose qualifications are not so high, scholastically speaking, as those of at least one other candidate, and it behoves the Senate, composed as it is of University men, to express its opinion on this appointment. Perhaps, as a third question, some inquiring member of the Senate will be glad to know how it came about that there was no Chancellor to distribute diplomas in December last. The Chief Justice was Chancellor up to November 9. He was not then re-elected, and yet he admitted to degrees, by virtue of an authority which he did not possess.

It is pleasant to turn from this record of the Council's errors of omission and commission to the history of the academic year as furnished by the calendar just issued. This volume is growing in bulk and importance. It contains most useful and concise information as to the nature of the work required from students, giving, as it still does within the compass of one volume, both the subjects for study for the current year and a key to their study in the shape of the examination papers for the past year. Those interested in the progress of higher education will be

inclined to learn at once from an official source how far the new regulations have been carried out successfully. First of all, there is the preliminary examination, which was instituted for the purpose of separating the compulsory from the optional subjects in the junior and senior public examinations. This is a practical test of the knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic, with analysis of sentences—shall we say, somewhat injudiciously?—thrown in. For this examination 301 candidates presented themselves in 1887, and 201 passed. Of the unsuccessful third we venture to prophesy that it was not analysis which “ploughed” them. The boys and girls were probably well up in their predicates and co-ordinate sentences and objects, but unfortunately did not know how to spell the words in which they were set out. Next to the Preliminary is the Junior Public Examination, which is meant for more advanced students, and requires proficiency in certain branches of not less than three or more than five of the following subjects:—English, Latin, Greek, French, German, mathematics, physical and natural science. The limitation to five is a wise provision, else, as we said last year, we should be inundated with Admirable Crichtons in knickerbockers and blue stockings in short petticoats. There were 89 candidates for this examination, of whom 47 passed in classes, and 14, who were over age, secured certificates. The Senior Public Examination, which is likewise dependent on the preliminary, attracted 75 candidates, of whom 43 passed. Two things are on the surface noticeable with regard to these two examinations; one, that for each two candidates were examined in Mount Gambier, and the other, that the girls beat the boys badly. With regard to the first point, we must be prepared to make full arrangements for the local conduct of University examinations. It is too much to expect that parents in the country can or will always submit to the expense which is incidental to the presence of their children in Adelaide for the purpose of being examined. As well as being a heavy drain on the pocket, it is easily to be understood how a journey to the University, the new surroundings and the unsettled character which both circumstances give for a time to the young candidates, will exert a powerful influence to the detriment of their appearance before the examiners. It will not be found difficult to select a capable overseer, whose business it will be to prevent unfair conduct and to give such help as is lawful. In regard to the Musical School the principle has been more fully adopted, public examinations in the theory having been held last year in three places in the colony besides Adelaide. Touching the second point, the returns which we have compiled from the statistics given in the calendar speak volumes of themselves, and, granted that the examination of boys and girls is conducted in exactly the same way and with no favour, should help to support the present theory that a girl is as good as a boy—if not better—in the matter of the reception of knowledge. For the junior public examination 241 boys and 111 girls entered for various subjects; of these 164 boys and 74 girls passed. In the Senior Public Examination 242 boys and 88 girls entered for various subjects; of these 161 boys and 71 girls