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SPIRIT OF UNIVERSITY

DIVISION OF WORK AND PLAY

Brain Centre of State

It is 50 years since the University of Adelaide was established, and during that time many brilliant brains have been moulded in the institution to work for South Australia and the world at large. It is impossible to estimate the benefits which have accrued to South Australia from 50 years of effort by the University of Adelaide.

How does this institution, which has done so much for the State, work?

What is its spirit?

To find an answer to those questions this week an unofficial visit of inspection and investigation was made.

The first impression gained was the rather startling one that the University does not work at all. Classroom after classroom was inspected without finding the slightest trace of a class or a professor. The silent and deserted desks, however, told that the first impression was erroneous. Obviously it was a bad day for lectures.

Then four young men were discovered seated at a table. Upon the forehead of each there was a perplexed frown, and each held something before him which he studied with intense concentration. Some knotty problem of law or economics was at stake here? Some question of anatomy, botany, or classic lore?

And then—"Hearts are trumps!" said the most scholarly looking of the quartet, and the secret was out. The serious looking young men were playing bridge.

Spirit of Relaxation

But though far removed from the acquisition of knowledge, for which purpose a University is attended, these young men playing cards were, strange as it may seem in a sense symbolic of the spirit of the institution. Another young man, reclining at length in a chair, removed his feet from a table, and consented to explain.

"University students," he said, "do not study in the same way as do pupils at school. At a school there is a teacher to make the scholars work; at the University students work because they want to.

"A University student's working day might be made up of an hour in the lecture hall listening to a lecture, three hours at the Adelaide Hospital, two hours in the Public Library, and an hour's study at home. Apart from attendance at lectures the question of place or manner of study is left largely to the student.

"Students study in many places other than the classroom. Medical students spend a lot of time at the Adelaide Hospital, law students take lessons in the offices of practising solicitors, engineering students work for a year upon some construction work, and a student might not even attend the University at all and yet be classed as a University student. The University is the centre of thought. It sets the standard and it devolves upon the student himself to reach that standard."

Student or Professor?

In the new physics and engineering block three or four men were moving about in a room in which was a formidable array of complicated looking machines. Instinctively it was realised that here professor and students were at work. The realisation, however, did not permit of the selection of the professor from the students. Each of the men bent over some task, and not one of them waved a pointer nor wrote with chalk upon a blackboard. The atmosphere was more of the engineering works than of the schoolroom. Professor and students they undoubtedly were, but who was professor and who were students, the casual observer was left to decide for himself.

At the end of a corridor a door opened into a room, the sides of which were lined with row upon row of important looking books, and the floor with row upon row of school-like desks. At the far end of the room one solitary student sat engrossed, poring over a weighty-looking tome. He did not look up.

Cloistered Study

Here, then, was another symbol of the spirit of the University. Serious study in cloistered seclusion. Ah, this was the real thing, surely! It must be the true spirit of an institution which in its 50 years of existence had given to South Australia a galaxy of brilliant men and women, who had played a vital part in the building and maintenance of the laws and industries of the State.

