

From the Register Sep 10  
1882.

### CONVERSAZIONE AT THE UNIVERSITY.

Although some considerable time has elapsed since the Adelaide University buildings were formally opened by His Excellency the Governor, and a growing interest has been manifested in its welfare since that event, the actual knowledge of a large number of persons concerning the crowning glory of our educational system is limited to that appearance presented by the exterior of the building. With a view of dissipating this ignorance, and affording an opportunity for making a closer acquaintance with the interior of the institution, and of forming an opinion of its capabilities for performing the work that will devolve upon it, the Vice-Chancellor, His Honor the Chief Justice, gave a conversazione in the building on Thursday evening, August 31. Over 900 invitations were issued, and of this number 700 persons accepted the Vice-Chancellor's hospitality. Everything was done to make the gathering a success. The treasures of art, science, and natural history belonging to the University, and to prominent citizens, were laid under tribute, and arranged about the various rooms with such skill that their many attractions were brought prominently in view and could be leisurely examined. On the first landing of the staircase a quantity of pot-house plants and conservatory foliage provided by Dr. Schomburgk, Curator of the Botanic Gardens, and the Vice-Chancellor, was arranged with admirable effect under the direction of Mr. J. Mohan, the Vice-Chancellor's gardener. On the main landing the same style of decoration was visible, while the general brilliancy of the effect was considerably enhanced by a double Swan electric light of twelve burners each. This instrument, which had been provided by Mr. C. Todd (Postmaster-General), besides being a decided ornament, formed a very valuable addition to the illuminating power at the disposal of those entrusted with the duty of carrying out the details of the conversazione. In brief, it may be said that artistic taste and good judgment were apparent in every detail of the arrangements, from the decorations downwards, and there was in every room something worth seeing, from high art to dry science. The spacious library of the University was turned into a reception-room, and the guests, after the formality of introduction had been observed, were free to wander at their own sweet will from room to room to admire pictures, statuary, and curios, or to be astonished by the marvels of science. His Excellency, accompanied by Miss Jervois, arrived shortly after 9 o'clock, and after being formally received by the Vice-Chancellor was conducted round the various lecture-rooms that had for the occasion been utilized as museums and art galleries. Amongst the guests were the members of the Ministry, a large number of the members of both Houses of Legislature, Mr. Justice Boucaut, Mr. Justice Andrews, Dr. Reynolds (the Roman Catholic Bishop of Adelaide), Sir Henry Ayers, K.C.M.G., Sir Thomas Elder, Sir William Milne, and most of our prominent citizens. These gentlemen were generally accompanied by ladies in evening dress, whose gay costumes added considerable brilliancy to the scene. After the artistic treasures on view in the library and rooms on the first floor had been admired, a majority of the visitors found their way to the lecture-rooms, where the Professors, assisted by a number of patient and good-natured coadjutors, exhibited numerous scientific instruments and explained their uses. Professor Lamb showed

# Register

several very beautiful views of Alpine scenery, and gave a number of experiments illustrative of the various phases of electrical discharge. The natural history specimens were very beautiful, and the room in which they were displayed was literally thronged during the evening, while the geological and conchological collections, while less popular, were nevertheless greatly admired. Dr. Charles Gosse was the centre of interest with an ophthalmoscope, by means of which and several living subjects he was able to afford those desirous of increasing their knowledge in that particular direction an opportunity for inspecting the delicate and intricate combination of nerve and muscle that works the human eye. At the east end of the library were arranged a number of drawings from the round by pupils of Mr. Tannert, of the School of Design, and which suffered little or nothing by comparison with several specimens of the work of pupils from the South Kensington School of Design. Mr. Tannert must not only possess the true faculty of training his pupils in the artistic school, but his pupils must have in an encouraging degree the requisite qualifications for attaining proficiency, or they would not have been brought so far forward as they appear to have been. The crayon drawings from the round were singularly well executed, and two life-sized productions by Miss Scott, representing well-known classical examples of ancient sculptured figures, were remarkable for not only faithfulness of outline, but accuracy in the shading and general treatment. If Mr. Tannert's students improve as rapidly in the acquirement of the principles of drawing as their recent productions indicate, there will be no cause to consider that colonials are at all behind their more fortunate cousins in the old country in artistic intelligence, although we have been somewhat late in the day in the development of talent in that direction. In addition to the crayons referred to there were two of Gully's watercolour views in New Zealand, which have qualities of softness and transparency as well as exhibiting attention to those subtle touches which mark the true painter and prevent his work from appearing stiff or unnatural by a too close attention to detail. Several busts graced the room, and bronzes were to be seen too, but none were obtruded upon the view, a very nice adjustment of objects of interest being managed. Over the bookcase appeared a fine bust of Pallas Athene, flanked by smaller ones of a classical type, and on the long table a few good bronzes were to be noticed. On this table were disposed some large, handsomely bound, and splendidly illustrated volumes of natural history, mainly Gould's "Birds of Australia;" also a copy of the "Voyage of the Astrolabe," flanked by a fine edition of the same class, likewise belonging to the University. The lover of the antique could find much of interest in choice examples of early art, and in the English Literature room might be found undoubtedly the finest and most valuable collection of old engravings in the colonies. These were lent by Mr. David Murray, and invited a much more minute inspection than afforded by the mere passing glances incidental to the occasion on which they were exhibited. They showed the rise, progress, and development of engraving from the crude straight lines of the early beginners to the flowing, finished, minutely treated, and exquisitely shaded productions of more modern times. In looking at the work of the old masters of the art, the elaborate attention to all the niceties of anatomy, and the avoidance of deeper details or scenic effects were noticeable, and then the gradual improvement in style, the launching out into bolder treatment, and the compassing of greater difficulties disclosed, making the whole gallery most interesting to study. The first example was an engraving by Andrea Mantegna, a contemporary of Albrecht Durer; the subject, "The descent of Christ into Hades." Then Mark Antonio