

THE UNIVERSITY.

The annual conferring of degrees on Wednesday closed the year's work at the university. Few among the outside public are able to realize, during the course of such a function, how much mental labour and close application are required for passing in all the subjects requisite for the attainment of a degree, or how largely the demands of the examiner have been increased in the last century. Lord Chancellor Eldon was accustomed to relate that after completing his residence at Oxford, which was varied by his making a runaway marriage, he was let off with two simple viva voce questions for his "finals"—"Who founded New College?" and "What was the Hebrew word signifying the place of a skull?" On giving as answers "King Alfred" and "Golgotha" he was certified as having passed for his Bachelor of Arts degree. This fact is vouched for as

having been received at first hand from his lordship by Horace Twiss, the author of the "Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon." It cannot, indeed, be doubted that for many years there has been a gradual process of stiffening in the tests set by the British university authorities, and that the professors and lecturers of universities in the states and colonies of the empire have almost always displayed a determination to maintain their standards fully on a level with those insisted upon in the old country. Twenty-seven degrees were conferred in Adelaide on Wednesday; and, although thirteen of these were ad eundem, several of those who took medical qualifications in this way were really Adelaide students, whose medical courses had been interrupted owing to the disturbance of the relations between the university and the hospital. Fourth-year students, however, are now appearing on the lists of passes and honours; so that before the close of next year the University of Adelaide may be expected to have recommenced granting its own degrees in medicine and surgery. Meanwhile the Law School has been vigorously flourishing; and the Stow scholarship, which previously had been awarded to only two students in seventeen years, has been taken by Messrs. Bennett and Skipper. For the attainment of this honour it is necessary that the student should gain a Stow prize three years in succession; so that the chances against its being secured by any particular student are not far removed from those prescribed by the canny Scot, who offered to give a prize to the bowling team who would win a prize three times in succession, each match being fixed for the twenty-ninth of February! The university does not keep on hand a supply of Stow gold medals, as the demand for them is not sufficiently brisk to warrant such a course; and accordingly none was available for presentation by the Chancellor on Wednesday.

The case was different regarding the Tennyson medals for English Literature, which were presented by His Excellency the Governor personally. These prizes are awarded to those who take the best places in English literature at the Junior, Senior, and Higher Public Examinations respectively; and they will have the effect of stimulating the study of the great English classics in South Australia. A German admirer of British educational methods has recently asserted that the reason why so little attention is paid by the English people to their own noble literature at the universities is that such great works as the plays of Shakespeare, the Lays of Macaulay, the poetic tales of Sir Walter Scott, and Tennyson's Idylls are so fascinating that every English boy and girl would naturally read them without being asked to do so. This opinion, although flattering to the British as a nation, is not altogether in accordance with facts. The conflict of studies in the present day is so great that if English literature be crowded out of the university syllabus and curriculum it will on the whole receive diminished attention from the people at large. Still, much encouragement may be derived from the remarkable demand for reprints of the world's great classic literature in the English language. The success which is now attending the issue of the "Library of Famous Literature" in South Australia affords an illustration in point. It is becoming increasingly apparent that, as Carlyle declared, the people's university, from which emanates the best thought and

the best culture of all ages and all countries, is the printing house. Those who cling tenaciously to the older traditions of collegiate education can hardly appreciate the full significance of the changes which have been wrought during the last century. In every country of the civilized world there is urgent need for special efforts to keep the universities in close touch with the advance in the popular taste for literature and science.

"The Register" recently urged that definite steps should be taken with the object of drawing closer the relations between the School of Mines, the School of Design, and the university by affiliating the former institutions to the latter. In granting (for the first time) the "Diploma in Mining Engineering and Metallurgy of the University of Adelaide and the Fellowship of the School of Mines and Industries," the authorities of the university have practically committed themselves to the policy of seeking to affiliate, at any rate, the School of Mines. In the older universities the effects of ancient jealousies are such that one institution will hardly ever bring itself to recognise the existence of another, or to give students credit for any work which they may have done elsewhere. Oxford will not take cognizance of what is done at Cambridge, nor will Cambridge pay any heed to passes or honours gained at Oxford. Of course, it is necessary that the governing body of one institution should be fully satisfied concerning the sufficiency of the standard maintained by another before the work of the latter can be confidently accepted. It is well, indeed, that some members of one council should also be entitled to act on the other; and this is already the case with the university and the School of Mines. The recent addition of the names of Messrs. Brookman, Fowler, and John Gordon to the list of the university council will have the effect of assuring the public that the interests of education in mining and commerce will not be neglected. It was hardly seemly that Wednesday's proceedings, which began with the dignified and appropriate exordium of the Vice-Chancellor on the self-sacrificing bravery of the late Dr. Hopkins, should have been disturbed throughout by the silly annoyances inflicted upon the audience by certain undergraduates, and that it should have been brought to a conclusion amidst painful references to disagreements in the internal management of the university. "There are a time and a place for everything."

