

The Treasury Grant to Universities.

WE have already referred on several occasions to the proposed reduction, from 1,500,000*l.* to 1,200,000*l.*, in the Treasury grant-in-aid of university education for the coming financial year 1922-23. A memorandum, in which the dangers of reducing the grants and the rightful claims of the universities are ably stated, signed by the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities of Birmingham, Durham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, and Sheffield, has been forwarded to the Prime Minister. The document has also received the approbation of the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, London, Bristol, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Wales. As we have repeatedly pointed out, the universities are the chief centres of research; they advance science and, to regard the matter from the purely commercial side, they have unquestionably added millions to the national wealth by the way in which they have enriched industry and commerce. In return for their great services, and in order to continue to be able to give such service, they are asking the Government to assist in maintaining their relatively modest financial resources. Encouraged by the hope that funds raised locally would be met by a corresponding increase in Treasury grants, great efforts have been made and every form of self-help employed; severe economy has

been practised in structural expenditure and in the maintenance and equipment of laboratories; students' fees have been increased so that one-third of the total income of the universities of the North is derived from this source; private benefactors have given 1,175,000*l.* in response to urgent appeals; and local authorities have increased their grants to these universities from 74,268*l.* in 1913-14 to 135,868*l.*

In spite of this effort and the proportion of the Treasury grant allocated to the universities of the North of England, heavy losses were sustained in the working of the last academic year. It is therefore considered that with a curtailment of the existing grant the efficiency of the universities will be seriously impaired. In other countries, with which Britain must come into competition, efforts are being made to increase the resources of the universities. It is only necessary in this connection to recall the case of McGill University of Montreal, which has recently received sums amounting to seven million dollars in gifts from private benefactors and subsidies from public funds. The universities are admittedly of prime national importance, and when their resources, exploited to the uttermost, are insufficient for the maintenance of efficiency and vigour, it becomes a national duty to provide the necessary additional funds.

The Royal Academy Winter Exhibition.

THE exhibition which opened this week of works by recently deceased members of the Royal Academy affords an opportunity of comparing the pictures which have been exhibited at different dates during the past fifty years with those of the present time as shown year by year at the summer exhibitions. Even a rapid tour round the galleries shows that, so far as landscapes and Nature studies are concerned, the past can well bear comparison with the present, the number of unsatisfactory representations of Nature in the present exhibition being remarkably few. This does not prove that such pictures were not exhibited fifty years ago; it may indicate only that the Selection Committee in making choice has avoided pictures of that type. It may, on the other hand, indicate that "recently deceased members" were less addicted to post-impressionism and similar phases of art than those still living.

Thirty-six artists are represented in the exhibition. Of those who excelled in landscapes Sir Ernest Waterlow must be mentioned. He is represented by eighteen works of almost uniform excellence. Alfred Parsons's landscapes are equally pleasing, particularly No. 233, "River Scene," first exhibited in 1878. His garden pictures are not quite so successful, the flowers not presenting in all cases an entirely natural appear-

ance. Napier Hemy, whose sea paintings are so well known, is represented by several of these works, and also by views of the Thames in London, of which No. 80, "The Riverside, Chelsea" (1873), derives an added historical interest as showing a wooden bridge over the Thames in the foreground, the familiar square tower of Chelsea old parish church being seen behind. Much more ancient history is shown in "The Catapult" (No. 208), a stout wooden apparatus manipulated by Roman soldiers in the siege of a walled city. The construction looks strangely modern.

Peter Graham's works show much more variety than was to be found in his recent paintings. One of the earliest shown, "A Spate in the Highlands" (No. 105), exhibited in 1866, is typical of his modern work with hill-mist in a Scotch glen, but without cattle. Then in 1873 came a Highland farm scene, and in 1896 and 1898 two really excellent pictures of sea and rocks (Nos. 191 and 216). It is a great pity that a subject in which the artist showed such skill should have been entirely discarded later in favour of the mountain scenes, successful as these were. It would not be fitting to close this note without favourable mention of Briton Riviere's numerous scenes from animal life, some of which are very striking.

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Botany of the Argentine Republic.

THE *Anales* (vol. 29, 1917) of the Museo Nacional de Historia Natural de Buenos Aires, recently received, a bulky volume of 700 pages, is devoted to the botany of the Argentine Republic. The earlier portion of the book contains the first part of a catalogue of the flowering plants, with the preparation of which Messrs. Hauman and Vanderveken have been occupied since the foundation of the botanical section of the museum in 1914. The catalogue consists of a list of all the species recorded for the area, under their families, which are arranged according to Engler's

system. The entries in each family have been revised by the latest monograph dealing with the family in question. Under each species references are given to the publications on the authority of which the species is included. A systematic enumeration of the results of botanical explorations in this large area of temperate and sub-tropical South America has been much needed, and it is to be hoped that the authors will carry it to completion. A communication by Mr. Hauman on the orchids of the Argentine gives some indication of the work which remains to be done.