

Dr Adams' reasons of protest against the appointment of an additional Professor of Chemistry in Anderson's University.

Contributors

Adams, James, M.D.

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DR. ADAMS' REASONS OF PROTEST

AGAINST THE APPOINTMENT OF AN

ADDITIONAL PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY

IN

ANDERSON'S UNIVERSITY.



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TO THE
PRESIDENT, TRUSTEES, MANAGERS, AND VISITORS
OF
ANDERSON'S UNIVERSITY.

GENTLEMEN,

The Trustees of Anderson's University—eighty-one in number—have, among other duties and privileges, that of appointing certain Professorships, the subjects of which are named, and the total number specially limited. In discharging this duty, the Trustees are enjoined to consult with, and to desire the recommendation of the conjoint body of Professors holding office at the time, and in a special manner the Trustees are emphatically charged to give every encouragement to such Professors as are laborious and active in doing their duty.

I protested against the proceedings which hastily, and without due consideration, received the sanction of the meeting of Trustees specially convened on the 1st inst., because that the Trustees had not been furnished with any information which would prepare them for safe legislation, and because that the proceedings otherwise were contrary to, and in utter disregard of, the instructions and safeguards wisely provided by the Founder of the University. The limited support and the expressions of sympathy with, and of assent to my views, which I received at the meeting have since been largely supplemented by communications from Trustees, some of whom were absent from the meeting, and some of whom were present, but who were carried away by *ad captandum* statements, the fallacy of which the time and circumstances did not permit them to analyse and to appreciate. I now feel entitled to express confidently my belief, that with due information and reasonable time for consideration, the Trustees present at that meeting would not have assented to the

formal, cut and dry, and legally prolix deed which in its entirety they were then called upon to comprehend and at once to sanction; and I am assured that there now exists an increasing feeling that a precedent has been laid down and the first steps in a course of action taken that will hinder the progress of the University, that will operate as a great discouragement to men of talent seeking office in the Institution, and that will immediately inflict undeserved pecuniary loss and other injury in quarters where there exists strong claims to protection and to support. Believing that the abrupt action that has been taken in carrying out Mr. Young's intentions has been sanctioned by several individuals unwitting of the offensive and mischievous effects, and hoping that an awakened generous feeling will yet give time for duly considering the position of matters in this its earliest stage, I request attention to the following representations.

Mr. Young's act of founding a "chair" of Technical Chemistry was heralded and appears before the public as a "*gift*" of £10,500 to Anderson's University. Now, the actual fact is, that not one farthing has been so given, or has in any way been subjected to its control, and upon no individual or class of individuals connected with that University has any benefit whatever been conferred. The benefit is all the other way. Mr. Young being desirous of extending a knowledge of chemistry in its relation to arts and manufactures, has, in a liberal spirit that merits the highest commendation, set aside £10,500 to found an institution that will secure the objects *he* has in view, and at same time convey his name and a perpetual record of his munificence to posterity. He has so provided for his new, and therefore experimental institution, that, while it will hold a thoroughly independent position, it instantly secures by its *nominal* connection with Anderson's University such prestige and such a basis of support as ensures its immediate success, and if this was the only result there would be room for no other sentiment than congratulations offered to the shrewd sagacity which characterized the plan for carrying out a praiseworthy intention; but the parasitic graft is placed in a position so advantageous for its own growth, and for the intercepting and drawing away from the Chemistry Classes of Anderson's University the sources of supply necessary for a vigorous existence, that the latter must become subordinated, and that immediately. A little consideration will shew how this must inevitably happen.

The Professor of Chemistry in Anderson's University has no endowment—receives no pecuniary aid whatever from the Trustees. He pays a large rental for the premises he occupies, and these are provided only with seats for the students, and with tables and shelving for apparatus. He is obliged to furnish from his own pocket all the appliances for the conduct and illustration of his instruction in chemistry, and to keep in continual renewal and repair the costly and fragile materials of the entire plant, in which so much of his earnings is irrevocably sunk. He pays rates, taxes, coal, gas, the salaries of assistants, &c. He is elected only from year to year, and at any time he is subject, at the pleasure of the Trustees, to be suspended or dismissed. What are his privileges? He receives the prestige which may attach to the title of Professor, but which, when connected with an established and time-honoured public institution, carries with it a certain amount of public employment, and entitles him to the fees of all the students who resort to the Chemistry Classes of Anderson's University. So precarious, however, and so limited have been these emoluments in former times, that successive occupants of the chair have failed to obtain a supporting income, and have voluntarily abandoned it. It is indeed on record that one of the most talented occupants of this chair, the late Dr. Gregory, was so unsuccessful in maintaining his ground in competition with the endowed chair of Glasgow University, that for three years he was unable to pay even his rental. In a word, the income of the Professor of Anderson's University depends entirely upon his own talent and energy, and if he cannot develope as much employment, or attract as many clients as will cover the large annual outlay for which he is personally responsible, the entire loss falls exclusively upon himself. Not exclusively however, for the interests of the Medical School, and the number of students who resort to the school and fill the benches of the other professors, are largely influenced by the reputation of the Professor of Chemistry. Of this more hereafter. Such is the income of the Chemistry Chair; and it is earned in the Laboratory, by fees received from private pupils for courses of practical instruction, and from fees received from manufacturers, tradesmen, and the general public, for analysing and reporting upon the various commercial and mineral products, and the various manufacturing processes submitted to the Professor of