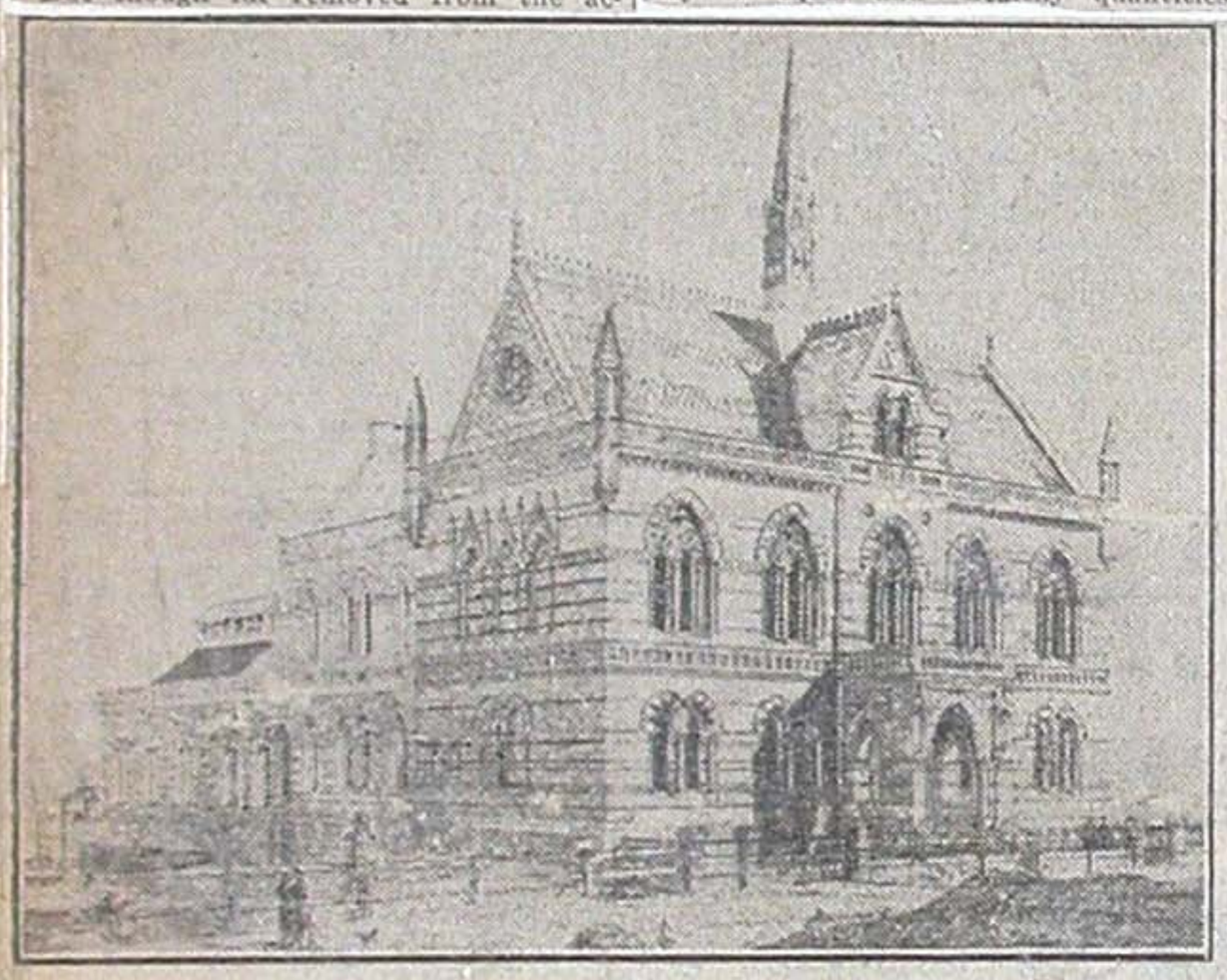
Permeated with this new idea, the intruder left the solitary student and tiptoed down the corrider.

"Stop!" This printed word and a hideous drawing of a corpulent policeman with features closely resembling those of the ex-Kaiser, glared from a notice board. "Have you bought your ticket for the Arts Association Ball?" the poster enquired, and further wanted to know, "If not, why not?"

This flippant work of art in breaking in upon the vision conjured up by the solitary student in the library could have only one effect. Once more the spirit of the University became elusive. There was material to warrant a decision that the University did not have a spirit.

Close at hand the wailing notes of a violin issued from a building, as if in plaintive farewell, and afar off the lusty shouts of men could be heard as they chased a football on the University Oval.

Suddenly everything was quite clear. The card-playing students; the solitary scholar in the library; the flippant poster; the wailing violin; the shouting football players—apart they were a phase together a spirit incarnate. Work and play in equal and healthy quantities!



