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It is the excellent custom of the Adelaide University to select the annual commemoration, when successful candidates are admitted to their degrees, as the occasion for the delivery by one of its professors or lecturers of an oration which, alike as to the subject discussed and the manner of its treatment, shall possess more than a purely academic interest, and give to the public outside an insight into the aims and methods of certain branches of University work. In the fulfilment of this plan it almost necessarily happens, from the variety of the subjects that are included in the University curriculum, that many different aspects of the educational question are forcibly and vividly presented for consideration. It is unavoidable, too, as the orators represent varying schools of thought and methods of mental culture, that by each of them particular emphasis should be laid upon the value of that branch of knowledge which has been his special study. Two years ago, for example, we had from Professor Kelly an eloquent and scholarly address, in which the merits of a system of instruction in the classics were vigorously advanced. Last year an oration, which might almost be regarded as a counterblast from the scientific stronghold, was contributed by Professor Tate; while yesterday Dr. Stirling, in an address not less intellectually stimulating than the deliverances of his predescessors, undertook the task of demonstrating the exceptional worth and importance of the studies included within the wide field of the biological sciences. That there should be a free play of ideas on controversial questions affecting higher education is a fact that affords as little ground for surprise as for regret. A University founded on a broad and liberal basis must needs infold in its all-tolerant embrace schools of thought between which sympathy is either difficult to trace or non-existent. Its work as a whole need not be deficient in the element of unity or consistency because those who are entrusted with mere sections of the plan tend to become imbued with sectional ideas; or to speak more plainly, to suppose that the special sections they represent are the most important branches of all educational work. Perfect intellectual agreement between Professor Kelly, Professor Tate, and Dr. Stirling, concerning the relative value of classical and scientific studies, both as to the knowledge to be derived from them and their use in mental discipline, is hardly to be expected. But it is exceedingly probable that each is a better teacher because of the high estimate at which he assesses the worth of his own sphere of labor. The Adelaide University, fortunately for the culture of the people, pledges itself neither to classics nor to science as the dominant feature of its system of instruction, but exhibits a happy eclecticism that is well suited to a young community with whom only a single University is possible.

Dr. Stirling's preliminary remarks contained a reference to the long-standing dispute between the champions of a purely literary training and those of scientific education. He desired to avoid controversy as to the claims of the science with which he is especially identified; but while expressing his own conviction that as a means of mental development and discipline the study of science offers advantages both to the individual and society which are lacking in a purely classical training, he was fair enough to acknowledge that literary culture has its place in a sound educational scheme, and that its neglect tends to intellectual one-sidedness. The disciplinary superiority of science consists in the power it possesses of bringing the mind into direct relationship with facts. The observation of natural phenomena, the discovery of the relations between the things observed and the demonstration of the laws that govern them, exercise the highest faculties of the human intellect, Of course if the test of utility is applied, the victory of science over literary culture is simply indisputable. Without committing himself to the Benthamite principle that utility is the basis of all law, and that it includes the whole idea of good—a position which moral philosophers will never concede—Dr. Stirling at the same time claimed that that knowledge is of the most worth which tends to "self-preservation and to success in the struggle for existence." This is a view that embodies the spirit of the teaching of Herbert Spencer, and it is upon it that Dr. Stirling rests a large part of his argument in favor of the extension of scientific study. His statement of the objects and resources of biological science, the purely intellectual charm which belongs to it, its bracing effect upon the student, and its utilitarian value, is singularly interesting and suggestive. In his speculations concerning the abstruser problems of life—which were but delicately touched upon by the orator—many will not be able to follow him with complete sympathy. Biology, says Dr. Stirling, holds the key to the riddles of existence, or at any rate the great secrets of life cannot be unearthed without its aid. He admits that the biologist has come to a dead stop just at the point where physical action is, in some mysterious way, translated into consciousness, thought, and will; but apparently he does not despair that this gulf may yet be crossed. If it could be, then we should all know exactly what life means, and whether it is the product of force and matter and not merely their associate. We cannot say we have much faith in the ability of the biologist, either now or at any future time, to answer the tremendous questions which Dr. Stirling suggested to his audience as fair subjects of enquiry; but it must be confessed that his views were modestly urged, and that in the same spirit as the most truly scientific of our scientific teachers, he declined to affirm, as Haeckel and others have affirmed, that the matter is already settled, and that there is nothing more to be said.

In the latter part of his address Dr. Stirling followed Professor Tate's example in referring to the comparatively slow progress made by the people of these colonies in the work of scientific research. The explanation he offered is no doubt the true one. It is not that the Australian youth is deficient in intelligence or capacity for original work; it is not that the teachers lack zeal or skill in teaching; it is not that the standard of University education is lower in the colonies than in England. In all these respects the colonies compare favorably with the mother-country. But, as Dr. Stirling points out, the smallness of the contribution made by Australia to scientific knowledge is to "be attributed to the various causes inseparably associated with the