Chemistry in his Laboratory. Those fees which he can derive from the mere lectures are so limited as to leave no margin that would be creditable to name after the necessary expenses are deducted. It is therefore only the practical teaching and the analyses which furnish the real income and the substantial interest which attaches to the chair, and which recompenses the labour and supports the status of its occupant. I only express a fact that is notorious, when I state that the present Professor has been more fortunate than his predecessors, and that under his regime the School of Chemistry in Anderson's University has been raised to a high reputation—second to no other in the Kingdom—that its accommodation has been repeatedly overflowed, and has required successive enlargements—that the Students attending his lectures exceed in number that of any other school—that the number of his private Pupils is second only to that of the Royal College of Chemistry, London—and, that a largely remunerating professional employment has at length rewarded the energy and the loyalty to local interests, which for thirty years back has been devoted exclusively to the development of the School of Chemistry of Anderson's University. If the sacrifice of money, of talent and labour, and of the best year's of a man's life can give a vested interest in the remunerating business, commercially speaking, that he has builded up, I cannot doubt that the judgment of a fair and generous mind will decide that the present Professor has earned a most unimpeachable claim to the highest and most tender consideration, and to every protection by the Trustees in that vested interest.

It is into the centre of this cultivated field of labour, and backed by the over-riding influence of a rich endowment that Mr. Young lifts his nominee. Let us examine the actual and the relative position of the Teacher of Chemistry in Mr. Young's Institution. He will be permitted to assume the title of Professor, and will thus at one step be placed co-equal with the legitimate Professor. He is not elected by the Trustees of Anderson's University, as all the other Professors require to be, but he is *selected* and appointed, at the approval, and by the will of Mr. Young; neither is he liable to be suspended or dismissed by Anderson's Trustees, but only by Mr. Young himself. He owes Anderson's Trustees nothing, and is not in any way subject to their control. I repeat then, that as with the appointment, so it is with the dismissal. Exclusive control is vested

by Mr. Young in his own hands. It is only at Mr. Young's death that the new Professor comes under other control, and even then it is not the control of Anderson's Trustees, but of Mr. Young's own Trustees, consisting of his son, and of four gentlemen selected by Mr. Young from among the Trustees of Anderson's University. When a vacancy occurs among Mr. Young's Trustees they fill it up themselves, without any necessary reference to, or control of Anderson's Trustees, only they make their selection *from among* Anderson's Trustees. And this slender connection—the only connection—is the bridge over which has been conveyed the fallacious impression so trumpeted about that an actual gift or costly endowment has been bestowed upon Anderson's University. At any moment Mr. Young and the gentlemen he has chosen to assist him in carrying out his projects *could* pursue, in the very teeth of Anderson's Trustees, a policy of indifference, or even a policy openly inimical. This, no doubt, is *improbable*, but quite possible. Time brings many changes more strange and unforeseen. If Mr. Young's Trustees had been selected by him from the Shareholders of the Caledonian Railway or the National Bank, it might with equal truth or propriety be alleged that the Railway or Bank had received a donation or an endowment. I repeat therefore that no donation has been gifted, and no endowment conferred upon Anderson's University. Money has been rattled in a padlocked box, and the Trustees have been regaled with the sound. To return to Mr. Young's Professor. He pays neither rent, taxes, nor salaries. All his apparatus is supplied and maintained for him. He receives from the outset a supporting income; and thus titled, equipped, and supported, he begins his struggle for supremacy with the legitimate Professor. Who can doubt that the premises of the old Professor, upheld as they have been at private cost during the last thirty years, by an occupant now soured and insulted, will soon be emptied? The new Analytical Laboratory, lavishly furnished from a fund of £5,000, with all the newest appliances of modern chemistry, and presided over by an energetic man of ability, will certainly attract immediately the largest proportion of the chemical students of arts and manufactures—the now famous school which in Anderson's University has been literally created by Dr. Penny. If low fees and working apparatus supplied gratis to the students be necessary to secure pupils, that policy will be no strain upon the resources of the new opposition

