

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

SIR JOHN MADDEN WELCOMED.

INTERESTING ADDRESS.

AN APPEAL FOR DECORUM.

Yesterday afternoon Sir John Madden, the Chancellor of the University, addressed past and present students in the Wilson-hall. After the disorderly proceedings at the Annual Commencement on Monday (which were referred to in our columns), meetings of the students were held, at which it was decided to apologise to Sir John Madden for what occurred, and to ask him to attend a reception to mark his return from his trip to Europe. Sir John Madden readily accepted, and promised to deliver an address upon some of the topics which he had prepared for the commencement. When Sir John Madden entered the hall yesterday he was received with loud cheers. Professor Spencer occupied the chair, and among those on the platform were the vice-chancellor (Sir Henry Wrixon, M.L.C.). The hall was well filled, a large number of those present being ladies.

Professor Spencer, on behalf of the students' societies, who had asked him to preside, offered the Chancellor a hearty welcome to the University on his return from Europe. He said he need hardly refer to the special circumstances which had resulted in this meeting being held. He could only say that the students generally felt as much great regret and annoyance at the commencement proceedings as they must have caused the Chancellor. All acquainted with the inner workings of the University knew well the deep and lively interest Sir John Madden had taken in its welfare, and they were proud that one of its old students should be its official representative, whether in Australia or the universities of the old world. (Applause.) They hoped Sir John Madden would accept their welcome as an earnest expression of the deep respect and esteem which all entertained towards him, and that he would for many long years occupy the position of chancellor. (Loud applause.)

The students then rose and gave hearty cheers for the Chancellor.

Sir John Madden felt he was deeply grateful for the fashion in which the students had seen fit to deal with the circumstances which had attended the annual commencement on Saturday last. At the earliest opportunity they had addressed him in connection with the matter. On Monday he had received from the hand of Professor Spencer charming letters expressing the spontaneous and graceful regret of the students at what took place. For this he was extremely grateful, not merely because they had addressed him as the chief officer of the establishment, but because it showed that between themselves they were such good friends. (Applause.) In addition to that, he was proud of the students because they had not been afraid to do what was right. In a manly spirit the students had recognised what was an impropriety to the audience and a possible damage to the University, and they had at once set themselves to put the matter right at whatever cost to their own sensitiveness, and youth was generally pretty sensitive on such matters. The same sort of thing that occurred on Saturday in Melbourne had occurred in connection with other universities, but he could not remember an instance in which the students took upon themselves to say that what had happened was wrong, that they were sorry for it, and that they hoped it would not occur again. (Hear, hear.) This they did in the face of stinging criticism directed against themselves and others. It was manliness all through, and manliness was the best test of propriety and success throughout the world. The annual commencement of the University was intended to be an occasion in which, as far as possible, the whole University was drawn together in a solemn and impressive fashion to let the nation whose University it was know what it had done in the past year, to attract as many as possible of the public in order to secure earnest and enthusiastic friends whose assistance in bearing the burdens of the University they might obtain in the future as in the past, and to receive with becoming honour those who had won the degrees and the distinguished honours of the University. The introduction of great noise and rowdy comedy must surely produce a dark blot upon the scene. Instead of their hour of triumph, successful students might seem to those who did not know to be treated as wretches caught upon a race-course. He firmly believed that the instincts

of chivalry were more firmly implanted in Australian bosoms than any others, and if one of them had a sister or some very dear lady friend—(applause and laughter)—would not those instincts rise in indignation at the reception which that lady received. (Applause.) Members of both sexes were treated in a fashion which must give great pain to their friends. Instead of relatives and friends being permitted to share in the distinction which the successful student had obtained, they saw him come on to the platform, if he might be excused the simile, more like a dog on a race-course.

The public, the chancellor continued, was invited to witness the ceremony, to hear what the University had done, and to see what were the prospects of those entering the University becoming better men and women. Yet they heard nothing except that children of other people were received with howls and execration. They came with the greatest enthusiasm, with the brightest tendency to friendship—they left it with resentment, possibly some of them as sworn enemies, although he hoped their antagonism would soon pass away. (Hear, hear.) As a result of a mere outburst of animal spirits in public, the credit of youths and maidens at the University for earnestness and culture was most undeservedly underrated. What was the value of all the noise and dressing in ridiculous costumes—humorous as it might be in its place—at the annual commencement? Whatever might have been the justification for noise and obstruction by students in the old times, there was none to-day. What did students now want? They were well fed—(laughter)—and well clothed, and had all possible means of enjoyment. If they were asked suddenly, he did not think they could say there was anything they wanted to justify a noise, and even with the opportunity to deliberate, he did not think they could discover any want which could not be supplied, except, of course, the prevalent wish to get £10,000 a year, paid quarterly, in advance, without working for it. (Laughter.) It was urged that lark, and comedy, and song would relieve the tedium of a University commencement. (Applause.) There was no doubt about it, but it should be remembered that a University commencement was not intended to be a bright and lively thing. It was a ceremonial with a very definite, grave, and responsible purpose, and they might just as well introduce a variety show as a process of enlivening the play of "Hamlet" as introduce a comic show into the commencement. The two things would not harmonise. The comic element must destroy the gravity of the occasion. No doubt, it would brighten the commencement, but it would do so by destroying its purpose by driving away its friends, and by dishonouring those who came with the expectation of being honoured. The students had proclaimed him to be their father. (Applause.) That entailed a good deal of responsibility—(laughter)—but he was proud of it. As their father, he would repeat a proposition in a few words, in which that admirable philosopher, the American Self-made Merchant, gave his advice on a kindred subject to his son. He said:—

"It is not enough to be all right; you have also got to look all right in this world. Two-thirds of success consists in making the world believe that you are all right, and therefore you must be governed by general principles, even although you know yourself to be a brilliant exception." (Laughter.)

