SPECIAL REPORT.

CINCINNATI, December 17, 1888.

To the Board of Directors:

Those of you who were in the Board when I accepted the appointment of President of the University know the hesitation with which it was done on my part, and my purpose that it should be a temporary arrangement. I believe the time has come when the Board can release me without serious detriment to the interests of the institution, and when economical reasons make it proper to save for other uses the sum now appropriated to the Presidency. In support of this view I will lay before you, as briefly as may be, the facts in the growth and present condition of the University, which are the basis of my conclusion.

A FREE COLLEGE FOR CINCINNATI.

The gift of Charles McMicken to the city of Cincinnati, which is the chief endowment of the University, was limited by terms and conditions which have not always been easy of interpretation, nor have they always seemed well adapted to the changed circumstances of the city and to the progress of the system of education. His munificence has, however, secured to the city the benefits of a free collegiate education, crowning the work of instruction begun in the primary schools and continued through the High Schools, which are in no small part the gifts of other public-spirited Cincinnatians—Woodward and Hughes. Whether the McMicken bequest shall or shall not ultimately become the nucleus around which may gather other
noble endowments, which shall enlarge the University work for the benefit of the whole Ohio valley, no small result is already attained when every ambitious youth in the city, male or female, is offered courses of liberal education leading to all the principal degrees in the arts and in science, as free from cost as in the common school itself.

THE COURSES OF STUDY.

These courses are framed with careful view to the demands of the learned professions and to the probable needs of students who may devote themselves to scientific pursuits. They are, 1st, the general classical and literary course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts; 2d, a literary course covering both ancient and modern literature, but with less mathematical study than the first, and leading to the degree of Bachelor of Letters; 3d, a course in which the central studies are scientific and mathematical, leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science; 4th, a scientific course with special reference to theoretical and practical engineering, and leading to the degree of Civil Engineer. In each of these the effort is made to unite enough of general literary and philosophical work with the central subjects of study, to ensure culture broad enough to be properly called a liberal education. Each of them is also subject to modification within reasonable limits, which shall adapt the education to the probable future career of the student. Thus the course in letters is given with or without the study of the Greek, or may include both the French and German languages or one of them. The course in science may look more strongly to Chemistry as a central subject, or may be more extensive in Biology and Physiology, or in Botany or Geology. About a dozen well proportioned courses, with definite characteristics, are thus offered to the election of the student, each of which is full enough of solid work to keep the brightest of our youth up to a high standard of earnest and industrious effort through the whole four years of his undergraduate career. Post-graduate courses are also offered, giving opportunity for the pursuit of special lines of study preparatory to a professional career in science or in literature.
The preparation required for admission to the University is equal to that demanded in the colleges of the country which are by common consent regarded as of the first class. The undergraduate courses may be confidently compared with those of other colleges of the high class referred to, with the assurance that the degrees conferred are full evidence of as high a standard, and successful accomplishment of as great an amount of intellectual work here as elsewhere.

THE FACULTY.

The corps of active instructors, twelve in number, is not large, as compared with that of larger and richer institutions, and each is therefore obliged to devote more time and labor to class instruction than would under other circumstances be necessary. This they have done, not only faithfully, but with earnest zeal and devotion. In most colleges where the number of students is large, the work of class instruction devolves upon tutors to a great extent, and the students come directly in contact with the matured experience and ability of the professors for comparatively little of the time. Here we have no tutors, and our students have daily and hourly the advantage of personal intercourse with and assistance from a corps of matured and able experts, not only in knowledge, but in teaching. I risk nothing in saying that results prove that a positive gain to the student is found in this. His progress is more rapid, his enthusiasm is aroused, his powers are quicker developed, and his grasp of his studies is made surer and stronger. Subjects which are ordinarily regarded as dry and repellant become attractive, and an enthusiasm is aroused even for those which are regarded as driest. I venture to quote a passage from an address by our Professor Eddy before the Association for the Advancement of Science, which is based upon experience in the University of Cincinnati. Speaking of abstruse mathematics when thus presented to the pupil, he says: "Under such influences, I have seen students gain, during the first half year of the college course, such familiarity with those branches of higher analysis which are the common ground-work of modern investigation in
analytical mechanics and mathematical physics, as to have really opened to them the literature of these subjects, and this not in isolated instances merely, but with class after class."