establishment, the success of which will naturally be ensured at whatever cost, as a project dear to the heart of a millionaire. A competition to obtain analyses, under the pretext of procuring illustrations for practical instruction, will very naturally be simultaneously entered upon, and then the fees, which will be all gain for one side may be ruinously low for the other. The reputation of the School of Chemistry of Anderson's University is *now* so thoroughly established that an analysis which carries with it a certificate emanating from a *Professor of Chemistry* in the building will be equally valued whether granted by the old Professor or by his co-equal coadjutor. Money considerations will therefore in most instances regulate the choice of applicants seeking the aid of chemistry. To what extent the present Professor will be immediately injured, or how long he may struggle against such unkindly odds, can only be matter of conjecture. There can however be no dubiety as to what will occur when the legitimate professorship becomes vacant, either through the demise of the present incumbent or by his being driven, insulted in reputation, injured in pocket, and disgusted in feeling, from the Institution in which he might so confidently have hoped to terminate a brilliant career. Will there then be found a man of talent or of respectable ability who, even if able in a pecuniary sense, will be willing, or so foolishly inconsiderate as to renew at his own cost, the furnishings of the empty laboratory to which he gains access, or so desperately hopeful as to enter upon a competition, where, in the cold shade of a depreciated status, and encouraged only by such sympathy and protection as was meted to his predecessor, he must strive for position and for scraps of emolument—not as his predecessors have done—against the richly endowed Chemistry Chair of *Glasgow University* only—but in addition, against the dominating influence of the rival institution of Mr. Young—planted in the same building—under the same roof—separated by a mere partition wall, and carrying on its operations with all the energy that wealth can impart, and in a laboratory so complete and so luxuriously appointed as to make his own, or anything to which he could ever hope to bring his own, seem mean and insufficient in comparison.

There is indeed little likelihood that the Trustees of Anderson's University could ever again have a suitable choice, *if any*; and it may be surely assumed that the vacant chair would be offered to Mr.

Young's Professor, thus ultimately merging the two chairs in one. This may seem a simple solution of the anticipated difficulty, and the oppressive policy would then seem to terminate only in the injury inflicted on the individual. But it would be no desirable result, and the consequences to the Medical School would be most disastrous. On this point the opinion of the first chemist, and most experienced Teacher of Chemistry in this country, viz., Professor Graham of University College, London, and Her Majesty's Master of the Mint should receive respectful consideration. Addressing the Trustees of Anderson's University, he says, "The most important duties of your Chemical Professor are those connected with the scientific courses of instruction required for the Medical School. It is the cultivation and extension of these classes which will tend most considerably to the profit and reputation of the Professors and University." The wisdom of these views has been well illustrated in the progress of the Andersonian Chemical School since it came under the conduct of the present Professor. In due correspondence with each of the many important and historically famous cases discussed in the criminal courts, the positive triumphs of Chemical Art in its relation to Medical Jurisprudence which have been demonstrated so unfailingly in the successive creditable appearances of the present Professor, have not resulted merely in giving him his present celebrity, and constituting him an authority as an adviser to the Crown, or a much-desired and highly-appreciated witness and referee in civil actions of the highest magnitude, but have reacted on the School and on the University, and have produced the progressively increasing and crowded attendances which at the present moment so peculiarly distinguish all the Chemistry Classes of Anderson's University. The teaching of Chemistry in its relations to Practical Medicine, to Physiology, and to Medical Jurisprudence, requires a very special training, and it would be no disparagement to Mr. Young's Professor, whoever he might be, if he did not possess this training and proved incompetent for the duty. Nor could he be with reason accused of fault,—in view of his special supporting endowment, the fees from his lectures and laboratory pupils, the paramount claims of his duty to Mr. Young's Chair, and the general conditions which connected him so closely with that Institution and so loosely with the Medical School,—if he devoted only a moiety of his time and energies in endeavouring to uphold the latter. He

will look exclusively to the seat of power and to those who fill it. It must indeed be very obvious to any medical man who gives any consideration to this aspect of the question, that the Chemistry Chair of Anderson's University cannot properly be held by one specially appointed because of his fitness to teach Technical Chemistry. So far, therefore, as the Chemistry Chair is an essential and important department of the Medical School, it is, by the Young Professorship being established in juxta position, subordinated and doomed to virtual extinction.

