

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE.

## COMMEMORATION DAY.

The annual commemoration of the University of Adelaide was held in the Library of the University on Wednesday afternoon, December 14. The members of the Council and Senate assembled in the Museum, and proceeded to the Library at 3 o'clock, wearing their academic costumes. Shortly afterwards His Excellency the Governor (Lord Kintore), accompanied by the Hon. Captain A. E. Hummick-Major (Private Secretary), and escorted by the Hon. Dr. Cockburn, M.P., and other members of the Council, entered the Library, where there was a large assembly. The Chancellor (His Honor the Chief Justice) occupied the chair, and there were also on the platform the Vice-Chancellor (Archdeacon Farr, LL.D.), the Warden of the Senate (Mr. F. Chapple, B.A., B.Sc.), Professor Rennie, and the Registrar (Mr. C. R. Hodge).

The first business was the presentation of candidates to this University for admission to degrees. The Deans of the Faculties presented the following candidates, upon whom the undermentioned degrees were conferred by the Chancellor:—T. H. Frewin, M.A. degree; P. L. Stow and E. A. Beare, LL.B. degree; W. R. Cavenagh-Mainwaring and A. E. Gibbs, M.B. and Ch.B. degree; G. B. Hogg, Anna Trudinger, and W. Trudinger, B.A. degree; and Ellen Ida Benham, H. B. Corbin, J. A. Haslam, and J. A. R. Smith, B.Sc. degree. Cheers were accorded to a number of the undergraduates in the rear of the hall upon the admission of the respective candidates.

Candidates of other Universities were then admitted of *ex parte* status as follows:—The Hon. S. J. Way, D.C.L., Oxford; W. G. Teer, LL.D., Dublin; T. Borthwick, M.D., Edinburgh; C. W. Hayward, M.A., Oxford; R. E. Harold, M.B., Edinburgh; and G. S. Newman, B.A., London.

In order to receive the honour that was bestowed on him the Chancellor vacated his chair, which was then taken by the Vice-Chancellor (Archdeacon Farr, LL.D.), who said:—Your Excellency, members of the Council and Senate, ladies and gentlemen.—It was understood that the University of Cambridge had intended to bestow upon the Chancellor of this University the degree of Doctor of Laws, but that University was anticipated by the University of Oxford, who conferred upon him *ex parte* the degree of Doctor of Laws, which degree is conferred upon eminent persons for eminent services. (Cheers.) It was with great pleasure that we noticed the action of the University of Oxford, which has enabled the University of Adelaide to request Dr. Way to accept the degree from us, so that he may be more closely connected with the University over which he has so long and so ably presided. (Cheers.)

After the admission of candidates from other Universities the following prizemen and scholars were presented to the Chancellor:—The Stow Prizeman, F. L. Stow and G. Ash; winner of Sir Thomas Elder's prize for Physiology, J. A. Tomlin (student of medicine of the second year); R. H. Pullins (student in medicine of the first year), another winner of Sir Thomas Elder's prize, was unavoidably absent; the John Howard Clark Scholar, G. B. Blackburn; the Howard Scholar, W. R. Cavenagh-Mainwaring; and the Stow Scholar, F. L. Stow.

In receiving the last named (Mr. Stow) the Chancellor said:—Your Excellency, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, members of the Council and of the Senate, and ladies and gentlemen.—The Stow Scholarship, like the Stow Prizes, was founded to commemorate the memory of my lamented colleague, the late Mr. Justice Stow. I need not inform those of you who are familiar with the statutes of this University that the Stow Prizes are of the most distinguished and one of the most difficult honours in the gift of the University of Adelaide. To be Stow Scholar the candidate must have been Stow prizeman in each year of his undergraduate course, or the degree of Bachelor of Laws. The scholarship was founded nine years ago, and not until now has it been awarded. It is to me a satisfaction, and I am sure it must be to you, that we have a student who is worthy of that distinction, and that that student is the son of the distinguished man in whose honour this scholarship was founded. (Cheers.) Mr. Stow, your name will be honourably coupled with the name of your father in the annals of this University, and being the first student of this University who has become the Stow Scholar. I trust that this is merely the augury of a distinguished, useful, and happy career for you. I congratulate you most heartily upon your success. (Loud Cheers.)

