

Extract from "Report for the year 1892 on the Trade of the Consular District of Chicago." (F.O. Annual Series, 1893, Diplomatic and Consular Reports, No. 1233.)

FIVE years ago the University of Chicago was not thought of, and now there are twelve fine buildings of English Gothic architecture, either finished and occupied or in course of construction, on twenty-five acres of land owned by the University in the neighbourhood of Jackson Park, near the Exhibition grounds, where three years ago was a marsh. The University has now a large staff of professors, selected from other institutions in the country and Europe, and about 1000 students. Its origin and rapid growth are greatly owing to the generosity of Mr. Rockefeller, who in 1889 offered an endowment of £120,000 if a committee could raise the sum of £80,000; this sum was quickly raised, and about the same time a merchant of Chicago presented the University with twelve acres of the ground on which the buildings now stand. Further gifts came in, and up to the present time the total donations amount to £1,284,000, of which Mr. Rockefeller alone has contributed £754,000. The sums given in 1892 amounted to £711,500, and among the gifts was the offer of a telescope, to be the largest and most powerful in the world, which, with the observatory in which it will be placed, will cost more than £150,000. The University was opened last October with a faculty of 115 professors, men and women. One of the features of its regular work will be university extension and a system for the education of the masses.

A magnificent gift was last year presented to the city, and entitled the Armour Institute, after the patriotic and public benefactor of that name. It consists of a large and handsome building already completed, and fitted interiorly with marble wainscoting on every floor, marble arches and marble bath rooms, and the gift was accompanied with an endowment of £289,000. It is to be used as a manual training school and an institute for every branch of science and art; it is fitted with laboratories, forges, gymnasium, and library, and contains electrical, lecture, and other rooms for domestic sciences. It is intended as a benefit to young men and women of every class to be within the range of the poorest, and is taking the form of a school of technology.

ANTIPODEAN RETRENCHMENT.

LAST week a brief reference was made in these columns to the decrease in the grant to the University of Melbourne—a curtailment only justifiable under very special circumstances, and one that may bring reproach on the Colony that adopts it. Since then we have seen a letter in the *Journal of Education* for July by Dr. E. A. Abbott, late Headmaster of the City of London School. The letter is as follows:—

I venture to ask space for the following extract from a letter I received to-day from the Professor of Mathematics in Auckland College, New Zealand. Prof. W. S. Aldis was Senior Wrangler and First Smith's Prizeman in 1861, and subsequently, for several years, Principal of the College of Physical Science in Newcastle-on-Tyne. The failure of his wife's health induced him, about ten years ago, to accept the Auckland Professorship, at some sacrifice of income, on the understanding, of course, that he was irremovable as long as he could do the work. After nearly ten years of service, here is the result, as stated in the extract, which bears date May 19. I give it with the mere suppression of the name of the chief mover in this business.

"Last Monday ——— succeeded in getting a majority of the Council to give me six months' notice of the termination of my engagement, on the ground that the amount of work I did could be perfectly well performed by plenty of men who could be got for a much lower salary. . . . No charge of incompetence or neglect of duty has been made against me, unless by slander behind my back. I have never been asked to meet the Council; the debates were held with closed doors; and, before I even knew what was being proposed, I was allowed to read the result of their discussion in the *New Zealand Herald*."

Those who know my old schoolfellow, Prof. Aldis, as a man incapable of dereliction of duty or exaggeration of fact, will think that the only way of meeting the necessities of the case is

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to rescind the resolution. Others may reasonably defer their final judgment till they hear what is to be said on the other side; but meantime I would appeal to all University men to defer applying for the professorship. For the present, to succeed a professor thus arbitrarily dismissed by the Council involves not only the possibility of being similarly treated, but also the certainty of contributing to what Sir Robert Stout has justly described as "a grievous injury to higher education." Many teachers, and many University men who are not teachers, will, perhaps go with me still further, and agree that, if Prof. Aldis's statements cannot be denied, no one can take the post without some forfeiture of self-respect.

Dr. Abbott puts the case plainly and fairly enough, and, lacking an explanation from the Council concerned, we conclude that this is another example of the reactionary policy of retrenchment which now fills the minds and dictates the deeds of Colonial officials. Let them retrench by all means, but in the right direction. There could hardly be a more short-sighted and mistaken policy than that of curtailing educational grants in order to redeem a position lost by extravagant expenditure. Wealth-producing power and facilities for obtaining knowledge go hand in hand. In the past many of the Colonies have proved that they recognised the prime importance of their Universities and similar establishments. Indeed, they have often shown the way to the authorities at home. Apparently, however, this wisdom is departing from Colonial Councils, for healthy branches are being lopped off indiscriminately, while obtrusive suckers at the roots of the constitution are left untouched. However, it is not too late to rescind the measures that have been taken—measures that are derogatory both to the good sense and dignity of Colonial Governments. We trust that the next mail will bring us news of the reinstatement of Prof. Aldis and the restoration of University grants.

SCIENCE IN THE MAGAZINES.

THE July magazines contain a few papers of scientific interest. In the *New Review* Mr. E. R. Spearman writes on "Criminals and their Detection." This article is a vigorous protest against the crude methods of identification employed at Scotland Yard. In spite of the thousands of blunders that have been made, our police authorities are stolidly indifferent to their imperfections, and look upon the Bertillon system as a "scientific fad." But this is the way in which the official mind usually views matters of scientific importance. To show the absurdity of the position taken up, Mr. Spearman gives a full description of the Bertillon process of measurement, with the results obtained since the method was adopted in France, and compares it with the haphazard system of identification used in our prisons. But for the fact that officialism never acknowledges itself to be in the wrong, *Bertillonage* would have been established in England long ago.

The Bertillon system, says Mr. Spearman, is fast circling the globe. Our great Indian Empire has taken it up, the whole province of Bengal being recently put under its protection, and still more recently the island of Ceylon. Even in still more Eastern Asia, Japan has borrowed M. Bertillon's scheme. In Eastern Europe, Russia (St. Petersburg and Moscow) and Roumania are using the system, which is also practised in Norway and Switzerland. In North America the United States Government has successfully applied anthropometry to deal with deserters in the army and navy; while Chicago not only uses the system for its own purposes, but is the centre of a large field of operations in the States and in the adjoining portions of the Dominion of Canada. Beside this, on the Pacific coast it was successfully used to enforce the Chinese immigration law, the Celestials being able to use each other's permits with impunity, all being alike as two peas to the casual Caucasian glance, but not to the Bertillon compasses. In South America the Bertillon system has also penetrated, the Argentine Confederation making use of it.