The Medical School—and no department of the Medical School deserves such a fate, and if I seem to digress for a moment to urge its claims it is because I know well that it does not merit the scanty consideration it has hitherto received. But this is no digression, for the Medical School is an essential element in the question I am discussing. Of all the objects contemplated by the Founder, the Medical School is the only one which has been developed, and during the long period that Anderson's University struggled under heavy debt, the income drawn from the Medical School, and the success attending the exertion and sacrifices of the Medical Teachers, unaided in any appreciable manner by the Trustees, have been the main upholding of the University. And yet the poor endowment of even *a room rent-free in which to deliver their lectures* has been a boon so long asked, so long hoped for, so long promised, and so long withheld, that the earliest answer upon record, viz., "The matter is under the consideration of the Managers," bids fair to be the fixed position, and the stereotyped reply for many years to come. It is now thirty-five years since a formal official public assurance was given that "*this rent is not intended to remain as a permanent burden upon the Professors, but it is at present exacted by the Trustees to assist the funds of the University in liquidating a small debt incurred in erecting the present buildings.*" During these thirty-five years how many have been the measures discussed, how large the amount of money and the means lavished on pet projects—and how greatly have been manifested the spirit of patronage and endowment? But whatever the project, and however directed the expenditure, the interests of the Medical School have throughout remained a subject of the slightest consideration and of utter disregard. Not only so, but a system of rule in reference to the Medical College has been acted upon altogether antagonistic to the provisions and intention of

the Founder. Of the Twelve Professors and Lecturers presently in office, not less than Nine belong to the Medical School; and I am utterly amazed that they have not been consulted seeing that this matter affects their interests so narrowly. For such obvious reasons alone they should have been consulted, even if the clearly expressed intention of the Founder and the provision he has made did not show incontestably that it is the duty of the Trustees and the privilege of the Medical Professors that they should be consulted, and their conjoint opinion asked, and very marked deference accorded to their recommendation, whenever the occasion of supplying a vacancy shall arise. It is now many years back that an unheeded appeal was made by the Medical Professors "respectfully to direct the attention of the Managers to the propriety of recognising the Senate, and granting to it such powers and privileges as are consistent with the interests of the University, and in accordance with the intentions of the Founder." Strangely enough, the occasion which induced the Medical Professors to make, what proved a fruitless effort, was the very contingency that has now arrived, viz., the appointment of a Professor of Chemistry. The appeal was made, not only on the ground that they claimed a voice in such appointments in conformity with the intention of the Founder, but because "the Professors have a deep interest in the appointment of fit and proper persons as their colleagues." This disregarded appeal was made conjointly by men, then, and since, highly honoured as Glasgow citizens, and justly regarded with pride by the Medical public, and in particular, venerated by the present Professors as predecessors who had achieved for Anderson's University, that place among educational Institutions which their successors have so creditably maintained. But through succeeding generations, and after a lapse of more than thirty years, the Managers of Anderson's University are found firm to the traditional policy.

When expectation was excited by the vague terms in which a "donation" to the University was first intimated to a meeting of Anderson's Trustees, one gentleman ventured to ask how far the Medical Professors were likely to be recipients of the supposed bounty. The public answer given was to the effect that Chemistry only was to be encouraged, and the emphatic private commentary on the querist which followed was sufficient to arrest the expectations of those who thought that the good time so long promised to the

Medical School had at length arrived. A negative regard was plainly indicated—positive injury was not however foreseen.

When I lodged my Protest I said I was not actuated merely by feelings of the personal slight of my privileges as a Trustee in objecting that I had been called by special summons “to consider an offer to establish a Chair of Chemistry,” seeing that the business ostensibly before the meeting had been already concluded by those who had the power but not the right of carrying it out. It is of the very essence of every trust to be rendered accountable, if not to others—at least to conscience. The control and legislation which are the special province and privilege of the Trustees calls for the exercise of reason and judgment,—not of inclination or of servile acquiescence. But what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion? On 1st September, the date of the meeting of Trustees, the first intimation was made to them of the exact intention of Mr. Young and of the details by which he meant to carry it out; and yet as early as the 23rd August negotiations were in progress for occupying the premises required for the new chair; and on the morning of the very day on which the meeting was called—professedly, and in the words of the billet summoning the meeting—“to consider Mr. Young’s offer to endow a Chair of Technical Chemistry,” the public prints announced that the matter was already past consideration and was concluded. The Trustees were called together not to deliberate, but simply to register Mr. Young’s decree. In the words of a local paper—“Mr. Young has deemed it to be his duty, and say, “It shall be!” *Sic volo, sic jubeo!* From first to last, therefore, the matter of the “Young Chair” has been determined and closed without the slightest reference to the Trustees of Anderson’s University or to the Professors holding office. They have not been called in counsel.

