

The Advertiser.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 1884.

His Excellency Sir Wm. Robinson has laid this colony under a lasting debt of obligation by his recent action in reference to the University of Adelaide. In another column will be found a report of the proceedings of a special meeting of the University Council in which occurs a letter from His Excellency on the establishment of a chair of music. The charter of the University gives power to the council to grant degrees in music as well as in arts, science, law, and medicine, but hitherto this power has remained unexercised. The cause of this inaction is not far to seek. The financial resources of the University are strained to the utmost to provide tuition in other branches of learning and are confessedly inadequate to overtake the claims of the nascent medical school. Various studies and fresh courses of instruction are encouraged in proportion to the means at command for meeting the necessary expense, and the order in which the University develops its efficiency is determined by the practical utility of its tuition and its degrees. Literature and science had the first claim. The number of young men studying law in connection with the Supreme Court suggested next the establishment of a law school. Sir Thomas Elder, by his munificent gift, has enabled the council to face the difficulties attendant upon the initiation of a medical school. Music, however, was in danger of being left out in the cold for many years. As it is one of the ornaments rather than the necessaries of life, it was not likely to commend itself to the University authorities until all other subjects were provided for in the academic curriculum. We owe it to our worthy Governor that this order is likely to be interfered with. As a musician of cultured taste, he takes great interest in the cultivation of his favorite art. He must have noted when he came among us that the public musical taste in Adelaide was by no means a credit to the colony. In his generous patronage of various musical entertainments he must have noticed how high class music has been performed before empty chairs, while what was light and frothy has evoked enthusiastic cheering. By whatever process, however, he was convinced of the need of a higher musical education, he saw clearly enough that the powers granted to the University to give musical degrees afforded him an opportunity to confer a public benefit.

His Excellency asked a number of private friends, among whom we hear that Sir Thomas Elder is again con-

spicuous for his liberality, to assist him in founding a chair of music. To collect enough to endow a chair in perpetuity seemed too difficult a task, so he obtained a list of subscribers who would guarantee to contribute a definite amount for five successive years towards the salary of the new professor. His efforts have been met with a liberal response, and he has sent in to the council a list of subscriptions amounting to upwards of £500 per annum for five years. It is surmised that with such a salary the services of a competent scientific musician could be secured in England who would be able to give instruction at the University and conduct examinations for the degree of Mus. Bac. The salary does not seem very large, but according to His Excellency's letter we gather that there need not be any impediment thrown in the professor's way if any lucrative appointment as organist were offered him. The fees paid by the students would doubtless be considerable, and as the extra expenses connected with musical classes would not be great, a portion of the fees might be added to the salary. These are questions of detail, however, which the council will have to consider. In the meantime the public will heartily endorse the resolution that was moved by the Vice-Chancellor, that the gift of His Excellency be accepted with thanks. If our former Governor has taught us how to defend ourselves in times of war, our present Governor is teaching us how to enjoy ourselves in times of peace. Sir W. Jervois and Sir W. Robinson will both leave their mark behind them. But we hope that it will be long before we have to listen to the rough and turbulent music of cannon and rifle, but that the time is not far distant when a developed taste will render Adelaide the most musical city in Australia.

There are some critics who object to the association of so fantastic a science as music with a grave and reverend University. Surely such critics must forget that the scientific basis of music has been so carefully examined of late years that music is no longer to be considered a mere dilettante art, which may help us to pass an idle hour in the drawing-room, but which is of no use as a mental exercise. Music is no longer a mere question of a good ear; music is a sister science to physiology and acoustics and mathematics. It needs to be studied with the mechanical aids which can only be found in the lecture-room of a physicist, where the theories of fundamentals and overtones of harmony and dissonance can be made manifest to the eye as well as to the ear. We have, moreover, abundant precedent for uniting musical with other studies in the halls of learning. Without laying much stress upon the example set by the ancient Greek philosophers or the "schools of the prophets" among the Hebrews, we