

hensive view of them, and generally waste much valuable energy in the acquisition of trifles of knowledge, while the weightier matters are neglected. To such men an evening college would be of very great service, and we trust that steps will ere long be taken to originate one in Adelaide.

*The Advertiser*  
*June 28<sup>th</sup> 1882*

Professor Tate delivered the first of a course of lectures on the Northern Territory at the University on Tuesday evening, before a large audience. The lecturer principally confined his remarks to the history of Northern Australia during the present century. The next lecture, which is announced to be given on July 4, and subsequent ones, will deal exclusively with the scientific and geological aspects of that portion of the province.

*Advertiser June 29<sup>th</sup> 1882*

#### **THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.**

The first of a series of three lectures on the Northern Territory was delivered on Tuesday evening, June 27, by Professor Tate, F.G.S., at the University, in the presence of a large audience, over 250 persons being present. Before commencing his lecture Professor Tate called attention to the unsuitableness of the library for purposes of lecturing, the reverberation being greatly against a speaker being advantageously heard. He commenced his lecture by alluding to the recent ministerial visit to the Northern Territory, through which considerable attention was at the present time being directed to that portion of the province as a field for the capitalist. The council of the University, thinking the occasion an opportune one, had imposed on him (the lecturer) the duty of enlightening the South Australian public, as far as it lay in his power, on the more scientific aspects of the questions which would in all probability soon occupy the attention of the Legislature. When there were so many works extant expressly written on the Northern Territory by writers such as Earl, Oppen, Tenison Woods, Knight, and others, it might seem presumptive on his part to deal with the subject. His excuse was that excepting the book by Mr. Woods, all the works so far compiled consisted of what he might term an array of disconnected facts; in fact, were mere gazetteers of geography. The Rev. J. E. T. Woods, on the other hand, had succeeded in establishing the physical geography of the country upon an intelligible basis. He had not, however, had the advantage that the lecturer had had of having seen the country, and as he had occupied himself with the whole of North Australia he had not treated the South Australian portion of the Northern Territory in so detailed and particular a manner as would satisfy the demands of those most concerned for the future of our northern possession. Moreover, eighteen years had elapsed since his compilation was published, and in that period much had been added to our stock of knowledge. It was not his intention to recount the experience gained during his brief sojourn in the Northern Territory, but his object in that series of lectures was to concrete and systematise the large store of facts relating to the Northern Territory which had been accumulating for the last eighty years. He wished to explain in what way the natural phenomena there exhibited were interdependent; in other words to investigate the causes of things. That was in part the method of Mr. Woods's treatment of the subject, and on carefully reading his pamphlet since his return from the Northern Territory he found that some of his deductions from

*Prof Tate's*  
*1st Lecture*

*in series*  
*on N.T*

personal observation had been anticipated by Mr. Woods's speculations, and the lecturer wished to avail himself of the present opportunity to express his high appreciation of the scientific merit of that early production of the author in question. (Hear, hear.) He did not propose to occupy his hearers' attention by narrating all that was possible touching the vast area comprised in the Northern Territory, but would concentrate his remarks more particularly on the peninsular portion called Arnhem Land. After tracing the history of the Northern Territory and explaining at some length the many surveys that had taken place from the time when Captain Flinders first explored it in 1801 down to the latest one in 1869 by Mr. Goyder, the lecturer continued—Respecting the Northern Territory from a commercial point of view they knew that since 1876 interest in it had been at a low ebb. However, the imposition of customs duties and a tax on the export of gold, which came into force about two years ago, and increased revenues from other sources, resulted at the end of the financial year of 1881 in a balance for the first time in favor of the Northern Territory. The acceptance of large land concessions by intending sugar planters and others seemed to revive the languishing state in which all enterprises had gradually fallen. These facts determined the present Government to ascertain the nature and extent of the resources of the colony preparatory to the adoption of a wise and energetic policy for their development; hence the recent visit of the Minister in charge of the affairs of the Northern Territory to our northern possessions. In the brief review of the results of explorations he had endeavored to restrict himself to the salient points, the better that they might form some estimate of the amount and character of the knowledge respecting the Northern Territory that the public were possessed of. The Northern Territory stood pre-eminent among the other portions of Australia as an arena for geographical and scientific exploration. There remained little to be done, except as to details, which would be worked out as settlement advanced; but the knowledge of these details was not likely to affect the broad generalisations of the physical features and natural history of the country deducible from the facts that had been accumulating for eighty years. At the outset he had stated that his chief object in these lectures was to illustrate the interdependency of certain phenomena—in other words, to ascertain the causes of things. The physical, botanical, and zoological features of this portion of Australia, in conjunction with its geographical position, were so intimately connected with its geological structure that the subjects could not be separated without detriment to each when treated in a general way. A correct knowledge of all this must have an important bearing upon the development of the natural resources of the country. A careful study of these features in their relation one to another would help them, in the absence of experience on a large scale, to form some estimate of the nature and extent of its industrial capabilities. Richness of soil alone would not ensure a good crop of wheat any more than an abundance of grass would be an index of its capabilities for wool-growing purposes. Conditions of success were various, and, if they rightly understood them, hasty and faulty judgments would be avoided. The sandstone tableland was, he thought, the most striking feature of Northern Australia. It was in fact the *pièce de resistance* so to speak of the Northern Territory. If in place of the tableland there were mountain ranges it would greatly alter the character of that portion of the province, and it was mainly owing to that natural phenomenon that so little of the mineral wealth of the Northern Territory had been developed. The lecturer then brought his first lecture to a close, and was loudly applauded. The next lecture was announced to take place on the following Tuesday.