The present Professor seems to have been kept equally in the dark, equally unconsidered, and equally ignored. I learn that the first and indeed the only information he has received, has been furnished to him by the public newspapers—no conference—no attempted arrangement—no offer of compensation—no effort to draw a line which will restrict the proposed new Professor to the special branch that is professedly assigned to him.

I do not feel that this is an occurrence in the history of Anderson’s University that calls for language of adulation, and I cannot join in congratulations offered to a strong arm, which is as strong and

as ready to crush as to uphold. I do not impute intention to injure, and I do not attach undue weight to the under-current of gossip regarding the differences between the President and the Professor which immediately preceded the transactions I am commenting upon. If, however, the immediate superseding of the present Professor, and his ultimate forced retirement had been a contingency really contemplated, there could assuredly have been devised no better means to reach such a result than the proceedings which have been already taken, and are still in progress. It would notwithstanding be to me a very painful regret if in the endeavour to convey my sentiments, I should seem in any way to charge a wilful intention in acting wrongly. But what I do not presume to censure I may have leave to lament. I am more inclined to think that it has never been supposed, or clearly realized in idea that the established Chair of Chemistry was likely to sustain vital injury. With respect to the present Professor it has been assumed that this is a personal question—that although soreness of mind at being so markedly put out of account is natural enough, there is scarcely occasion for other feeling—that his reputation is so high, and his hold upon public confidence so firm, that he is placed above rivalry however strong, even backed with wealth however unstintedly expended—and that the present was “a mere sentimental difficulty” that would soon “blow over.” I think otherwise, and I have endeavoured in some measure to lay my grounds of reason before my fellow Trustees, impelled by a conviction that a bald protest is not sufficient for the occasion and that to bear with oppression and to tacitly sanction its authority, is to be an active accomplice in the abuse. I have spoken plainly, but only, I hope, as the exigency demands. To some I may have been tedious, but this is the misfortune of those to whose influence nothing will be conceded, and who must win every inch of their ground by argument. I sincerely believe that larger interests are involved, and higher principles are in need of vindication than have appeared on the surface of events, and if these principles and interests have inadvertently been over-looked, or insufficiently considered, I have no doubt whatever that there is wisdom, justice, and generosity in the Trustees that will reach a proper determination.

On technical grounds, and to give shape to my remonstrance, I protest against the proceedings of the special meeting of Anderson's Trustees, held 1st September, 1869,—

First, Because it is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the object of the Institution and the intentions of the Founder that an additional Professor of Chemistry should be appointed to discharge any of the duties, and to enjoy the title, privileges, status, or any of the emoluments that have, in accordance with the constitution of Anderson's University, been already bestowed upon and assigned to the Professor of Chemistry, in all its branches, now holding office.

Second, Because that by said proceedings there has been enacted new rules and regulations, and existing rules and regulations have been altered and repealed without notice or intimation having been made and entered in the Record six weeks at least before the time of the discussion or enactment, all in terms of Article Eleventh of the Deed of Constitution.

Third, Because it is contrary to the intention and provision of the Founder and to the Deed of Constitution, Article Seventh, and elsewhere, that the Trustees should appoint any person to a professorship before they have sought and obtained the conjoint opinion and recommendation of the Professors then holding office.

Fourth, Because the Professor of Technical Chemistry, holding office under the provisions of Young's Trust, will not be under the control of the Trustees of Anderson's University.

Fifth, Because that the interests of the Medical School are closely involved in the position and success of the Chair of Chemistry, and will be seriously imperilled by the appointment of a rival Chair established and carrying on its operations in, or in connection with Anderson's University.

Sixth, Because it is the intention and provision of the Founder, Article Eighth, that any Professor who has been laborious and active in the discharge of his duty should receive every encouragement from the Trustees; whereas, the immediate effect of the proceedings of 1st September, by sanctioning the nomination and appointment of an additional Teacher of Chemistry, to enjoy the title of Professor, to hold office, or to discharge duties as a Teacher of Chemistry, *in, or in connection with Anderson's University*, is to discourage in feeling, to lower in status, and to injure in his pecuniary interests, a Professor who has been laborious and active in the discharge of his duty.

JAMES ADAMS, M.D.

62 CAMBRIDGE STREET,
GLASGOW, 11th Sept., 1869.