

The Advertiser

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1882.

At a recent meeting of the Senate of the Adelaide University the question was asked by one of the members, Mr. Chapple, whether the warden (Dr. Gosse), who presided, could give any information about the appointment of a chancellor to succeed the late bishop, Dr. Short. The warden was very reticent, and apparently not very courteous in his reply. He stated that "Dr. Short was still chancellor. What might happen as to the appointment of a successor to him in a short time or a long time hence he could not tell." When the question was pressed and supported by another member of the senate, the only additional information that could be elicited from the warden was that he did not know of any steps being taken either to ask the present chancellor to resign or to appoint his successor, and that the question had not been mooted in the council at any time when he, Dr. Gosse, had been present. Doubtless what the warden said was true; but his infelicitous manner of expressing it arouses the suspicion of evasion; and if there was not a testiness about his reply that was neither necessary nor pleasant, at least there was a total absence of frankness and willingness to give the matter ventilation that must have produced an unfavorable impression inside the senate, as the report of it has certainly produced outside. Mr. Chapple's enquiry only echoed what has been on the lips of a great many persons for some time past; and his statement of the present relation of Dr. Short to the University represents what is generally understood to be the fact of the case—that is to say, that he merely holds the chancellorship until it shall suit the convenience of the council to relieve him and appoint a successor. While to make the appointment is, of course, the prerogative of the council, it is at the same time a matter of public interest; and if the method adopted by the warden for avoiding discussion of it and keeping everything in connection with it a secret represents the disposition of the council at large it will certainly be resented. The University is a public institution in the conduct of which there is felt a very strong and very general interest; and any attempt on the part of the council or any other body to establish exclusive and irresponsible management of it will not be tolerated.

The chancellorship of the University is practically though not nominally vacant. The late bishop possessed qualifications eminently fitting him to receive the honor that the appointment conferred upon him, and he thoroughly appreciated the honor. It was only a graceful thing that, when in consequence of advancing years and enfeebled health he felt compelled to relinquish the arduous episcopal duties which he had so long fulfilled, there should be no seeming haste to take from him any honor attached to the occupancy of the chancellorship. But though the respect due to one who had so long served the colony and the University justified perhaps the arrangement for the late bishop to retain the dignity for a short time after his withdrawal from the colony, it will not justify an indefinite continuance of that arrangement. There is no prospect that Bishop Short will return to South Australia and resume the active duties of the chancellorship. All necessary attention has been shown him in the past delay to appoint a successor, and the time has arrived when it appears unreasonable and impolitic to allow the vacancy to continue. If the position can remain practically vacant for an indefinite length of time without the University suffering, it will be difficult to justify the existence of a chancellorship at all; and at least the effect will be to make it appear in the public view a mere empty honor. On the other hand if the duties are both honorable and responsible, it is not right that they should be neglected, nor fair to any gentleman to long impose the discharge of them upon him and yet withhold from him the dignity that properly belongs to them. It is difficult to see how the vacancy can be longer continued without either impairing the efficiency of the University or bringing the chancellorship into contempt. However well the duties may on an emergency be discharged by a gentleman holding another position in connection with the University, it is only in an emergency that such a course ought to be allowed. Except in the rarest circumstances he who does the work is entitled to the position.

Is there any reason for the longer continuance of the vacancy? is a question that is now being freely asked on all sides; and so far as we are aware it must be answered in the negative. Rightly or wrongly an impression has got abroad that the chancellorship is being quietly reserved for the newly-appointed Bishop of Adelaide, and that on his arrival it will speedily be conferred on him. Whether there be any justification for this impression or not it is not necessary now to enquire. But in many respects the appointment of the Rev. George Wyndham Ken-