What is thus said for mathematical and scientific instruction might justly be said also for the other departments of philosophy and of literature. It is only justice to call marked attention to this. College teaching is not performed upon a public stage like an operatic performance, and little public éclat is connected with it. Its quiet seclusion in college halls makes many forget its existence. Of its highest results few but the student himself and his teacher are aware. The fruit is gathered years after the planting and cultivation are done, and the fruition is the broader intellectual life, the more marked success in difficult paths of professional work, in men who, except for their fortunate association with able teachers, would not have accomplished what their native powers were capable of. It is doing a plain duty, therefore, for me to report to the people of Cincinnati through you, that those of our youth who take full and earnest advantage of the means of higher education here offered, need not envy the students of other colleges of the country. The opportunities offered them are not inferior to those they would find away from home.

The professors of the University have some reasons to apply to themselves the proverb that "a prophet is not without honor save in his own country." The appreciation of former occupants of chairs in this University has not been lacking, certainly, in the authorities of other institutions of learning, and most of those who have left us, have done so to fill places recognized as near the head of their several departments in the whole country. The University and the Board have a right to regard such recognition as a reflex endorsement of the wisdom of their original selection here, and of the good work here done by which the full maturity of their powers was developed. The professors now in the chairs are worthy compeers of their former colleagues or their predecessors. Professor Frederick D. Allen was called from your chair of Ancient Literature to that of Greek in Yale, and thence to that of Comparative Philology in Harvard. Professor Ormond Stone
was called to the Astronomical Observatory of the University of Virginia, where is the McCormick Telescope, one of the great telescopes of the world. Professor F. W. Clarke was called from your chair of Chemistry to the head of the Chemical Department of the U. S. Geological Survey, where the extent of the chemical investigations and the corps of experts under his direction make the position one of the most important, in a scientific point of view, anywhere to be found. Professor Charles H. Gilbert has only just now been invited to assume the scientific charge of the U. S. Fish Commission's investigation of the marine fauna of the Pacific Coast in the ship Albatross. From such examples our citizens may judge of the class of men the Board of Directors have secured for the higher education of Cincinnati youth.

PROGRESS.

The growth of the college during the past few years has been every way satisfactory. Circumstances which need not be recalled made it our first duty to win public confidence for both the solid value of the curriculum, and the moral and mental tone governing the institution in all its work. Its relations to the high-schools and to the private schools of the city and its neighborhood have been cultivated and assured, so that a cordial and hearty sympathy and confidence exist between the University and the preparatory schools on which it must depend. Such work can not be very rapid, for most students who are looking to a collegiate course, have a particular college in mind during the last two or three years of their preparatory work. Those who have not fully resolved upon a collegiate course, are apt to choose lines of study with a view to practical life immediately after leaving the high-school. An increased desire to take advantage of a free college education, will not show itself in an immediate increase of the college classes, but in the large number who shape the preparatory course with reference to entering the University in two or three years. We are now feeling the results of public confidence in this respect, and in matriculating freshman classes of from fifty to sixty students, are taking into the University nearly all of
those who are preparing for college in the city and its suburbs. There will always be some who, from hereditary attachments to colleges in which parents or older members of the family were educated, will naturally go elsewhere. In other cases, a change of scene and of surroundings will be considered by parents desirable for the student as tending to awake new interest or to break up habits or associations which may be in the way of thorough work. Due allowance for such things must be made, and no local institution can ever hope to secure all the pupils who reside in the city. It is strictly true, however, that we are now matriculating as large a proportion of those who here prepare for college as we can reasonably expect. The number will increase with the growth of the city and with the growth of the desire for higher education and an appreciation of its advantages, but we may be content if the percentage which enters the University out of the whole number fitting for college in Cincinnati shall continue as great as at present.

PERSISTENCE IN THE COURSE.

The diminution always noticeable in the size of the higher classes in college is often misunderstood. It is inevitable in the nature of the case, though circumstances may make it more or less in particular instances. All education is a process of sifting and of the "survival of the fittest." Some seven thousand little children enter the primary schools of Cincinnati every year; but about one hundred and fifty graduate from the high-schools. Over ninety per cent. drop out by the way. Poverty compels many to leave school and earn a livelihood. Health fails with many. Many show no love for study and throw away the advantages offered them. In the higher walks of student life the reasons may vary, but the fact remains. The upper grade of every high-school is small compared with the lower.* Public schools usually show more of this difference than others. The reason is obvious. When the education is free, a parent will keep his children in

*Four or five hundred enter the lower grade of our high-schools yearly, though the number of graduates is only that which I have above stated.
attendance as long as seems desirable, without feeling that a definite completion of a course of study is necessary. On the other hand, when it is a question of sending a youth to a school where considerable expense is involved, it is more natural to count the whole cost, and not to embark in it except with a well defined purpose to complete the whole. It results, therefore, that the diminution of numbers in advanced classes must always be expected to be greater in public than in private schools, in free colleges than in those charging for tuition, though the rule works in both kinds of institutions. When economy is an important factor, it is not strange if students are kept in the free institutions during the earlier years, and the experiment of a change made in the latter. The prestige of the name of an old and famous institution of learning has a natural and proper influence, even when the education it gives may be no whit superior. There are also temporary causes of diminution of classes, operating exceptionally. Such was the health of this city during 1887, when the long continued drought induced an unusual amount of disease, and made exceptional inroads upon our list of students. But when all these things are taken into consideration, we may still say that the persistence of our students to the end of a college course once undertaken, does not compare unfavorably with other institutions of a similar character.

