

**Report to the Radcliffe Trustees for 1876 : with a note on some points in the recent administration of science apparatus in the University of Oxford / by Henry W. Acland.**

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# REPORT

TO

## THE RADCLIFFE TRUSTEES

FOR

1876,

WITH A

NOTE ON SOME POINTS IN THE RECENT ADMINISTRATION OF  
SCIENCE APPARATUS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

BY

HENRY W. ACLAND,

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE, F.R.S.,  
PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL,  
AND RADCLIFFE LIBRARIAN.

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OXFORD :

BY E. PICKARD HALL AND J. H. STACY

PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY



## REPORT TO THE RADCLIFFE TRUSTEES.

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*Oxford, July 11, 1876.*

MY LORD DUKE AND GENTLEMEN,

1. IN the last year the Radcliffe Library has appeared to discharge its usual functions. There seems no reason for doubting its increasing value. Besides the ordinary routine work, a third edition of the Catalogue of the Students' Library has been begun with the aid of the Professors of the Museum, and will be shortly completed. The Trustees are aware that this Catalogue is a list of the best elementary works, and of some select typical monographs, in all the chief departments of Natural Science.

2. A third edition of the Catalogue of the Serials has been printed. This is more extensive than the former editions. It describes a good working collection of scientific periodicals, such as is now essential for persons engaged in scientific research. The last edition of these books was issued in 1871.

3. The main Catalogue of the Library has also been completed. It is on the plan adopted in the Athenæum Library. Every year the additions are printed. When so printed, a slip containing each title is placed in its proper order in one of eight folio volumes. These volumes may be calculated to last to the end of this century. The title of every newly purchased volume is entered daily



in a MS. year-book, and on a slip. The slips are kept in subjects, as are the volumes on the shelves of the Library\*. The last title in the eight folios is 'Zypæus. Fundamenta Medicinæ reformatæ physico-anatomica.' Zypæus was a Physician of the University of Louvain. In his preface, written 1687, he comments thus on the state of physical research in his day :—

'Felice sæculo vivimus, exulat prorsus in omni Academia ignavia, indefesse operantur Chymici, discurrunt, disputant-que Physiologi, nullibi quies, studium ubique perpetuum ut vel omnes unanimi voce ad paucos intra annos cuncta sua naturæ arcana abripienda et manifestanda diceres conspirasse. Hinc facta mirabilis Medicinæ variatio et illustratio, hinc multa quondam primo vera, jam facta ridicula, hinc prævalet modo in Medicina ratio auctoritati, hinc multa inutilæi eliminantur, hinc denique nuda veritas expetitur, eliciturque.'

It is useless to speculate what Zypæus would now say could he learn what Science has done for the world, and hear how little the world is said to do and has done for Science, or could he see the Periodical Scientific Literature.

4. The Librarian had the honour of inviting last year H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, H.R.H. the Princess Louise, H.R.H. Prince Leopold, and the Marquis of Lorne to the Library, to meet members of the University, and of explaining to them the progress in the work of the Library since its removal to the Museum: just as twenty years before the old Library had been used to welcome the Earl of Derby, on the occasion of laying the first stone of the Museum. That act led subsequently to the transfer of the Library for the general benefit of the University.

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\* I must here again record my sense of the value of the services of the Assistants in the Library, Messrs. Haines, Bailey, and Walker. The Catalogues have been prepared chiefly by Mr. Bailey.



5. Nevertheless it may be well now to revise the situation in which the Library has been placed by the transfer. The transitional state of the affairs of the University, the publication of the Reports of the Commissions of the Duke of Devonshire and of the Duke of Cleveland, and the progress of the discussion as to grants in aid of Research, seem to mark this as a proper time. But other circumstances also call for reflection.

6. A detailed history of the movements in aid of Science teaching and study in Oxford would be tedious. It is sufficient to say now that about thirty years ago an attempt was made to reconstruct the whole of the Science apparatus in Oxford, and rearrange the administration of its Scientific Institutions. The principles laid down were that the means for studying the material Universe should be concentrated, and complete; that the Universe being One should be so represented, from the first, to the mind of the Student; that all the Science Departments in Oxford should be brought together into one Institution; and that this Institution should be capable of extension as need and opportunity required.

7. Christ Church lent to the Linacre Professor her extensive series of Anatomy and Physiology. The University sent its Geological and Zoological Collections. Mr. Hope gave his Entomological Cabinets. The University moved its Physical apparatus, which at a later stage the Clarendon Trustees so entirely replaced that they may be said to have founded the study of Physics in Oxford, fortunate in finding Professor Clifton ready to the work. More lately the general physical conceptions and facts of the universe have been displayed close to the Museum by the foundation of an important Observatory for Astronomical Physics. This was so placed as to leave room to the south, east, and west for a Botanical Department. Only one great portion of Nature



remained unrepresented (except by carvings of Natural Orders on capitals in the Court)—the whole of the existing Flora. The Fossil Flora of course is there already in the Geological Series.

