

The Register.

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UNIVERSITY COMMEMORATION DAY.

The annual Commemoration of the University attracted a large audience yesterday, though scarcely so large as that which assembled in the same place about seven months ago when Bishop Barry was admitted to an *ad eundem* degree. On the earlier, as well as on the later occasion, the smallness of the University Hall was referred to, and advantage was taken of its limited capacity to point a moral. It would be much nicer to have the commemoration in the University Buildings; but while so much remains to be done that is more important, we trust that no more money will be spent in bricks and mortar except so far as additional accommodation may be needed for class work. A hall that would be large enough to hold the number attracted by the ceremonial of Commemoration Day would probably be filled not more than once or twice during the year, and so long as there is a room in the city capable of holding the audience, a large University Hall is a luxury that we may well be content to wait for. There is one feature of yesterday's proceedings that must be strongly condemned. We refer to the rowdiness of the undergraduates. We know that time-honoured precedent can be pleaded for such an exhibition of inane stupidity; but it is a custom more honoured in the breach than in the observance. If the undergraduates were meeting by themselves no one would object to their enjoying themselves in their own peculiar way. If they were content to indulge in their pranks before the regular proceedings began or after they

were ended, there would be less ground of complaint; but it is altogether too bad that the proceedings should be interrupted and lengthened by ill-timed buffoonery and fun. Boys we know will be boys, especially when they think they are men, and it is not likely that they will be scolded or shamed out of an exhibition of fun that is ill-timed and in bad taste. Fortunately, though old superstitions die hard, they sometimes become unfashionable, and we trust that this superstition will one day become unpopular with those who now regard it as one of the hall marks of a University training.

An oration is always one item in the programme of Commemoration Day, and generally one or two speeches are thrown in. From the printed programme the audience were led to expect a speech from the Governor; but His Excellency refrained from offering any remarks. The oration was delivered by the Vice-Chancellor. Dr. Farr gave a very complete and interesting sketch of the history of the University. It is interesting, that is to say, to read, for it cannot be said to have aroused much enthusiasm as it was delivered. We have more than once expressed the opinion that these laboured addresses are out of place on Commemoration Day, and will become increasingly out of place as the ceremonial attracts a still larger and more miscellaneous audience. Proud parents and sympathizing friends

and relatives, who come to witness the conferring of the degrees, are not in a mood to listen appreciatively to a long oration which makes a severe demand upon their attention and their patience. If we must have the orations, and it would be a pity to lose them, why not arrange for their delivery before a Select University audience? The larger audience would still be able to read them in print, and the commemoration proceedings would not be unduly prolonged. It is not every University man who has Dr. Barry's facility for addressing and securing the attention of a miscellaneous audience, and to compel an unfortunate member of the Council or the professorial staff to deliver a long oration on Commemoration Day, just because the precedent has been established, savours more of the spirit of old fageyism than might be expected in such a young Institution as the Adelaide University.

As a record of the progress of the University Dr. Farr's address will be exceedingly useful for future reference. The various stages were carefully noted. Most of the incidents have frequently been published; but we do not remember that they have ever before been given with such completeness. Some of the advances that have been made cannot be looked upon with unqualified satisfaction. It is much to be regretted, for instance, that the Arts School has not kept pace with the growth of the University, and that it is in danger of being overshadowed by the Medical and Law Schools. We learn that of the thirty-six who have taken the B.A. degree, thirty-three have been holders of University Scholarships, and probably if they had not secured the scholarships, would not have gone on with University work. In these days a University only half fulfils its mission if it merely trains candidates for a professional career. We are not unmindful of the difficulties which the University authorities have had to encounter; but to many persons it is a matter for deep regret that the Arts School is in so much danger of being sacrificed to the more popular claims of the Law and the Medical Schools. We have recently reviewed the results of the University work as shown by the late examinations. The list of candidates who presented themselves for examination is a sufficient answer to the assertion, so frequently made of late, that the University is a class institution; but it is to be regretted that the fees are so high as to prevent poorer scholars who are not fortunate enough to obtain scholarships from going on with a University course. A great mistake was made when so large a proportion of the University money was spent on buildings, and its legitimate work was crippled by the want of funds. In the future developments of its work a similar mistake will, we trust, be avoided.