The students had been very orderly throughout the meeting, but a few interjections and a little hilarity led the Chancellor to express the hope that they would not feel their respect for Professor Rennie by keeping silence during the delivery of the annual address. The Chancellor's request was complied with.

Dr. RENNIE, who was received with cheers, said:

"Your Excellency, Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, graduates and undergraduates, and ladies and gentlemen.—It has been felt by the speaker to be a matter of no small difficulty for one who can lay no claim to the possession of oratorical powers to prepare an "oration" which should be worthy of the attention of an audience such as annually assembles here to witness the University commemoration ceremonies. You have listened on similar occasions in the past to able and eloquent addresses dealing with various departments of University work, and more than one speaker from this platform have brought under your notice those special subjects with the exposition of which they are charged in this University. Following in their footsteps it will be my endeavour to the best of my ability this afternoon to enlist your interest in a science which to me seems to have a claim upon your sympathy quite as great as those of other sciences with which perhaps you are more familiar. That apology for the existence of chemistry as a part of an University curriculum, and for the study of chemistry as a science is not altogether superfluous, will I think, be granted by those who possess even a slight knowledge of its real aims and objects. Many who have some general acquaintance with the subject are yet unaware of the vastly increasing importance of some of the more complicated portions of the science in medicine, and regard as unnecessary in a medical course the use of uncouth names and symbols which have been sarcastically, but perhaps not altogether inaptly, compared to Chinese puzzles. The more advanced, moreover, being well aware of the little use made of chemistry by the ordinary practitioner, views the subject as a rule with more or less repugnance, as something to be crammed up and got through with the minimum of trouble, and very often regards the teacher, or at least the examiner, in chemistry as almost his natural enemy. I feel persuaded, too, that there are those whose ideas of chemistry are pretty well limited to its applications in the compounding of drugs, the assaying of ores, the detection of adulteration, and the search for poison, and such persons but too often view with disdain any attempt to introduce into the teaching of the subject anything more than a mere mechanical acquaintance with so much of the science as is necessary for such purposes. The feeling just referred to is one which constantly meets genuine scientific teachers all the world over, and you will, I hope, pardon me if I digress for a moment in order to say a word or two about it. When attempts are made to insist upon a scientific treatment of any subject the *ex cathedra* is immediately raised, and the teacher is tormented with pleadings for instruction in mere mechanical methods and technical applications without any attempt on the part of the student to lay a solid foundation of underlying principles. Far be it from me to decry the teaching of the technical applications of any science. It will be well within the means of this University to widen and supplement the science courses in such a way as to give them a more technical bearing, always provided there were a proper insistence upon the acquiring of a sound knowledge of the scientific principles involved, but I may be allowed to utter an earnest protest against the student towards which there is a constant tendency, and which encourages the student to seek certificates of competency in mere mechanical methods without any attempt to initiate them into the reasons upon which such methods are based. Those who advocate such a system are, in my opinion, either willfully blind to ignorant of the fact that all the great practical results of modern times have not been reached by haphazard experimenting in the dark, but by patient investigation on lines which have often seemed absolutely without promise of useful issue. You will perhaps bear with me for a moment while I endeavour to illustrate this point by an incidental which has of late acquired considerable public interest. A year or two ago while a well-known chemist was engaged in certain scientific investigations in connection with the metal nickel, he noticed in the course of his experiments that a certain gas in use at the time after coming in contact with the nickel under certain conditions caused a colourless flame near at hand to become suddenly brilliant. Following up this slight clue he discovered some new and remarkable compounds, which can be prepared without difficulty, and which not only bid fair to revolutionize the production of nickel, but which reveal unreamed possibilities in the future, such as, for instance, the manufacture of complicated vessels of pure nickel of one solid piece without a touch of the mechanic's hand, and which further suggest to the trained chemist lines of investigation of the utmost theoretical and practical importance. Needless to say that such results as these could never have been attained by the so-called "practical man." I mean the man who has been merely taught to manipulate apparatus in a blind and unreasoning fashion, apart from his technical applications, opens to the lover of science for its own sake a rich field of enquiry among some of the most interesting questions relating to matter on the one hand and life on the other, and supplies the importance of which can scarcely be over-dramatized. The alchemist of the middle ages dreamed of the *elixir vitae*, which was to