8. Now you were asked to aid the nascent Institution on two grounds: 1st, That you might by your books, your foundation, and your officers promote the literary position of all Physical Science, and so advance both ordinary study and scientific research; 2nd, That you might create a new epoch for the Bodleian Library, by giving Radcliffe's dome for a Reading Room, united to that national workshop of higher culture. On the second point I need not now dilate—except to repeat that could Mr. Panizzi and your Librarian have foreseen that the Reading Room would be for ever separated by a wide street from the main Library, the Memorial that you should be induced to consider the granting this great boon to the University would never have been presented. They would not have advised you either to be parties to an administrative paradox, or to the slur thrown upon modern artists that they are unable to suggest a mode of junction between buildings of different styles.

9. But a far graver failure has since your last meeting befallen the scheme which led to the removal of your Library. Sir W. Hooker, and his son Dr. Hooker, Dr. Daubeny, and his successor, Professor Lawson, all advised the placing the Botanical Department by the side of the other Departments through which the Kosmos is studied and explained. Professor Phillips, too, the Keeper of the Museum, who had borne the brunt of the labour in constructing it, felt, in his comprehensive and philosophic spirit, the full force of the necessity for looking at 'Life on the Earth' as one whole. Indeed, whether one looks out on the Universe with the hopeful eye of the Theo-



logian, or with the dry scrutiny of the modern Materialist, one cannot but feel that a great University in this age inaugurating a scheme for the study of the '*Systema Naturæ*,' can rightly represent it but in one way,—the only way in which Newton, Galileo, Linnæus, or in our time Humboldt, Mary Somerville, Grove, and a host of others, were and are able to look upon it.

10. By a vote on a Statute issued with only a week's notice, and in the necessary absence of your Librarian \*, it was resolved to erect a new Laboratory, Lecture Room, and Houses on the site of the old Botanic Garden, and so, if the vote be carried out, to mar probably for ever, and certainly for this generation, the practical realisation of the complete plan which induced the removal of your Library. That Library was devoted to every department of the Material Kosmos. It possesses therefore important Botanical works, relating to the existing as well as to the extinct Flora, and specially to that border-land which lies between Animal and Vegetable life, once supposed to be easily distinguishable and widely separated.

11. The University, moreover, by aiding the development of an additional and complete Biological department apart from the Museum, may be supposed somewhat paradoxically to have affirmed at the same time the true principle that Botany cannot be properly separated from the allied subjects, inasmuch as in the new buildings Zoology as well as Botany are to be taught; Physics and Chemistry and Physiological experiments are to be studied under the same roof, as a new and non-University foundation. But there is reason for believing that the bearings of the vote were not fully appreciated.

12. It has been my duty to lay these facts before you.

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\* See Appendix.



They are, in sum, two: that the loan of your building to the Bodleian has not yet fulfilled your expectations, and that the conception of the complete scientific Institute to which you were invited to give your powerful help is marred, neither from want of space, nor from want of funds, but from the chance change of purpose to which our rapidly and often-changing constituency is liable, and in this department perhaps more liable since the lamented death of Professor Phillips.

13. Could I charge myself with negligence in this matter I should at once tender my resignation to you as your Librarian, as a just punishment for such neglect, thereby depriving myself of the one task to which I desire to cling, as long as I have strength to serve you and my colleagues, as years go on. As it is, if in disappointment at what has become the imperfect conclusion of your generous endeavours, you, without imputing to me negligence, nevertheless think it well to censure me for my original advice, (tendered in full confidence that you, whose aim has ever been to promote in your Library every branch of Physical Science, would be placing it in an Institution also complete and harmonious, and a mirror, poor though it be, of the great scheme of Nature,) then on the receipt of that censure it would be for me to weigh its import, and consider how I may best serve the public and you under new circumstances, brought about thus unexpectedly at the end of thirty years' devoted attention.

14. If you ask why the question is decided now, and why I had not expected this result, the answer is, 1st, the decision was to be come to, whenever the old buildings required rebuilding, whether they should be built at the Museum or no, and this question is but now raised; and, 2nd, with the opinions of the great authorities I have named there was no reason for doubting the issue. I am



satisfied that had Sir W. Hooker, Dr. Daubeny, and Professor Phillips lived, our hopes and great expectations had not been frustrated. They, to great experience, added the keen interest of sharing or watching for many years the labour which reached our present but imperfect measure of success. Your Library was classified and kept up in accordance with the faith that the organization of Nature is One—and its component parts inseparable. Every year has proved more and more the correlation of one part of the Universe with the rest. The University had purchased eighty acres of ground round the Museum. Every part of the Institution was contrived for extension. The most eminent authorities had advised the completion of the comprehensive plan; now at the last moment marred in its entirety by the absence of one important division of the great whole.

