

## OUR UNIVERSITY AND ITS AIMS.

To-day the University of Adelaide holds its high day, and makes some attempt at reproducing on Australian soil the imposing spectacle of an academic commemoration, such as is celebrated at the seats of learning in the mother country. The Council and the Senate will parade, and such of their members as are entitled to academic robes will put them on "for this occasion only," and the two classes of dignitaries will direct their steps to the right and left of the platform respectively, and on the platform the Chief Justice will preside. The gentlemen who, after examination here, are entitled to degrees will clothe themselves in the appropriate garments of their youthful *alma mater*, and be led up to the dais by the Dean of some faculty and hear from the lips of the Chancellor the words which are made to constitute the conferment of the degree. The graduates of other Universities to be admitted *ad eundem gradum* will go through the like process; the prizemen and scholars will then "go up the middle and down again;" and then a few superior boys and girls who do not as yet belong to the institution will receive public recognition of their merits. There are no prize essays in prose or verse, but a Professor will deliver an oration on something to do with learning, and the Chancellor will give an address. These things may not be much, but such as they have the Council give to us. The ceremony is not grand enough to be imposing, but it is natural and suitable, and has its uses. It may fail to excite enthusiasm in the breast of those who, having been nurtured at the bosom of a more august mother, cling round the skirts of the Adelaide University as a kind of stepmother; but it certainly gives the stimulus of public and authoritative recognition to academical achievements, and tends to encourage the studious youth who are not yet mature for the gown. So agreeable, indeed, must such a meeting be that it occurs to us to suggest that the mediævalism displayed in universal cap-and-gownedness should be carried a step further, and that if so many learned and distinguished gentlemen were to adjourn to a good dinner instead of parting at the door it might tend to cement friendships and prevent misunderstandings. There is another point, however, in which mediævalism might with advantage be foregone. There is no reason why a student who has passed his examination should not have his certificate handed to him by the Registrar at once instead of having to wait for a public presentation which he may be unable to attend. At Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin, where a graduate has to swear to something, such a requirement may be necessary, but at those places there are several degree days in the course of the year; while at the University of London, where no swearing is wanted, the certificate is given on demand, and the presentation is optional.

Passing away from the ceremonial, however, let us say a word about the practical work of the University. It has done much that is good, and has left much undone. When it was started there were many forebodings as to its being premature, and practically useless.



After a short experience it tacitly acknowledged its prematurity, but resolved not to be useless. Finding that there were few persons in the colony prepared to pursue an academical education by following the studies for a degree in arts, which is the normal foundation, the Council did their best to stimulate the schools by taking examinations in hand. And, in this respect, "stooping to conquer," the Council has done much service to the schools and their scholars. Finding also that the inclinations of the youths — misnamed "practical" — tended in the direction only of such learning as resulted directly in gain, the Council admitted them to two professional courses after a very slender groundwork of liberal education. This, we are inclined to think, is a mistake. Whether it be a mistake in medicine or not it is evidently so in law, and there are symptoms that the students and graduates in law are of that opinion. The slender learning required for matriculation does not arm the student with the means of encountering an abstruse study. His Latin does not enable him to construe his Institutes, his history is too scrappy to form the basis of a study of constitutional or international law, and his want of logical training leaves him unprepared for the reasoning of the law in general. The result is a waste of his first year or two, and then the violent exertion of the memory in the subsequent process of "cram." It is with great regret that we find the fees in the Arts course increased. They should, on the contrary, have been diminished; for this is where the duty of the University is to be done. It enjoys an ample, a munificent endowment; the salary of able and popular Professors is assured out of that endowment, and the lectures entail no expense beyond it. Moreover, so long as attendance at lectures is made a necessary condition, a course should be delivered in the evening, so as to enable those to qualify who cannot attend by day. These evening lectures should be a matter of course, not dependent upon subscription, and, like the others, should be cheap. It is by such means (adopted by some of the Colleges) that the University of London has welcomed into its ranks a number of what may be called "volunteer" students, men who have long left school or have never been to a school, whose day is occupied in earning a salary, but whose nightly studies result in honour to themselves and in glory to the University.

In connection with this insufficient provision for the first academic duty of fostering the fundamental liberal education, we cannot help noticing the very unequal distribution of the University funds. The Council set down their income at stand the accounts, set down their income at between £11,000 and £12,000. Out of this more than £8,000 is spent in salaries, and this brings us to the expenditure on the several "faculties" and the work done by them. To begin with, the Law Faculty is that in which there is the greatest number of students, twenty-nine studying for a degree and fifteen who desire certificates to be admitted as solicitors. The Law Lecturer gets only £500 a year, and about £100 more may be spent in examinations. Dividing this £600 by 44, the Law School costs