

Reg. 14<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1905.

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### A UNIVERSITY COMEDY

PUBLIC PROCESSION BY THE STUDENTS.

A SATIRICAL SUCCESS.

For here on this terrestrial ball,  
Nations and markets rise and fall,  
But humour wobbles most of all.

The other day an American professor of theology, convinced that the pranks of University students at commemoration time were the product of a specific mental disease, set out to diagnose the ailment. After considerable investigation into the historical significance of the ceremony he called it "the audacity of a picturesque imagination." The epidemic in its pronounced form did not affect Adelaide until this year. Previously the students have been content to concentrate their theatrical display and poetic resource at the orthodox degree-conferring function, but on Wednesday their originality and grotesque humour took a more striking turn. The commemoration festival is largely an exclusive gathering. The scope for ludicrous display and clever satire is to an extent limited. For the first time, therefore, the young men who wear the black-and-white check handkerchiefs made their appearance as public entertainers. Their debut was an eminently successful farce, as it was intended to be. They endeavoured, so it was said, to astonish the natives. They did so with a vengeance. One might have been excused for exclaiming with the Prince in "The Princess":—

On a sudden, in the midst of men and day,  
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,  
I seemed to move among a world of ghosts,  
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

The strictly orthodox spectator may have viewed the procession with a feeling of quiet protest, but those who were able to enter into the spirit of the movement and of the season saw an excellent reason for this temporary disregard of classical dignity and precise gesture. The whole procession, from the red-costumed, long-eared Mephistopheles ("our patron saint") in the lead to the bewildered, down-driven donkey at the rear, was a capital caricature of public men, institutions, and events, and the promoters deserve the thanks of the large gathering which thronged the streets for supplying gratis a long list of mirth-provoking diversions. If the proceedings did indicate the audacity of a picturesque imagination, there was, at any rate, the justification of traditional privilege, and the Adelaide undergrads were no more undignified than their brother students in the other States or those in the university cities of the old world.

The procession was certainly a ridiculously heterogeneous affair. It was the combination of a piece of every imaginable procession which has the dash of the farcical about it, with a Tivoli "turn" and a circus performance thrown in. All stages of vehicular construction seemed to be represented. The inartistically decorated conveyances carried some of the most ludicrously attired passengers that the boldest imagination could conceive. Clowns, be-spangled and painted like a barber's pole; soldiers, from a resplendent hussar to a kilted Scotchman, with pink legs on which feathers had been stuck; plantation niggers wearing hats several feet in diameter; mediaeval knights, with pretty noses and powdered hair; nurses, bewigged lawyers, firemen who wore helmets which looked like inverted teapots, arrow-marked criminals, ebony-faced aboriginals, almond-eyed Chinese, straggly bearded Russians, cow-boys swinging whips nearly as long as the procession itself, and—well, any other character that may be imagined. The vehicles and horsemen threaded their way through the crowded streets with as much progress as the tramcar-piestall would permit. But that elongated, gaudily painted conveyance, was true to itself every time! The passengers had frequently to alight and push the wheels with protesting grunts, while one of the officials—a white-whiskered individual, who carried a huge can of oil—pathetically lubricated the joints of the horses. It was the smartest and most effective appeal for an electrical system that has ever been made in Adelaide, Hansard speeches and public meetings thrown in.

It would, of course, be impossible to make a detailed reference to the procession, but the leading characteristics may be explained. The Adelaide system of horse traction, which lends itself admirably to caricature, was the subject of an exceedingly clever hit. One of the picturesque pie-stalls that frequent the city streets in what Scotchmen call the "wee sma' oors" had been engaged. On each side of the vehicle were suspended streamers with these notices in large capitals:—"From Slowtown to Paradise." (No.) fare 3d. Asteolean horses (?) Tram Company, Adelaide. No connection with silly-bus (syllabus) of "Varsity." There was a trio of gaudily arrayed officials on the car—one held the reins with nervous gesture, another wielded the whip, and a third spent his time oiling the stiffening joints of the horses. The man and the oscan had the busiest part of the contract by a big margin. This tram was a characteristic tram as Adelaide cars go—and that is not at motor-car speed. The passengers were continually alighting, and putting their padded shoulders to the wheels, but the vehicle was always the obstacle to advance, notwithstanding the discarded assertion,

"Where there's a will there's a (Sammy) way." It even stopped a donkey cart. Another capital piece of satire was the hospital scene. On a rambunctious vehicle was an operating table, bearing a male patient, who threw his arms and legs about with the facility of a windmill. The youth was undergoing the excruciating pain of having a leg (wooden) amputated by a butcher's saw, and three prettily costumed nurses, with red and blue faces, white streamers, and sympathetic hands, were holding the patient, who had not been given an anaesthetic, in position. It was certainly a repulsive advertisement for the progress in surgical science as practised at North terrace, and several children screamed at the sight. Under a skull and crossbones this interesting announcement was displayed by the travelling surgeons:—

Well man, aiek man,  
Dead man, stiff;  
Cut him up, chop him up,  
What's the diff?  
Humorous, tumorous, blood, and gore,  
Adelaide medicals for ever more.

It was also intimated that sawing was done for the trade, and that families could be supplied at the shortest notice. Then this appropriate question was asked—"Where's the rest of Tommy?" Where? The Metropolitan Fire Brigade and its popular chief were not forgotten. A tired-looking horse with a packet of "Force" tied under its nose was drawing a reel, in which sat two helmeted, brass-buttoned officials, wearing unkempt beards and a look of stolid unconcern. But Nero fiddled while Rome was burning! One of the occupants smoked a stout cigar, and there was a strong suggestion of abdominal retundity about his physique. Behind the reel came the ladder, but neither conveyance seemed anxious to get to the scene of the conflagration—certainly an unfair satire on the splendid efficiency of our brigade. But even Superintendent Booker enjoyed the joke, and unless he makes a protest to his board the public ought to refrain from taking the initiative. A picture-covered pantechnicon gave the students an opportunity to display their artistic talents and their skill for coining puns. Fairly commendable ink sketches were displayed of Professor Stirling, Sir Frederick Holder, Sir Charles Todd, R. Poynton, and Mr. Scherk, and the names were adapted to meet the requirements of

a certain advertisement for cheap suits, such as "Don't Scherk a bargain" and "Sterling opportunities." Another failure was "Sterling powders for stomatic pains." "Punful" unquestionably!

A trial scene was capably presented. A criminal-stained individual stood in the box, and three curly-wigged, querulous lawyers submitted technical points for "His Honor's" consideration. In Rundle street the proceedings were dramatically suspended owing to the escape of the prisoner, who made an unsuccessful endeavour to hide in a spring dray which had been drawn up by the kerbing. The black-gowned counsel gave chase, and hauled the runaway sanonimously into the moving Courthouse. "A viceregal bus"—an antiquated vehicle with a deceptive modern name—was in the procession. It accommodated a lady (?) and gentleman, who bowed to the people with profuse gesture, and smiled with conventional amiability. St. George and the dragon were there too, and also an unshapely "circus queen," who did acrobatic feats on the bare back of a sleepy pony, and threw kisses to the onlookers. Un-aristocratic-looking vehicles had been engaged by "Dr. Cuddle-me-more," "Dr. Un-hung" (a Chinese specialist), and "Professor Cuddleimquick," who sold pills for poisoned policemen. Other attractions were a rumbling farm roller, which flaunted the announcement, "If she does not bump you get a coupon" (a lot of coupons must have been distributed); a bachelor-inhabited vehicle, which supplied matrimonial lottery tickets free, and which made placarded applications for wives, "broken in by whip preferred;" and walking bottles of whisky and beer—"all for little Mary." Altogether the procession was a capital piece of ludicrous organization, and the students played their parts with grotesque success.

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Mr. Brewster Jones, who has just won the Elder Scholarship, which entitles him to a three-years' course at the Royal College of Music, London, is a native of South Australia. He is the son of Mr. A. W. Jones, of Port Elliot. At an early age he displayed considerable musical talent, and when only 7 years old he played a selection from Mozart's "Twelfth Mass" on the Town Hall organ. He received his early musical training from his father on the pianoforte, and afterwards on the pianoforte. While quite a child he gained an intermediate certificate for singing at the Tonic So-Fa College. Since coming to Adelaide a few years ago his record has been one series of successes as a pianist of more than ordinary promise. Under the skilful tuition of Mr. Bryceson Trebarne, at the Elder Conservatorium, he made rapid progress, and his contributions to students' concerts have frequently been amongst the most attractive features of the programmes. At the end of his first half-year at the Conservatorium he won the Elder scholarship for pianoforte-playing, and at the close of the term of three years the scholarship was extended for another year. He has been a prize-taker also at the institution. In 1903 he received the prize for being the student who had made the most progress during the twelve months, and the following year the Egan prize for pianoforte-playing was awarded him. He has given public recitals in addition to his contributions to concerts at the Conservatorium, and for a time he was pianist to the Adelaide Liedertafel. His readings of the works he has from time to time presented have always been marked by breadth of feeling and great musical intelligence. The

artistic temperament is as conspicuous in him as his technique, and he has long been regarded as probably the most promising young pianist within the Commonwealth. Mr. Jones' career at the Royal College will be watched with interest by the musical portion of the Adelaide public, and great satisfaction will be felt that the coveted scholarship has been awarded to so promising a student. Mr. S. P. Waddington, the representative of the Associated Board, London, acted as examiner, and selected Mr. Jones from eight competitors.

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### TOPICS OF THE DAY

#### UNIVERSITY COMMEMORATION.

The annual Commemoration of the Adelaide University is to be held in the Elder Hall this afternoon under the presidency of the Chancellor (Sir Samuel Way), and in the presence of the Governor (Sir George Le Hunt). The degrees, diplomas, scholarships, and certificates won by students of the University during the past year will be conferred or presented. The seating accommodation of the Elder Hall is limited, and the whole of the space has been allotted, so that no further applications for tickets can be granted. The procession through the streets this morning will be headed by an impersonation of Mephistopheles—the patron "saint" of the students who are taking part in the procession—mounted on horseback. A dray will carry a brass band, and the vehicles following will contain a "tub pair" in a rowing boat, law students conducting a mock trial, and medical students with a victim on an operating-table. A pie-cart, so converted as to rival an Adelaide tramcar, a couple of mounted bushrangers, a fire brigade squirting potassium permanganate, and a watering-cart laying the dust with the same chemical, besides donkey-carts, motor cars, tip-drays, and other Donnybrook accessories will also form part of the show. A band of minstrels, whose instruments vary from Pan's pipes to cornets and kerone tins, will attempt to delight the public with their untutored efforts. The procession will leave the University at 11 o'clock, and will travel along North-terrace west to King William-street, south to the Queen's statue, back to Rundle-street, along Rundle-street to East-terrace, and back to the University. At 2 p.m. the students will sing songs of their composition in the Elder Hall until the arrival of the Chancellor an hour later, and the subsequent proceedings will be interspersed with vocal items of a more or less appropriate character.

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#### UNIVERSITY BUFFOONERY.

To the Editor.

Sir—Will you kindly extend to me the same consideration as you did to my critic, "H. G. Norris," in this morning's paper? I am sorry for the poor man, for he has evidently not been blessed with an iota of one of Nature's greatest gifts—a sense of humour. Has he never been young? Has he never known what it is to laugh? What a narrow, hidebound mind a man must have when he declares that his tender sensibilities are shocked by an orderly and well-behaved procession, which does not profess to be anything but humorous and at times a little satirical. Doubtless he could not see the jokes, which fact would account for the epithet "morbid," and it seems that he holds a brief from the Almighty to object on His behalf. Perhaps—but tell it not in Gath—"our young men of learning" have had their minds sufficiently broadened by that learning to enjoy to the full my critic's righteous indignation.

I am, Sir, &c.,

ADRJAN AKHURST

("Mephistopheles" of the procession).  
North Adelaide, December 15.

To the Editor.

Sir—All worthy colonists will appreciate the remarks of Sir Jenkin Coles as quoted in The Register under the heading "Demonstrations by Students." To me it is inexplicable that men who would like to be considered gentlemen should act in the way University students do. Surely the greatest object in life is to endeavour as nearly as possible to live the life of a gentleman. Unfortunately we are not led to believe that the University is the place where gentlemen predominate.

I am, Sir, &c.,

AUSTRALIAN.