

# The Register.

ADELAIDE: THURSDAY, DEC. 17, 1885.

## THE UNIVERSITY COMMEMORATION.

There was more parade about yesterday's ceremony at the University than was, unfortunately, warranted by the results of the past year's work. We may indeed congratulate the University upon the brilliant scholar whom yesterday the Chancellor admitted to the rights and privileges of a B.Sc. We have already complimented the first girl graduate of the Adelaide University upon her success, and we can do no more now than hope that the distinction which she has so ably won she may as honourably bear. So long as genuine hard work and real ability are worthy of praise, Miss Dornwell, B.Sc., need not fear that she will be forgotten. The number of students admitted to the Arts degree was very small. That a University should at the end of a year's work be able to present only two students who have passed the Arts course must be taken as proving either that the work is badly done or that there is not enough work to do. The first of these suppositions may be dismissed at once. The men who form the professorial staff of the Adelaide University are men who have approved themselves worthy of high honour. They are scholars of repute, and we can fully believe—indeed, facts prove it—that they are as willing as they are qualified to extend the benefits [of higher education in the colony. We cannot but think, however, that they are over-weighted by the injudicious commands [of the ruling body. A University, to be what its name implies, must be governed by men who know what higher education is, and, generally speaking, who have themselves experienced the benefits of a University training. If men, however great their abilities and estimable their character, who know nothing of what a University should be,

are endowed with the supreme control the result can hardly fail to be disappointing. It is to be noted that only the other day no more than 67 out of 128 candidates were successful in passing the junior examination, while at the same time over 400 students passed a similar examination in Sydney. Surely the University here has existed long enough to produce results commensurate with those produced in the other colonies.

It is in no wise the part of a University to act primarily as advertising agents for outside educational institutions. These have their own methods for testing the knowledge of their boys, and no outside authority need be called in to decide upon the relative merits of the various schools. What, then, is the function of a University? We have sought in vain for a plain answer to this question in the address delivered yesterday by His Excellency the Governor. This address has much of vagueness in it, and is characterized by an amount of striving after philosophical treatment such as is not often to be found in the Governor's public utterances. The nearest approach which can be discovered to a definition is such a sentence as the following:—“Our Universities should be not merely schools for instruction in the sciences, but in science, for correlation

implies unity, and possibly, therefore, in the not very distant future diversity may result in unity, as diverging bush roads often lead to the same point." To this mystic declaration we even prefer what seems to be the keynote of His Excellency's discourse. The result to be aimed at is "the education of the people for the life of the community." But this is merely a generalization, which may mean anything or nothing. How would His Excellency see the people educated for the life of the community? The first essential is not to be supplied by the University at all. "The laying a sound foundation, to be tested by the matriculation examination, which should be for the purpose of proving, not so much the amount of acquirement in particular studies as general mental discipline and training, and consequent fitness for application to any branch of science, appears to be the first essential." His Excellency here seems to have got hold of the right idea. His language is involved, but his meaning is right enough. Matriculation is not a test of knowledge or a hall-mark of omniscience. It is a proof that the successful student is sufficiently advanced to be able to profit by higher teaching. Here we are entirely at one with the Governor, and we do not quarrel with him because after this he lapses into vague and obscure phrases. It is the entrance into the higher walks of learning which is the most important thing here, as indeed entrance is everywhere. The Irishman in the play can make his escape out of purgatory when once he gets his shoulders outside the gate, and readers can understand what University education should mean when they know what the entrance to a University course ought to be.

But as to the particulars of this entrance. We are not left in doubt here. Professor Kelly, one of the most brilliant classical scholars south of the Line, here takes up his parable and speaks his mind in homely and convincing

words. His address deserves careful study as a powerful—to our mind convincing—apology for the study of classics. The true gentlemen of the world—the *καλοὶ κάγαθοί*—cannot afford to lose the examples of their ancestors in nobility. “Classical education,” Professor Kelly says after Döderlein, “while presuming that all the pupils are designed for some intellectual employment, does not trouble itself to enquire what particular sort of employment that is to be.” And here, as it seems to us, classical education strikes the highest note that ever has been struck by any system of education. Whether it is George Grote, the banker, or J. H. Short house, the merchant, or Lord Iddesleigh, the statesman—all combine in praising the system which has given them access to old truths and filled their minds with beautiful and noble images. Of most of what Professor Kelly said yesterday we heartily approve. With him we deplore the would-be omniscience and consequent crass ignorance of our youthful wonders. No man can know everything nowadays, and the boy who knows a little of everything knows a very little. With him, too, we would again express our regret that the matriculation examination is taken as the final