

*Advertiser November 11<sup>th</sup> 1884.*

A YOUNG University naturally labors under the disadvantage of lacking that popular veneration which no institution of ambitious aims can expect to enjoy while it is a new thing. Of all the caprices with which human error is chargeable perhaps none is less defensible than that which is prone to attach an extravagant value to educational establishments whose chief claim to respect is based upon their antiquity. But although such a standard of appreciation may proceed from mere sentiment, and that a very weak one, it has a powerful hold of the public mind, and the surest way to check its possible mischief is to follow such a course in the administration of the affairs of new seats of learning as shall challenge the ability of those of older foundation and larger growth to prove that they could have done better. The success of the Adelaide University rests so entirely upon the judicious selection of its professorial staff that every appointment to any one of its chairs is a matter of importance to all interested in the higher education of this community. With a full sense of the responsibility involved the University council has made a choice, and there is good reason to believe a felicitous one, of a gentleman to undertake the duties of the Professorship of Chemistry which the liberality of Mr. J. H. Angas has endowed. Dr. Rennie comes to his new post with the credentials of a ripe scholar and a competent instructor, tested by wide experience in the particular field of science which is to be his province in the curriculum of our University. He is not a man who has simply adapted himself to the fixed rules or the well-defined groove of a single college in one corner of the earth, but he has followed the instincts of his passion for scientific research and training from one scene of study to another of greater repute, and his diligence has been rewarded by high distinction at each successive stage. Professor Rennie adds to his other high qualifications for the office to which he has been appointed the no inconsiderable one of a familiarity with the inner working of a colonial University, so that he will have nothing to learn with respect to any difference in the course of undergraduate life in Australia and that of a corresponding career in England. The branches of study over which Dr. Rennie will preside are those which ought to make his lecture-room one of the most crowded and pleasurable in the University. Chemistry,

as a subject of amateur investigation alone, is a delightful attraction, while those who are patient enough to persevere in unfolding its deeper mysteries usually become devotees to its wonderful and illimitable discoveries and uses. Its intimate connection with medical science, and also with the science of agriculture, gives it a prime significance as an instrument of education. To have a University with aims such as ours has without suitable appliances for systematic instruction in chemistry would have been an unpardonable blunder. All concerned are to be congratulated upon the promise that this important chair will be so speedily and efficiently filled.

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Sydney Telegram

Dr. E. H. Rennie, who has received the appointment of Professor of Chemistry to the University of Adelaide, obtained the high Degree of D.Sc. in London, but his earlier studies were conducted and honours won at the Sydney University.

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## AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHY.

Professor Tate continued the course of his lectures on "Australian Geography" at the University on Tuesday evening. There was a very small audience. The Professor dealt at some length with the peculiarities of the Australian flora, which were not so marked perhaps as those of the fauna, but which were more easily examined. No orders were absolutely wanting here, and of the leading orders in Australia not one was wanting in other parts of the world. There was, however, a preponderance of peculiar genera and species which made the Australian a more defined region than any other on the face of the globe. Many had a peculiar habit or physiognomy which gave a peculiar character to the forest scenery especially. As instances of this he mentioned the eucalypti, or gum, the acacias, the proteaceous plants, such as the hakeas, the sheoaks, which in particular presented a most marked physiognomy. Others were anomalous or grotesque in appearance, the grass-trees, banksias, and sheoaks having nothing approaching them in any part of the world. A great many of the species had anomalous organs, the Western Australian pitcher plant, for example, having leaves modified into insect-catching organs. Then they had the remarkable character presented by the deciduous bark of many of the gums and the leafy organs of the large bulk of the acacias. Every one was acquainted with the peculiar construction of the native cherry which was cited in England as an example of the topsy-turvy manner in which things grew in this country. The stone of the native cherry was said to grow outside the fruit, but this was not botanically correct, as the so-called stone was the real fruit, while the succulent matter was but the enlarged flower stalk. The inflorescence of many of the proteaceous plants was peculiar, while the stornates, or breathing spores, were distributed not only over but also on the under surface of the leaves. In the ti-tree the flowers were sunk in the branches. A remarkable feature was presented by a plant found near Port Augusta, the only one of the kind known in the world, called petallostylus, from the fact that the style was remarkably like a petal. The comparative number of monocotyledonous and dicotyledonous plants was about the same in Australia as it was in other parts of the world. There were nine orders very largely represented in this country—The Leguminosæ, with 1,061 species; the Myrtaceæ, with 653 species; the Proteaceæ, with 589 species; the Compositæ, with 534; the Cyperaceæ, with 372; the Graminæ, with 346; the Epacrیدهæ, with 273; the Orchideæ, with 257; the Euphorbiaceæ, with 224; and the Goodenooideæ, with 212 species, or a total number of species of 4,291, about one-half of the total number so far known. Of these orders six were among the largest orders in the world, such as the grasses and sedges, the Leguminosæ, or pod-bearers, the Compositæ, the Orchids, and the Euphorbiaceæ. The Northern Territory had more plants in it characteristic of its near neighbour, India, than any other part of the

country; the north-eastern portion of Australia was correspondingly impressed by the flora of the Polynesian Islands, while the south-eastern portion contained more plants of South American origin. There were at present 8,800 species of the flowering plants known in Australia. Of these, 7,550, or six-sevenths of the whole, were endemic, or peculiar to this country, while 1,250 species belonged to other parts of the world. Fully two-fifths of the endemic species belonged to genera not found in any other part of the world. These numbers were not final, as the botanical features of Australia had been so little studied as a whole that the conclusions arrived at might be subjected to some alteration as their knowledge increased. The Professor then proceeded to give an outline of the leading botanical regions into which the country was divided. There were two main divisions—the endemic, including the 7,530 species peculiar to the country, and the exotic, which embraced the remaining species, immigrants from other parts of the world. There were in all five well-marked floras, four being restricted to definite geographical regions—the South-western flora, the Alpine and Antarctic flora, and the Oriental flora of tropical Australia, while there was a fifth flora more or less spread over the whole portion of Australia which, however, predominated in the eastern region. That of the south-west was almost confined to that space, and was nearly coincident with the region of the greatest rainfall. In dealing with the peculiarities presented by the identity of the flora in widely separated islands and on Australian soil the lecturer noticed the hypothesis that there had originally existed a large continent which had connected the lands in question, and presented a wide field for the growth of allied flora.