University of Adelaide as it was originally planned half a century ago.

The spirit of the University was captive at last.

Programme of Celebrations

From today until Wednesday celebrations to commemorate the jubilee anniversary of the University of Adelaide will be held.

Tonight there is a conversazione in the Elder Hall.

Tomorrow (Sunday) afternoon the much-discussed thanksgiving service will be held at St. Peter's Cathedral.

On Monday at 3 p.m. a special congregation will be held. Representatives of other universities will be received, addresses presented, and ad eundem degrees conferred. A short organ recital will be given before the proceedings begin.

In the evening a special concert in honor of delegates from other universities will take place in the Elder Hall.

Mr. John Gunn (Premier) will officially open the new physics and engineering building on Tuesday morning. In the afternoon there will be students' sports and a motor excursion, and in the evening a dinner at the Town Hall.

On Wednesday there will be an inspection of the Waite Agricultural Institute.

Mr. F. W. Eardley (registrar) points out that special arrangements have been made in regard to motor traffic for Monday evening. Motor cars will enter by the central gate and leave by the eastern gate, but only a limited number of cars will be parked in the University grounds.

NEWS. 20·8·26

SIR JOHN COCKBURN

Seventy-six on Monday

Sir John Cockburn, K.C.M.G., M.D., oldest surviving former Premier of South Australia, and former Agent-General for the State in London, will be 76 years old on Monday. It is 28 years since he left Adelaide to represent South Australia in Britain.

His home is at Dean's Hill, Harrietsham, Kent, England. Born at Corsbie, Berwickshire, Scotland, Sir John was educated at Cholmeley School, Highgate, and King's College, London. He was a gold medallist in medicine of London University, graduating in 1874. In the following year he settled in South Australia. While practising his profession at Jamestown, of which town he was mayor for three and a half years, he was elected to the House of Assembly for Burra district. He was Treasurer in the Colton and Playford Cabinets, and Minister of Education in the Downer Government.

Losing his seat in Burra, he was subsequently elected as member for Mount Barker, which constituency he represented for 11 years. In 1889 he became Premier and Chief Secretary, but his Cabinet resigned after having been 14 months in office. Later he became Minister of Education and Agriculture in the Kingston Ministry, in which he remained for five years. He resigned to take the Agent-Generalship in 1898.

ADV. 23·8·26

A GATHERING OF SCIENTISTS.

To-day the 18th Congress of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science will be opened in Perth under the presidency of Professor Rennie of Adelaide. These periodical gatherings have become a feature in the intellectual life of Australia and New Zealand. All the year round students—professional and amateur—are steadily engaged adding to their store of knowledge, or working out problems and conducting researches in the interest of different branches of learning. Generally there is nothing spectacular about their efforts. In many instances they are simply endeavoring to assimilate what has already been published as the result of the labors of others. This broadens the outlook on life and reacts in many beneficial ways on the students themselves. But there are other and more important developments. Discoveries are sometimes made, even by those who are not amongst the most advanced scholars in their own particular departments. In wireless telegraphy, for instance, many of the advances which have meant much resulted from the observations of amateurs. Any original work in the field of knowledge is deserving of encouragement, and no one can say from what quarter startling revelations may come. The scientific method may be cultivated even by persons of limited education, but the scientific temperament is a natural gift. It is to those endowed with the latter that the world is indebted for most of its great achievements. An association like that which will be in conference in Western Australia for the next few days serves many useful purposes, not the least of which is that it brings together persons of kindred tastes, engaged in more or less similar pursuits. The stimulating power of such a congress constitutes one of its chief values. The various sections have an opportunity of discussing problems and methods, and of recording results. Not only so, but the work accomplished may be brought under review, and some idea obtained of the more immediate aims of the leaders in different departments.