The Free College of the City of New York has a greater resemblance to the University of Cincinnati than any other in the country. It has been more than twenty years doing college work. Its standard of admission and curriculum are practically the same as those of the leading eastern colleges. Its expenditures, the size of its corps of professors, and the whole number of its students are larger than ours in nearly the ratio of the relative size of the two cities. The last report from the College of New York, given by the National Commissioner of Education, shows the following attendance:

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<th>Year</th>
<th>1st Year</th>
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<th>3d Year</th>
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<td></td>
<td>152</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>45</td>
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The attendance at the University of Cincinnati for the past three years has been:
It should be distinctly understood that we do not object to young men and young women taking a single year of our college course. We encourage them to go as far as their time and circumstances will permit. Young ladies, especially, may be benefited by a year or two in advanced literary and scientific studies, which they may take without leaving the parental home, though they do not mean to commit themselves to the full work of the undergraduate course, or to look toward professional life. They are required to have the full preparation for entering college, but the continuation of the work, when entered, is left to the determination of circumstances. The opportunity for thus enlarging their education indefinitely, is a home advantage offered to the young of both sexes of no small value, and it should not be our policy to trammel or restrict it. The analysis of our class lists show that no unusual proportion of our students is drawn away to other schools of learning, but the variation in classes is due to circumstances which, in the main, are decisive of the extent to which the student or his parents feel it wise to continue the education.

THE FUTURE.

We may therefore fairly assert that the University of Cincinnati is successfully fulfilling its mission as an institution for the free college education of our citizens, and that its organization and means promise to be adequate to the growth of this work for some time to come. We have to face the fact, however, that by its constitution the increase of students brings no increase of income. Its very success increases the strain upon its pecuniary resources. A few years will make the present college building too strait for its classes. The same progress will make a demand for additional instruction as the classes grow too large to be satisfactorily instructed without division into sections. Already you
find need of close economy in order to meet the reasonable demands of the college upon the present scale. Under the rules of the Board the business problems are outside of my sphere of duty. Your action upon them has been under the advice of committees of business men of large experience, and of lawyers of the highest standing. The economic question, however, is directly involved in the executive administration of the Academic Department. It has seemed to me that the organization of the Board of Directors and of the Faculty in this institution has peculiarities which may be turned to advantage in the direction referred to. Very few colleges have resident Boards of Trust meeting monthly as you do. The common practice is for such Boards to meet semi-annually, or at most quarterly, and the burden of business administration is thrown upon a small committee of which the President is usually one. The frequent sessions of your Board give exceptional advantage in the care of business, and it has been my constant aim to make similar frequent meetings of the academic faculty assume the actual administration of the proper collegiate work. This practice has now become so settled, that I think it may be trusted to insure co-operation between the Board and the Faculty, and to warrant you in leaving the proper academic administration to the Faculty as an organic body. I am aware that some members of the Board think that former experience is not favorable to this idea, but I submit that at that time there was no habit of organized administrative work on the part of the Faculty as a whole. Such a habit has now been formed. If the Board will adopt a rule to refer all questions affecting the college work proper to the Faculty, and ask their report and recommendation as a unit, I feel assured that the knowledge and zeal of such a corps of expert instructors, will give the wisest direction and management to the college work. The essential point is that recommendation and action shall be through as regular organized action on their part as is that of the Board in its sphere. It is in this way that I believe the salary paid for executive control and management may be turned to other uses for which there is need. For more than a year past I
have had this result steadily in view. Nearly a year ago, I laid before the Board a schedule of some things in which the expenditure of some money would enlarge the usefulness of the teaching force. Some new apparatus of special kinds was and is greatly needed. Some books of reference are essential in each department, notwithstanding the hearty efforts of the authorities of the Public Library to make it as fully as possible the library of the University.

The fundamental condition of prosperity in the future must be the solid and thorough work in the present, which will quietly but surely give the University a reputation which will draw to it new endowments and enlarged means of usefulness. We may be tempted to impatience because all that is desired cannot be done at once, but it should be remembered that our greatest institutions have found that they have not reaped a prosperous harvest till generations of their graduates, by eminence in learning and in affairs, have spread the reputation of their alma mater.

Your obedient servant,

J. D. Cox,
President.