

ADELAIDE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1892.

ADELAIDE LAW DEGREES.

A serious slur has been cast upon the law degrees of the Adelaide University by the Senate of the sister institution in Melbourne. The resolution which was carried by the Senate on Wednesday certainly makes no specific allusion to Adelaide degrees. It merely affirms that graduates or undergraduates of other Universities should be admitted to a degree or status in the Melbourne University only equivalent to that to which the course they had undergone would entitle them in the Melbourne University. It is intended to apply to all cases in which persons holding degrees may apply for admission *ad eundem gradum* although the amount of study which they have done may not be fairly equivalent to the work required from students of Melbourne University itself. But as it is understood that the Adelaide LL.B. is the only degree which is at the present moment called in question, the general motion has a more particular reference to our own University than to any other.

It will be remembered by our readers that some years ago, when the LL.B. degree was first added to the list of honours for which a course was prescribed at Adelaide University, the very unusual step was taken of excluding from the curriculum all those subjects which impart general culture as distinguished from merely professional legal knowledge. Indeed it must unfortunately be admitted that while, on the one hand, no student would be likely to take the whole course and remain absolutely an ignorant man on the general subjects of an English education, seeing that matriculation was to be successfully passed before the law course was begun, yet, on the other hand, it remained possible for a man to become a full-fledged barrister without knowing anything of general history or literature, and with only the veriest smattering of classical knowledge. So obvious was it that the degree was what has been contemptuously designated "shoddy" that the Melbourne University authorities, on being requested to admit an Adelaide Bachelor of Laws to the same degree in the neighbouring capital, flatly refused to recognise his status in any way. We pointed out at the time what a mistake it would be to allow the University of Adelaide to remain under the stigma of issuing cheap degrees. The reflex disgrace of such a proceeding would undoubtedly affect the outside estimation in which all other distinctions granted by our University were held, and the final result would be that not merely one but the whole of our degrees would be set down by outsiders as on a par with those of the miserable, self-constituted Colleges of some of the American States, where they give a man a degree for writing a letter or essay and paying a fee.

The matter was brought prominently before the Senate in Adelaide, and after much delay a compromise was agreed upon by which certain subjects of the Arts course were imported into that of the degree of LL.B., and the term of study was extended to four years. The Melbourne graduate who, on Wednesday, asserted that only a three years' law course was required in Adelaide was, therefore, in error. Both the calendar for last year and that for the current year set forth most distinctly the details

of the Adelaide course, and such a misstatement ought not to have been allowed to pass unchallenged. In Melbourne every candidate for the Law degree must first take his B.A. degree, and thereafter spend two years in special law studies. In Sydney, also, the Arts degree is required as a preliminary, but the whole course can be completed, as in Adelaide, in the space of four years. The substantial difference between the curriculum as it exists in this and in the neighbouring colonies is that while Greek is compulsory in Melbourne and Sydney it is optional in Adelaide. Without entering into the question now being debated so warmly in England as to whether compulsory Greek should be abolished in the Universities, we may point out that if it be allowed to remain optional in Adelaide those students who avoid taking it up ought to be called upon to do an equivalent amount of work in the way of general culture before being permitted to take their degree. Scholars who are ready to abolish compulsory Latin and Greek by themselves open to Sydney Smith's sneer that they are only too anxious to kick down the ladder by which they themselves have mounted. Yet in view of the strong feeling which exists in England at present it would certainly be well for the Australian Universities to confer together on this subject, and to find out whether they cannot settle their difference amicably instead of throwing acedemical stones at one another.

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES.

There is no greater enthusiast in the cause of learning in Australia than Professor Tucker, who has just returned from a trip to the old country. Much interest, therefore, attaches to the opinions expressed by the Professor in the interview of which a report appears in another column. It is evidently with him a settled belief that all our Australian Universities must offer greater inducements to students to specialize in particular studies in order to secure the highest grade of talent and of training in any department of knowledge or of scientific attainment. Our ordinary examinations are even more severe than those of some of the best Universities in the old world; but, on the other hand, the honour men are seldom encouraged to penetrate so far into the higher regions of their branches of study as are those of the older centres of learning. It is the opinion of Professor Tucker, indeed, that the standard in special departments advances so rapidly in the old country that young Professors fresh from College with all the newest impulses and ideas seem preferable to gentlemen who may have spent a long time out of contact and association with the cultured minds of the best collegiate society. He appears to advocate in connection with our Universities something very like the short service system which has been inaugurated in Victoria and New South Wales for the commanding and some other officers of the Defence Forces.

So far the consistency of the Professor's views seems very clear. But there are those who will not find it easy to reconcile his advocacy of specializing in particular branches with his obvious approval of the system of making Greek a compulsory subject in the leading courses of study. If it be a good thing to encourage a student who possesses exceptional talents, say in mathematics