Within the lifetime of people who are not yet old, discoveries have been made which have necessitated the recasting of theories formerly believed to be unassailable. The discovery of the X-ray was an epoch-making event. Even more startling was the segregation of radium. A new universe of thought has been revealed by these and other triumphs of modern research. In the Einstein theory of Relativity, there is a wide field for enquiry and speculation. The marvellous thing is that all the discoveries made and problems solved bring the student no nearer to finality. The universe enlarges as men become more acquainted with it. It has been said that the history of human progress is the record of man's conquest of nature. Man is confronted by something mysterious and apparently beyond his power of understanding. He faces the mystery and to some extent fathoms it, only to discover other mysteries deeper and more impenetrable. There are always new kingdoms to be explored. It is characteristic of workers in fields of science that no matter what they may accomplish they are always left with the feeling that they have only crossed the threshold; there is something beyond that awaits them. It was probably some feeling of this kind which inspired Sir Oliver Lodge when recently at Oxford to say that "scientists were on the verge of discovering the secret of life, and the answer to the question, 'What is God?'" He believed that before the British Association met again in Oxford, these questions would be answered. The announcement is startling, and it may be that Sir Oliver Lodge has drawn greater inferences than the ascertained facts warrant. It is not quite in keeping with scientific methods to make far-reaching predictions, and if it were not for the acknowledged place which Sir Oliver has won by his brilliant contributions to science, the prophecy would attract little attention. In view of his past record, however, such a statement commands respect at least, although it may be received with some amount of scepticism.

To place arbitrary limits to the possibilities of human knowledge would be to ignore the lessons of the past. One of the conspicuous messages gathered from the labors of those who have wrested secrets from nature is that there are no phenomena which forbid investigation, and no phase of experience which may not profitably be studied. Sir Oliver Lodge properly points out that in the nineteenth century science dealt chiefly with the material world. He thinks the spiritual world, "which has not yet been accepted by science," lies open for discovery. In this view he is in agreement with many thinkers, some of them, perhaps not in the technical sense, scientists. Tennyson found infinite mysteries enfolded in the commonplace things of nature. If he could understand the flower in the crannied wall, and know what it was, he believed he would "know what God and man is" also. It is in keeping with Christian teaching to find in the laws and facts of nature a reflection of the divine mind and purpose. A brilliant American scientist years ago published an interesting work entitled, "Through Nature to God." Of course, he did not suggest that nature had taught him, "what God is." Probably Sir Oliver Lodge intended his use of the expression to be understood in a limited sense. Dean Inge tells us that "the innermost nature of the Supreme Being is unknown." Many thinkers have gone further and declared that it is unknowable. The finite cannot grasp the infinite. But there is no occasion to speculate in regard to the future achievements of science. That they will contain surprises is certain. If they fall short of revealing the Creator, they may be expected to make disclosures concerning the methods of creation, and doubtless they will add to the sense of dignity in man, whose essential greatness is indicated by the capacity he displays for mastering physical elements and compelling them to yield knowledge of the laws of their existence, and the history of their formation. Meanwhile the many men and women who are working in the interests of fuller knowledge may well plod on, and they will be helped and encouraged by such gatherings as the Congress which opens in Perth to-day.

ADV. 23·8·26

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ORCHESTRA.

A programme of various composers' work is set down for the next concert of the South Australian Orchestra in the Town Hall on Wednesday, September 8. Prominent among them are three Wagner works, the popular overture to "Tannhauser," the beautiful "Meistersinger" overture, and a vocal solo, "The steersman song," from "The Flying Dutchman." An important Russian work not previously given will be the two dances from "Prince Igor of Borodine." From this school the "Musical snuff box" of Laidow, and "Hymn to the Sun" (Le Coy d'Or), Rimsky-Korakov, will also be played. Percy Grainger will be represented in "Handel in the Strand," and the favorite orchestral ballad, "Ship o' the fiend" (Hamish MacCunn), will again be given. Preferential plan at the Aeolian Company.