

PROFESSOR MITCHELL.

A Distinguished Scholar.

Adelaide University Needs.

A distinguished scholar, who possesses practical and interesting views on the need for development in connection with the Adelaide University, is Professor Mitchell, who has occupied the Chair of Philosophy since 1894. It previously included English literature as well, but now he lectures on economics instead. According to his ideas there is a need for further division of subjects with regard to not only his own, but other chairs, so as to give better opportunities for specialisation. It is only by specialisation that the best educational results can be achieved.

BORN IN SCOTLAND.

William Mitchell is a native of Scotland, having been born at Inveravon, on the Spey, in Banffshire, in 1861. He had his early education at Elgin, and proceeded to Edinburgh University, where he graduated. He remained in Edinburgh for 10 years altogether, studying the faculties of divinity and medicine, as well as arts, and became lecturer in ethics at the University. Then he went to University College, London, as lecturer on education, and had a good deal to do with the policy of what are called day training colleges, now associated with all the universities and university colleges in England. The other training colleges are residential, whereas training colleges at the universities are not as a rule residential, but aim at giving a higher form of education than the old training college. The result has been the abolition of the pupil teacher system in England, and a great raising of the standard of education among teachers

in the primary schools there. While in London Mr. Mitchell was examiner for degrees in philosophy for the Edinburgh University, and examiner on the theory of education for Cambridge. It was from London that he came to Adelaide.

ADELAIDE PROFESSORSHIP.

"When I was appointed to my professorship," he said, "the main emphasis had been on English literature. Indeed, I found only one student in philosophy, and his name was Solomon. However, when the council was able, on receipt of the bequest from Sir Thomas Elder, to divide the chair, it was possible to develop a philosophical side English being removed entirely from the scope of the chair, and economics being substituted. Although both these subjects belong to the same chair, they have little inherent connection, and there is so much work in them that they ought to be represented by different professors or lecturers in Adelaide, as is the case in every other university of any size. They happen to be subjects of the moral science tripos of Cambridge University; but that is no reason for associating them under one professor. The proper development of a university lies in having the subjects well divided up, and in enabling professors and lecturers to specialise. "When any one outside Australia turns up a list of the staff of professors and lecturers—and that is how any university man measures a university—he would be struck at once by the number of subjects put under the same chair," added Professor Mitchell. "As one visiting professor said, our chairs are sofas."

MR. BRYCE'S RECENT ADDRESS.

The conversation turned on the lecture that was given last week by the Right Hon. James Bryce, and Professor Mitchell pointed out that the occasion had again emphasised the need for a university hall, where the speakers could be heard. He stated that the University Council was clear in its mind as to where the hall should be. It should occupy the east side of the present square, so as to have an entrance from North terrace also, and should be part of a building in which there could also be a students' room and other classrooms and laboratories.

"The students," he said, "deserve a word of praise for their behaviour during Mr. Bryce's lecture, for, being right at the back as they were, they could scarcely hear anything, and to sit out so long an address in silence when one cannot follow the speaker is certainly a trying ordeal."

"Mr. Bryce laid emphasis on the fact that universities stand for truth. Has that always been the case?" asked the interviewer.

FREEDOM OF TEACHING.

"There has certainly been no suggestion of the want of any freedom of teaching in Australia," said the professor. "On the contrary, in Adelaide, and no doubt in Melbourne and Sydney, the lecturers are completely free from interference."

The interviewer spoke of the time when Shelley was expelled from Oxford for his freedom in expressing his thoughts on religion, but Professor Mitchell said those days were over. "The only two cases I know of in modern times were in con-

nection with the Chicago University and the Leland Stanford University, where two professors of economics were forced to resign for giving opinions on the matter of commercial trusts that clashed with the views of the wealthy founders of the institutions. Such a thing is unknown in Britain, and the outcry in the other American universities was so great that there is no fear of it being repeated there."

"In view of the increasing American interest in science and philosophy, is it probable that the philosophic and scientific centre of interest will shift across the Atlantic?"

In spite of the fact that American universities have larger incomes than any in the world, enabling the fullest development and specialisation—America, for that matter, has universities purely for research—Professor Mitchell's answer was in the negative. He pointed out that the opportunities of earlier education in America and the qualifications of students on entrance are by no means on a par with those in Germany.

WELL-EDUCATED GERMANY.

"The system of education in Germany before the university is entered," he said, "is so very much higher than elsewhere, that the student entering the university is practically up to, if not beyond, the ordinary standard of the B.A. graduate. Such students can, of course, go very much further in their university studies and researches; they do not require the stimulus of much examination, and there is practically no competition. On the other hand," he added, "there is practically no hope of a boy going through the primary school to the university, because the system demands that secondary education shall begin much earlier."

"You believe in early education?" asked "The Mail" representative.

"An early grounding is a good thing, but all education up to 13 I regard as only a preparation, and unless it is carried on it is completely lost. The proper time for a real education is from 13 to 16 or 19."

Professor Mitchell believes in the raising of the age for compulsory attendance

at school, and favours the development of technical schools. "The university," he said, "cannot go much faster than the schools, but it can provide teachers up to any requirements."

UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT.

"In that direction, ought the University to develop to suit South Australian needs?"

"Well, we are not short of students," was the reply. "In fact, the number at this University is possibly greater in proportion to the population than in any other English-speaking community. It is not numbers that are lacking; but we want a larger staff. We want junior members of the staff as tutors to read special books and essays with the students, and conduct discussions. We also want Chair of Modern Languages in connection with the Faculty of Arts. In general, what we want is to go on breaking up the work of the present chairs."

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

He added that it is more on the scientific side that development is needed for the practical purposes of the State. The Council and Faculty of Science wished the University to be regarded as a place where any scientific problems arising in the State could be dealt with. By concentrating the work in this way the best men could be secured to deal with it, and it would give an opportunity to the best students to assist in the investigations.

"The new professorship in botany and parasitology," he said, "shows that the Government approves of and appreciates this policy, which, when thoroughly carried out, means the establishment of laboratories where all scientific problems arising in the business of the State could be sent for solution."

Professor Mitchell is a recognised authority on psychology and economics, and a few years ago published a masterly work entitled "Structure and Growth of the Mind."

X Professor Mitchell is married to a daughter of Mr. Barr Smith.