

The Advertiser " 16th Dec. 1897.

THE UNIVERSITY COMMEMORATION.

THE annual commemoration of the University of Adelaide was duly observed yesterday, the ceremonial taking place in the library. The growing interest in this function was shown by the large attendance. The crowd filled every available space, notwithstanding the well-nigh unbearable heat. It is to be hoped that before another commemoration comes round the University will be accommodated elsewhere, unless it has the good fortune to have a hall, or a theatre, of its own. There is a splendid chance for one endowed with a large measure of this world's goods to provide some such edifice as the Restoration Primate gave to Oxford in the Sheldonian. The library of the University is far less fitted for University exercises and functions than was St. Mary's, which was used for such purposes before Archbishop Sheldon built the theatre called after him. Commemoration in Adelaide, as elsewhere, affords the undergraduate section of the University an opportunity to express its opinion of men of the day and of everything which it considers superfluous, and protracting, unnecessarily, the day's proceedings. Yesterday there was of course the official programme published by the authorities. Another programme was circulated, resembling the official one in type and style. But a second inspection sufficed to show the quarter whence it emanated. Its order of proceedings was not without a considerable touch of humor, we might almost say wit, and was enlivened with stanzas to be sung to music as each candidate was presented to the Chancellor for his degree. On the whole there was much less noise, disorder, and interruption than has been experienced on former occasions, and the undergraduates were tolerably amenable to appeals from the Chancellor. The candidates in the various faculties were presented by their deans, and in conferring the degrees the Chancellor addressed each in that kindly and complimentary style of which he is so graceful a master. It was evidently a satisfaction to the right honorable gentleman that it fell to his lot to confer on a near relative the first degree in music which has ever been won by a woman in Australia. Equally satisfactory was it to the undergraduates' gallery that their former brother students in the Medical Schools who had finished their course with such distinction in the University of Melbourne, where they had graduated, returned to their old *alma mater* to get an *ad eundem*. No doubt the feeling in the hearts of all was *Dulcior mater, quam novercá*. The Chancellor held out hopes

that the result of certain negotiations would be to restore the Medical School to its former efficiency, so that South Australian students can complete in this University the whole course necessary for a medical degree and the practice of the medical profession. We need scarcely say that those who effect such a consummation will deserve the best thanks of the community, and those who interpose unnecessary obstacles and retard it will incur a grave responsibility.

There being no public orator and no proctor to give a succinct account of the University year and its incidents, it devolved upon the Chancellor to fill the void. The right honorable gentleman had much to say of the founders and benefactors of the University, and notably of two who have passed away. The Council of the University have an important duty cast upon them to make the best appropriation of the munificent bequests of the late Sir Thomas Elder. If others, according to their means, will help on a great educational work, there is no reason why this University should not in its professorial chairs and tutorial staff, in its scholarships and laboratories, be the best equipped on the Australian continent. It fell to Professor Bensly to deliver the annual address, and he discharged a difficult task with fine tact and judg-

ment. His subject was one which requires a series of lectures rather than a single discourse. But having regard to the temperature under which his audience were suffering the Professor brought what he had to say within a very narrow compass of time, though not without leaving much to think of and digest. The idea of a University, like the idea of a Church, is matter for a volume, for the thing is to find the ideal. As men and their environments are, one uniform ideal is impracticable and impossible. To those who would realise this may be commended the lectures delivered upon University education by the late Cardinal Newman in Dublin. Most people know that spite of all the modern changes and innovations to which Oxford has had to submit, the great University is very much what Archbishop Laud made it and left it. A perfect University, one which can be described as such, must not be a mere manufactory to turn out professional men, equipped for their special career in life. It must be no doubt a teaching body, an examining body; but it must be more. It must be a learning body. It must be a school for research, for enlarging and expanding its stores of knowledge. It must be a body which has a home and a welcome to offer to men who are content to continue as learners, whose aim and object is not to acquire knowledge merely as the handmaid to wealth and success in

life, but to make the world better and richer in the best of riches. It should be, too, a great school for finally moulding men and manners at that impressionable age when example and appeals to reason and judgment must take the place of laws which are fit for the more immature age of boyhood. This of course implies what is the essence of the life of the two great Universities, viz., collegiate life. In this particular the Universities of Sydney and of Melbourne have a great start over our own. The corporate spirit is not created by the feeling that a man is a member of the University of Oxford or of Cambridge, but by the feeling that he is, for example, a Balliol or a Magdalen man, or a Trinity or a King's man. It needs only to recall what the Oriel common room was in the days of Newman, Whately, Froude, Keble, Arnold, to realise that it is College, not University, life which makes the Oxford and Cambridge man what he is, and what no man is or can be whose only connection with a University is that he has gone up to be sampled by it and branded, as in the case of London men.

We have no doubt that we have touched a theme where we shall find Professor Bensly agreeing with us, and which, judging from the little he said, he would have enlarged upon at length had time and tide been favorable. It is gratifying to note that the Professor emphasised the special importance of teaching history in the University. Probably there is nothing of more consequence in a young country, where everyone interests himself in politics and public life and public men, than a knowledge of the history of the past, and the light it throws upon the present, and the lessons to be gathered from it. The Council would do well to consider the question of a Chair of History. For the rest, we are glad indeed to see that the Faculty of Arts is more in favor than of old. There can be no greater mistake than an education which is professional and nothing else. The boast of the bench and bar of England is that their highest ornaments have been men who to mastery of the principles and practice of their profession have united the highest scholarship and literary, and, in many cases, scientific attainments.