Then the merchant went on to say:—

"People have been so long accustomed to say that 4 and 4 make 8, and a young man and a small bottle make a damned fool, that they are not easy to persuade that the combination will work out in any other fashion." (Laughter.)

Ladies and gentlemen—and he apologised to the ladies—(laughter)—that was the position here—Excellent men, as they were all, of course—(laughter)—excellent University as it was; they might get a very bad name if all the public at large knew about them was that once a year they carried through the worst, most unruly, and most unedifying public meeting encountered during the twelve months. He hoped, therefore, that they could arrange that the commencement should be the ceremonial it was designed to be. The council of the University had been called weaklings, because apparently they did not do something desperate. Of course, they could hand the unruly students over to a policeman, or turn them out; but a University deprived of its students would be only a name, and a ceremony without students would be a thing not worth holding. (Applause.)

A good deal of what he intended to say on Saturday last, Sir John Madden went on, had got out, and was published through the medium of the press "The Argus" had a hundred eyes; he was quite sure it had a thousand ears. Wherever he had gone on his recent journey he found that extraordinarily little was known of those very meritorious people, the Australians (Laughter.) Of the Melbourne University, little or nothing was known. At some of the great universities it was recognised such a university existed, because able professors had left them to come here, and had stayed. He had been able to assure many eminent men whom he had met of the excellent work

and high aims of the Melbourne University. If the universities in the British dominions could be brought together, and understand each other, much might be accomplished in the direction of the successful union of the empire. With the educational atmosphere and influence pervading Oxford and Cambridge, and especially Oxford, he was much impressed. We would certainly never have an Isis or a Cam at Carlton—(laughter)—but it was well worth their ambition to see these things in England.

Sir John Madden went on to say that the Melbourne University, like the rest of the world, wanted money, and wanted it badly. In the last few years it had succeeded far beyond its hopes of half-a-dozen years ago in getting assistance. At one time it seemed to have been cast upon the sands of desolation. From that it was rescued; but, even with the schools which had been established and with the system it was able to pursue, it was incomplete. He believed that Professor Berry was extraordinarily active and enthusiastic, full of design and organisation for carrying on his work—(loud applause)—but that he had not got the means to do so. He had not yet a proper theatre for his anatomy lectures, and a great deal of money was necessary to make that school as complete and effective as Professor Berry could make it. Then there were more workaday things needed for the institution—sewerage, for instance. Provision was also required for the electrical branch of the engineering schools. There was a vast area provided for in other universities not provided for here, but which should be provided if the Melbourne University were going to progress—for, in universities at any rate, standing still was undoubtedly retrogression. The conditions of Canada and Australia were very much the same. Canada had lived a little longer, but as a nation, with all its enthusiasm, its splendid patriotism, its magnificent energy, its complete union, Canada was as certain to be beaten by Australia as that the sun shines in the east in the morning. (Applause.) And the splendid work that had been done by Canada in the way of establishing and assisting universities by private benefaction could surely be imitated here. There were wealthy people in Victoria who, by coming to the aid of the University of Melbourne, could confer a glorious advantage upon their country. Here they could find an opportunity for easily-achieved glory.

While in England Sir John Madden said he had thrown out a hook to see what he could catch in the way of some process of exchange of professors between the universities of Great Britain and ourselves, particularly in the science school. (Applause.) The idea was received with a great deal of kindness. It was an idea which, in the case of the University of London, had been under contemplation. At Oxford and Cambridge something of the sort had been desired, but a great difficulty had been found. At Oxford it was one of the conditions of some of the professors' appointments that they should reside there. Of course, such a professor could not be sent to the other end of the earth, but it was still thought that something of the sort could be arranged. He had since had some correspondence with gentlemen whom he had met on the subject. That correspondence he intended to present to the University Council, and something might presently come out of it. Such a scheme would inform people in England what was being done here, and the kind of men being used to do it. It would inform them of the existence of the Melbourne University and its value, and it would enable our professors to go home with advantage, while nothing was lost to them, and refresh themselves by returning to the associations in which they got their learning. The idea was one well worth keeping in mind, but what would come out of it he did not know. (Applause.)

In conclusion, Sir John Madden said he thanked the students with all his heart for their great kindness to himself, to themselves, and the whole University. They had done excellent work in justifying themselves. If the council had the alliance of the students in putting the Commencement on its right footing, it would be only too glad to afford the students an opportunity, either before or after the ceremony, of indulging in such light-hearted brightness as might commend itself to them. As for the old fogies, none could do a breakdown or a comic song, and none would look well in an artificial nose—(laughter)—but he hoped they would show that they had at heart the success of the University. If the students helped them to do that they would do the best they could, and it would be done far better than it would be by a combination of light comedy and ceremonial gravity. (Loud applause.)

On the motion of one of the students (Mr. S. Bloom), who referred to the affection and esteem in which the chancellor was held by the students, a vote of thanks was accorded Sir John Madden for his address. Ringing cheers were given, and as Sir John Madden left the hall the gathering sang heartily, "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow."