

The Medical Journal of Australia.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1921.

The Medical School in Adelaide.

The Medical School of the University of Adelaide was founded in 1884, nearly thirty-seven years ago. It has played a great part in medical education in the Commonwealth, but like many other institutions in a young country, it has outgrown its clothing. The late Sir Edward Stirling equipped the physiological laboratory when the school was still in its infancy with apparatus then regarded as efficient and adequate. To-day the physiological laboratory is a bare department, with anything but adequate and efficient equipment. Professor Watson was asked to establish the department of anatomy in a few rooms and with the genius of adaptive invention, he moulded his requirements to fit into the limits of what seems to-day to be a singularly cramped space. No doubt the physiological and anatomical departments were sufficient and adequate in 1886. Time brings with it changes which cannot be ignored. For a series of years one order of staging is suitable for the performance. The actors soon find that the theme of the play is apt to become extended, that the audience demands more elaborate setting and more complex properties. After a time a complete rebuilding of the proscenium, stage and auditorium is demanded, unless, perchance, the managers have been adding, patching, extending and altering piecemeal at short intervals. In this case the inevitable reconstruction is postponed for a brief span.

The people of Adelaide have apparently not yet realized that the Medical School has served its time and is no longer suitable for efficient teaching. The Department of Physiology consists of one laboratory of moderate dimensions and a small study for the Professor. There is so little accommodation that the histology work has been suspended, as it were, between heaven and earth. It is still attached to the Physiological Department, but is housed in relatively cramped surroundings in the vicinity of the anatomical rooms. The Department of Anatomy is scarcely

more than a dissecting room. There is no room for modern research work, none for advanced teaching in embryology, histology and morphology. The people of Adelaide should be told that the quarters in which the fundamental sciences of medicine are being taught, are ridiculously inadequate and that unless the defect is remedied by the erection of a new medical school, they may look in vain for highly educated practitioners among the graduates of the next few years. It cannot be questioned that efficiency in the training of medical students is an almost priceless asset to any community. The people of Adelaide may not be able to hold the new occupants of the three chairs unless a suitable environment is provided for them. There are various proposals in the air concerning the reconstruction of the medical school. All these plans suffer from the same defect. They are makeshifts, presented because of the small amount of money available. When building is started, consideration should be had to the possibility of expansion. If the site adjoining the Adelaide Hospital is not extensive enough, the sacrifice should be made and the school divorced for a time from the clinical teaching. The number of students will increase. Each student needs more room than he did twenty-seven years ago and he will need much more room in the near future. It is anticipated that the systematic lecture will disappear, to a large extent at all events, in favour of teaching by demonstration, by practical work and by experiment. Small classes are more productive of good results than large ones. The modern tendency involves a quadrupling of the accommodation. The rich citizens of the beautiful city of Adelaide and the Government of South Australia must provide the means to erect an edifice fitted to be the house of medical studies.

While the outer walls of the present School of Medicine have become too narrow to hold their legitimate contents, the interior of the two older Departments calls for even greater development. Within recent times three new professors have been appointed. They are all young, energetic and competent. They have the ability and the desire to provide for the Adelaide students as good a training as can be obtained anywhere. The professor of Anatomy, Professor Wood Jones, presides over a department without a library, without a microscope, without a balance