Judging from the small number of Members of Convocation who took part on this occasion, I am convinced that the University acted on partial information as to the real issue. There are indications that they may yet have an opportunity before too late of reviewing the position of their Science arrangements considered as a whole, and with a National and permanent as distinct from a local and temporary aim.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord Duke and Gentlemen,

Your obedient and faithful Servant,

HENRY W. ACLAND,

*Librarian.*

THE RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH, K.G.

THE RT. HON. SIR W. HEATHCOTE, BART.

A. W. PEEL, ESQUIRE, M.P.



## APPENDIX. (See p. 10.)

*The following Paper was circulated in Oxford  
on May 17, 1876.*

### THE BOTANICAL GARDENS, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF SCIENCE APPARATUS IN OXFORD.

ON Tuesday next, May 23, the University will be called on, at a week's notice, to enter on a further expenditure of £9,000 on the existing Botanical Gardens.

The late Sir William Hooker and Dr. Daubeny recommended the removal of the Gardens. Dr. Hooker formerly concurred in this recommendation, and Professor Lawson urged it with elaborate written arguments. These arguments have not, as far as I know, been laid before the University.

The vote now asked for is nominally £2,200. But there is to be a positive condition to extend that amount to £5,580, and a virtual pledge to carry it up to £9,000, even if that sum suffice, which, on perusing Mr. Lawson's letter, I hold to be most improbable. Nor have designs been furnished, so as to enable Convocation to judge.

Of this sum, it would appear that by far the greater part is for a Lecture-room, Class-room, Laboratory, and entirely 'new houses, all the present houses being pulled down,' and re-fitting the Herbarium. *All, in short, are to be rebuilt, not on a freehold belonging to the University, but on a leasehold, apart from the rest of the Scientific apparatus of the University, but attached to the Science Department of Magdalen.*

The University had entered upon a plan whereby its Department for Scientific Study and for Research would have become, if not unequalled, certainly unsurpassed, for convenience, completeness, and space for extension. *Old institutions have been broken up and removed for the sake of this convenience, completeness, and space. It is now proposed to abandon the hitherto successful design; one which, including the purchase of the Parks, where it has been carried out, has cost not less than £125,000, exclusive of the value of the Collections,*



the annual expenditure upon them, and the salaries of the officers of all grades, making a total of over £200,000 in twenty years.

The expenditure of £9,000 *in another part of the town* will make this design incomplete for the lifetime probably of all here now, and perhaps for ever.

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I acknowledge, with gratitude, the admirable and growing development of the teaching in the Departments of Botany and Animal Physiology at the old Garden. But the more effectively Biology is taught at the old Gardens, the more costly will the double establishment be; the separation from the allied departments being, as I believe, both unnecessary and undesirable.

I would, therefore, respectfully urge the University to pause until all the requirements of the Scientific Departments are before it; and not, at this critical moment of University Administration, precipitately to take an irrevocable step in a new direction. When Convocation knows this, as well as the wants of other Departments, it will be in a position to consider whether or not—

1. The Gardens now existing should be maintained as they are, as long as the old buildings last,

2. *The NEW houses, Laboratories, and Lecture-room, that are now needed, should be built on a convenient spot near the Museum, on the freehold land of the University,*

3. Planting should be gradually begun round these new buildings, with a view to the removal hereafter of such hardy plants as it may be desirable to move, to the places sheltered by buildings and plantations,

4. As old houses gradually decay, new ones should be prepared and filled, and the old ones removed,

5. The Professor's residence, the old small garden, ancient wall and trees, should be kept intact, remaining as a beautiful relic in *their original form.*

For the discussion of so great and doubtful a step, a week is a short notice. It is impossible for me to be present. The Medical Council has been summoned for some weeks, and I must not be absent from its duties on the 23rd. There is no course left for me but respectfully to submit this brief statement to the consideration of the University.

It is made with a full conviction of what is in the true interest of the future of the University; and in the belief that Sir W. Hooker



and Dr. Daubeney were right, and Dr. Hooker and Professor Lawson, as long as they followed them, right also; that although Magdalen may seem now to act wisely as a Corporation, in allowing the University to develop a large Scientific institution at its gates, and on its property, yet that *posterity will wonder why the University, at this epoch of its History, having a unique opportunity of founding a complete Institute on its own noble site, and having all but succeeded, suddenly reversed its policy, and split up for ever the Unity of its arrangements for the Study of Nature.*

H. W. ACLAND.

OXFORD,  
May 17, 1876.