A DISCORD IN MUSIC.

A philosopher has said that for every case in which a man contends for love of a principle there are a dozen in which men fight through prejudice and hate. The hospital trouble, which was recently so happily settled, continued so long as it did mainly because certain narrow-minded and biased people, battling on the same side as others who scrupled not to make political capital out of the sufferings and deaths of the helpless poor, were determined to "spite" what they denounced as a particular social set. A wretched motive, surely; and the memory of the misery for which it and others were responsible ought to be enduring. Yet, if Parliament be not very careful, a "university squabble" will be substituted for the "hospital trouble," with similar incidents. A philosopher in the Assembly yesterday afternoon might have noted several observations with surprise; and his summary of the characteristics of some politicians would probably have been—entirely erroneously, of course—to this effect:—"1. They take it for granted that, if a 'social clique' be charged with any offence or blunder, that clique must be treated as guilty until its innocence shall be established. 2. The reverse rule applies to any party but that 'social clique.' 3. If any man with a grievance, and therefore having much to gain or lose personally, should bring accusations against a body of men having no grievance and nothing to lose personally, he must be right, and they must be wrong. 4. If such a body are subjects of charges, it is only proper and in accordance with the best British traditions that they shall be condemned without a hearing."

Any lover of fairplay must experience a sensation of repulsion as he reflects upon the lack of judicial balance which was shown by more than one member of the Assembly yesterday in connection with the unfortunate disturbances which have occurred in the musical department of the university. Take, for instance, the inci-

dent affecting a report which the Minister of Education asked the university authorities to supply to the Government. The request was not backed by any authority, but still it was promptly respected; yet, while that document—which must have been prepared very hurriedly—was on its way to the House, apparently without any avoidable delay having been incurred, some legislators were fully convinced that the directors of the university intended to haughtily flout the Ministry and the Parliament. So some of them were casting about for methods to punish autocratic tricks by "the social clique" at the very time when that abused body had courteously—though we think only reasonably—gone out of its way to oblige them. Thus do some of the components of the High Court of Parliament, which is supposed to be a deliberative assembly, set to the rest of the community a baneful example in light-headed precipitancy and prejudgment through prejudice.

We shall not now discuss with any elaboration the regrettable differences between Professor Ives and the Chancellor of the University, or the specific question which was mentioned on Wednesday in the Assembly and elsewhere. Still, the public are interested in both if any demonstration should be given of a threatening of the efficiency of the university through the operation of any cause of the kind indicated. In itself the severance of the connection between the professor and the university suggests no cause of complaint, because it has followed upon full notice, and is strictly in pursuance of a mutual agreement between the partes. It would be most awkward if a covenant of service which specified a definite term should be construed as a matter of course to mean that the period of service was for all time—"Once a professor, always a professor." So that, on the face of it, no occasion for denunciation is supplied in the mere fact that an agreement between Professor Ives and the university has been given an interpretation which is strictly within its own provisions, and therefore presumably fair. All else is a matter of sentiment and gratitude; and the public are not willing to condemn a body of reputable men, or the leader of that body, because the retiring professor, while smarting under a feeling of grievance to which other considerations contribute, accuses them of unworthy conduct. This attitude, too, will be quite consistent with a generous recognition of the fact that Professor Ives has substantially promoted musical culture in Adelaide, and of the justice of requiring a reply to his somewhat sensational allegations. The other matter—the failure of certain students to pass an examination—lies in a nutshell. It seems obvious (1) that if Professor Ives thought an examination paper was too difficult he should have objected to it when some good might have resulted from his protest; (2) that, unless factors not yet disclosed existed, there was some reason in the professor's request that the papers which formed the subject of dispute between his colleague and himself should not be sent to the arbiter with the annotations of only one of the parties to the disagreement; and (3) that no wrong has been done to the students concerned, as the weight of expert opinion tends to prove that they ought not to pass on the basis of their present attainments. On a general view we are bound to conclude that the charges of a prominent officer of a public institution against that institution cannot be ignored, but should be met straightforwardly and in detail.