

*From the Advertiser
April 5th 1883*

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE.—The ceremony of admitting candidate bachelors of our University and graduates of other Universities to degrees was performed on Wednesday afternoon in the presence of the Senate in their robes and a large attendance of ladies and gentlemen. The late Registrar, Mr. W. Barlow, was presented with a very handsome silver claret jug, with a suitable inscription, for his services during eight years of office. A meeting of the Senate was held the same day. Dr. Gosse was re-elected Warden, and Mr. J. T. Hackett, B.A., was appointed Clerk.

*From the Register
April 7th 1883*

CLARET JUGS AT THE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—The preamble of the University Act of Incorporation commences, "Whereas it is expedient to promote sound learning in the Province of South Australia." I read these words at the meeting of the Senate on Wednesday last, and was present at the proceedings held later on, when the Chancellor presented the late Registrar with a claret jug. I venture to think that in making this presentation the Chancellor was ill-advised. I cannot see the connection between sound learning, which the University was established to promote, and that mutual admiration of which claret jugs are so eminently suggestive. Be it understood that I have the highest regard for Mr. Barlow, and fully appreciate the careful and methodical manner in which it is well known he has always discharged his duties; but still they were duties which he discharged—duties the discharge of which he himself solicited, and for the discharge of which he received what he, I have no doubt, considered a satisfactory payment; and I am sure I am speaking the mind of Mr. Barlow, when I say that the consciousness of having faithfully performed the duties of an important position was the best remuneration he received. Why, then, should the Council (albeit in their individual capacity, as the Chancellor expressed it) follow the lead so frequently set by a testimonial-giving age, and often an affront, although conveyed in vague but irreproachable Latin, by saying to Mr. Barlow, as this presentation does say in effect, "We did not expect you to do your duty; but you have done it, and this so much surprises us that we beg your acceptance of this claret jug of antique and classical shape as a mark," &c., &c. If the Council felt all this so strongly they might have made a private presentation, and not have implicated the Senate and others who were present at the Commencement to witness "the conferring of degrees." But now that the ball has been set rolling, where will it stop? The new Registrar may have thought to himself, "I have only another seven years to serve when I too may expect the claret-jug degree." One learned Professor, mayhap, has a wife who unexpectedly surprises her husband with twins; he is sent away blushing and heavily laden with a silver cradle, warranted to carry double; or another, overborne with press of work, and with the endeavour to live up to his salary, seeks retirement and repose, and is solaced in his moody hours by the comfort which the contemplation of an emu egg set in silver is calculated to give.

Many members of the Senate will be glad of an intimation of the presentation of the above testimonials, that they may be saved from taking part in proceedings which, although nothing may be said against them in the abstract, are unworthy of the dignity of a meeting of the Council and Senate of the University of Adelaide.

I am, Sir, &c.,

SIGMA.

From the Register
April 12th 1883

THE UNIVERSITY CLARET-JUG.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Is your correspondent "Sigma" really a member of the Senate? Forgive my putting the question so bluntly. Set it down to the shock it gave me to think of any one within our Academic grove writing in so severe a tone of rebuke and disparagement of our distinguished University and the eminent and scholarly men who preside over its destinies. For myself I am an outsider, but not an envious one. To us without the pale, in common with those belonging to the inner circle of Council and high officials, conditions of success may be apparent which are undreamt of by those of the Senate, who occupy a sort of middle platform, and see less than those above or below them. He safely at the top of a tower, and he on the ground at its base, are in a better position for seeing what is within their ken—as well as for comfort—than any unhappy wight clinging precariously halfway up. Now I fancy I can detect, as many others have done in this claret-jug episode, the outcome of a deep and praiseworthy scheme for promoting the truest welfare of *Alma Mater*. I do not at all regard it as "unworthy of the dignity of a meeting of the Council and Senate," as "Sigma" says. On the contrary, it seems to me exactly in accord with that dignity. Even if it were not your correspondent ought to know that a trifle of dignity may sometimes be judiciously sacrificed by those who can spare it, to the achievement of high and useful objects. You must not stand too much on your dignity else it is apt to get trampled under foot. Where there is dignity, especially if new and a little stiff and awkward to the wearer, an occasional casting of it, or some of it, off is to be commended and not deplored. You remember how Thomas Carlyle threw aside his cumbrous academic robe—which, I suppose, was meant to give him dignity—before commencing his address to the students as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University. I am not sure that the dignity which comes of simplicity and freedom from assumption is not the worthiest. Take care you don't choke this nursing institution with affectations and pretentious forms and displays. Unostentatious effort is what you want.

I hope I have convinced "Sigma" on the point of so-called dignity. And now I will tell him why most people think differently from himself as to the significant gift to "Guilielmo Barlow," whom all esteem, both in and out of the Academic precincts. To be an educational success the University must be popular. It must not shut itself up in pedantic isolation. It must show an elegant sympathy with the ways of men. It must be convivial—of course in a scholarly manner. For instance, if the silver claret-jug had been a pewter pot, that would have been distinctly bad form. No cultured dignity could have stood that. But, what I would like to know, is there in the preamble of the University Act, so triumphantly quoted by "Sigma," to justify his remark that "the Chancellor was ill-advised?" There is no limitation of the means by which sound learning is to be promoted. If you cannot accomplish it one way you must try another. The Chancellor no doubt felt that this should be made clear. He did not, of course, mean that if students cannot assimilate Homer or declaim Cicero when sober, they must be inspired with brain-compelling wine; nothing of the kind. All he can have thought of signifying was that University training is not asceticism, and that although students who had imbibed their principles of liquor at the fountain of our good friend Matthew Burnett would be received with kindness and encouragement, the Council professed a more Horatian creed. I confess to rather preferring this latter view myself—*nunc est libendum*. "Sigma" will recollect how Rogero, in Canning's celebrated song, recalling, no doubt the beer-swilling memories of studentship, laments in his dungeon that he is