

A FUND of \$100,000 is being raised by the trustees and friends of Oberlin, the income from which is to be applied to the reduction of the term bills of needy students. About one-tenth of this amount has already been collected.

THE Commission appointed under the University of London Act, 1898, consisting of Lord Davey (Chairman), the Bishop of London, Sir William Roberts, Sir Owen Roberts, Professor Jebb, Professor Michael Foster and Mr. E. H. Busk, with Mr. Bailey Saunders as Secretary, has commenced its sittings.

THE Montreal correspondent of the New York *Evening Post* states that according to present arrangements the formal opening of the new chemistry and mining building at McGill University will take place on December 20th. There is a possibility, however, that an earlier date may be selected in order to meet the convenience of Lord Strathcona, who wishes to be in Scotland for Christmas day. The Governor-General and the Countess of Minto will be present. The authorities of McGill University have been notified of the loss of between \$3,000 and \$4,000 worth of chemical apparatus intended for the new chemical laboratories at the University. The goods were shipped by the ill-fated *Westmeath*, which was lost at sea a short time ago.

DR. JOHN HENRY BARROWS has been elected to the Presidency of Oberlin College. This action was taken by the trustees of Oberlin on Tuesday, November 29th, and the vote was unanimous. Dr. Barrows is widely known as the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Chicago, and as the one who pushed the Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair through to its successful end. During the last two years he has been lecturing in Calcutta, India, on the Haskell lectureship of the University of Chicago. Definite word has not yet been received as to his acceptance, but the trustees had assurance that he would accept, before the action was taken.

THE Normal College, New York City, has adopted courses of study by which the students may receive academic degrees. The members of the faculties concerned with the sciences are

as follows: Professor Joseph A. Gillette, analytical geometry; Professor Burgess, biology and geology; Emily I. Conant, Ph.D., psychology, and Isabel Camp, Ph.D., pedagogics.

THE Council of King's College, London, have appointed Mr. Ernest Wilson, M.I.E.E., professor of electrical engineering in succession to the late Professor Hopkinson.

#### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

##### A SELF-READJUSTING 'COHERER.'

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Van Gulik has shown [*Wied. Ann.*, No. 9.] that, when an oscillating electric discharge takes place across a minute gap between the ends of two fine platinum wires, the ends of the wires are drawn together and remain clinging together after the discharge has ceased.

Upon repeating some of his experiments in a modified form, I am led to the conclusion that such adherence does not always result if the gap be between dissimilar metals.

Advantage may be taken of this to construct a self-readjusting 'coherer.' If a Branly tube be filled with a mixture of tin and aluminium filings it acts normally in so far that, when subjected to the influence of electric waves, its resistance is greatly diminished. When the radiation has ceased, however, its resistance again rises, unaided by any tapping back. A similar result obtains, though the reaction is usually more sluggish, with a pile of alternate disks of aluminium and tin foil.

A. E. LAWRENCE.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,  
November 19, 1898.

##### ADDITIONAL NOTES ON AN APPLE CANCKER.

FROM observations made since the publication of the article 'An Apple Canker' in SCIENCE for October 28, 1898, it seems highly probable that *Sphaeropsis malorum*, Peck, is not only parasitic on the wood of the apple, but on the wood of pear and quince as well. It would, therefore, seem that a further note on the subject will not be out of place.

In the spring of 1898 specimens of blighted apple twigs were received. It was not determined at the time what was the cause of the