

The Advertiser

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1884.

IN the early days of South Australia, as in every young country, the strongest instinct of the people was self-preservation, and their first duty to secure the means for their own subsistence; but as the community increased in wealth and experience, and acquired stability, the earlier anxieties became less engrossing, and more time and thought were bestowed upon what beautifies and dignifies life—upon the cravings of the mind as well as the necessities of the body. It is not surprising, therefore, that an increasing amount of attention has been recently bestowed upon academical matters by the more intelligent portion of the community, and it may tend to further the interests they have in view if some information be supplied regarding the history and condition of one of the most ancient and influential of the high-class educational institutions at home; that, namely, of the University of Edinburgh. To any one who is conversant with matters of this sort it is a well-known fact that some of the most distinguished of our local celebrities in the various walks of life were alumni of that University; not to speak at all of her graduates in our midst in one or other of the “faculties,” and especially in medicine. And indeed the connection for the future promises to be even more intimate than in the past. For at this present moment one of the graduates of the Adelaide University is engaged in the prosecution of his medical studies at the University of Edinburgh, and who knows but that he may be only one of the first of a long list to follow. Some two or three months ago, moreover, the council of our University appointed Mr. Barlow, one of its number, to act as its delegate and representative at the forthcoming tercentenary celebrations there; and it may well be doubted whether a more suitable selection could have been made, for there is no man who took more trouble or spent more time in connection with the establishment of the Adelaide University than the first Dean of the Faculty of Law. It so happens too that this is the very week chosen for these proceedings by those who administer the affairs of that institution, and according to the programme Mr. Barlow has a rather formidable list of engagements to fulfil. On the evening of Tuesday, the 15th, there was to be a grand reception by the magistrates and council of the city (who, by the way, have a good deal to do with the election of professors, &c.) in the splendid museum of science

and art. On Wednesday, besides a forenoon religious service in St. Giles's Cathedral, and the formal opening of the new series of University buildings in the afternoon, there was to be a second grand reception in the evening, but this time by the University authorities in their library. Thursday's proceedings embrace a graduation ceremonial, another reception, but by the faculty of advocates in Parliament House, and a banquet in the evening. On Friday, again, the distinguished strangers who have accepted the invitation to be present are to visit the public buildings of the city; the students are to give a concert in the afternoon and a ball in the evening, while the civic authorities are going to further honor the occasion by a partial illumination of the city.

Of the four universities of Scotland, that of Edinburgh is the youngest, the dates assigned for the foundation of each being as follows:—St. Andrews, 1411; Glasgow, 1450; Aberdeen, 1494; Edinburgh, 1582. As early as 1558, Robert Reid "had bequeathed to the town of Edinburgh the sum of 8,000 merks (about £5,300, but equal to a much greater amount now) for the purpose of erecting a university within the city." Eight years afterwards Queen Mary granted a charter and sought to make provision for the suitable endowment of the institution, but the turbulence of the times arrested the fulfilment of her intention, so that another sixteen years had to pass before anything else was done. In 1582, however, James VI., by that time monarch of the United Kingdom, granted what is now deemed the "foundation charter of the university with the privilege of erecting houses for the professors and students." A very creditable structure gradually arose, consisting of a "quaint group of quadrangular buildings," which survived so long that Walter Scott is said to have paced the same courts and sat in the same rooms as those which witnessed all the social broils and civil wars of the Caroline and Cromwellian eras. It is needless to say that when first founded it was but the day of small things in its history. The educational staff, or, to adopt the term in use at our own University, the professorial board, consisted solely of Mr. Robert Rollock, previously a professor at St. Andrews, but afterwards principal and rector at Edinburgh, who besides his vocation of teaching was expected to preach weekly at St. Giles's. He was so successful in attracting students that first one and then another had to be added to the teaching staff. Some of the conditions to be fulfilled on the part of candidates, if they bespeak a state of more primitive simplicity than prevails amongst ourselves, give evidence of the necessary thoroughness of their qualifications. They were to be examined in their knowledge of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and the whole circle of the sciences, and to sustain a ten days' competition with each