

A STATEMENT REGARDING THE SITUATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE:—Letters received by the writer from professional friends in various parts of the country indicate more than a passing interest in the university crisis at Cincinnati. The reason is not far to seek. The measure which has been here enacted shows that it is possible in the United States of America for nearly an entire college faculty to be summarily discharged without specific reason and without a hearing. This fact gives to a local trouble an aspect of national concern. The security of the tenure of office of every professor in the country is responsive to such a shock.

One is naturally inclined to shield from publicity a purely family trouble, but the common interest in the present case leads me to submit for the readers of SCIENCE a brief statement that may be of service to all who desire to find correct answers to several pertinent questions.

What is the explanation of this revolutionary procedure? Does the difficulty center in the Board of Directors, in the Faculty, or in the President? As one who has just resigned from the Faculty, after a term of service covering nearly seventeen years, I may seem in a measure disqualified to make an *ex parte* statement, but the demand is for facts rather than argumentation, and the main facts are best known to the Faculty.

A comprehensive view of the situation must embrace the Board, the Faculty and the President. I restrict my attention to the most salient features of these three phases of the main question.

The conditions as to each are somewhat exceptional. The Board of Directors consists, normally, of nineteen members, including, *ex officio*, the mayor of the city. They are nominated by the judges of the Superior Court. The term of office is six years. The members are generally men of considerable professional or business experience, but frequently without college training, or knowledge of university management.

The varied business of the Board is subdivided and referred to special committees, in-

cluding a committee on finance, a committee on law, a committee on buildings, a committee on academic department, etc. While the final authority rests with the Board, the voice of each committee is practically decisive in its department. The members have seemed disposed to limit the expenditure of time and thought to the special duties assigned to them. The majority of them are seldom seen at the University even on great public occasions like commencement.

The educational horizon of members of the Board may be discerned from the following circumstance. The special committee in closest touch with the President met with a committee of citizens in order to confer concerning the present difficulty. The argument was advanced that the Board was acting strictly within its rights in the matter, inasmuch as it was simply a question of discharging and hiring employees. The changes contemplated were desirable, even from a business standpoint, since as good, or better men could be secured for less money.

During the twenty-five years which have elapsed since the organization of the university, the institution has been without a president.

The Dean of the Faculty has been charged with administrative functions and the deanship has been at times a rotary office. On several occasions a difference of judgment arose between the Faculty and members of the Board as to the internal administration. The Faculty took a positive stand, incurring thereby the displeasure of members of the Board. The depth and implacability of this feeling were never realized by the Faculty until the recent publication of a lengthy statement, drawn up by a special committee of the Board, in defense of their present course.

Again, the Faculty has received censure in not having been able always to act as one man in the government of the student body.

The reportorial mind has been quick to attribute any differences of opinion to personal ambitions and jealousies. I do not doubt the sincerity of members of the Board in asserting that many members of the Faculty strove to secure the deanship as a possible stepping-stone to the vacant presidency. This view is so far from the actual truth, however, as to be even grotesque. The deanship has long been a thank-

less and most undesirable office. One member of the Faculty who held the office for several years, accepted it reluctantly after much persuasion.

The several difficulties above referred to were never of such moment as to interfere seriously with the steady development of the institution; the number of students increased continuously, a high standard was always maintained, and the good will of the community was manifested by benefactions of increasing frequency and magnitude. Never were such evidences of public appreciation so marked, as in the year ending with June, 1899, at which time the new president was elected.

The Faculty had long desired the guidance of a wise president, and to President Ayers the members at once extended the assurance of their cordial co-operation and support. This attitude was not reciprocated.

From the published statement of the special committee of the Board, we infer that the president had been fully imbued with the ideas of members of the Board who were opposed to the Faculty. He had asked and received almost absolute power. How he has used this power is known. He was made the sole channel of communication between the Faculty and the Board, and he has made himself the judge as to what communications should reach the Board. In more than one instance he has withheld from the Board orderly communications addressed to it, and duly entrusted to him for transmission.

The summary dismissal of the Faculty, in the face of excellent work accomplished and recorded year after year, raised a storm of public indignation. A committee of prominent citizens, numbering over twenty-five was organized and a subcommittee was then appointed to make a thorough investigation and report. This committee was hard at work for several weeks.

It is in evidence that in October, soon after the opening of the term, the President gave a dinner at his house to the members of the Board, and that on this occasion he asked and received pledges of support in whatever he might recommend in the way of changes in the Faculty.

Whatever may have been the advice given to the President, he seems to have surpassed all expectations. Members of the Board have expressed surprise and dissatisfaction, but under

the circumstances they felt under obligation to support the new administration.

In conclusion, I refer, for the benefit of all who desire detailed information, to the 'Final Report of the Citizens' Committee on University Affairs' which will soon be issued in pamphlet form. A synopsis of the pamphlet is as follows:

1. Unauspicious opening of the college year.
2. Abrupt and sweeping demand for resignations.
3. Emphatic protest and peremptory resignation of Professor Myers in an open letter.
4. Public opinion finds expression in the organization of a citizens' committee which forms a subcommittee for investigation.
5. Report of subcommittee to the general committee of citizens. Much light thrown on the situation. The Faculty vindicated and President Ayers arraigned. The subcommittee instructed to appear in behalf of the Faculty at the next meeting of the Board.
6. Pleas for justice before the Board of Directors. A public hearing of the Faculty requested. A petition of the Faculty for an open investigation returned to the writers by reason of an alleged informality. Special committee of the Board appointed to draw up a reply to the citizens' committee and report at a special meeting. The minority denied representation.
7. The special committee of the Board makes an elaborate report. Indiscriminate accusations. General defense of the Board and of the President. The request of citizens refused. A hearing not granted.
8. Resignation of Professor French. The report accompanying the resignation not presented by the President, although addressed to the Board of Directors. The Board declines to hear the report when a demand therefor is made by one of its members.
9. Remarkable admissions by President Ayers.
10. The report of Professor French.
11. Review of the Board's defense.

Any one may obtain a copy of this pamphlet by addressing W. N. Hobart, 243 East Pearl street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

All official statements and reports, pertinent to both sides of the question, are given in full.

THOMAS FRENCH, JR.

CINCINNATI, April 10, 1900.

INFORMATION WANTED.

THE psychophysiology of anæsthesia is a productive subject greatly in need of adequate investigation and discussion. Both pure science and practical surgery have doubtless much to gain from a deeper-going study of experiences