

**LETTER TO THE
HONORABLE, THE BOARD
OF TRUSTEES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI**

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Letter to the Honorable, the Board of Trustees of the University of Mississippi by Frederick A. P. Barnard

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FREDERICK A. P. BARNARD

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HONORABLE, THE BOARD
OF TRUSTEES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI**

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THE HONORABLE

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THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OF THE



UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI.

BY

FREDERICK A. P. BARNARD, LL.D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY.



OXFORD:

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI.

1858.



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TRUSTEES

OF THE

University of Mississippi.

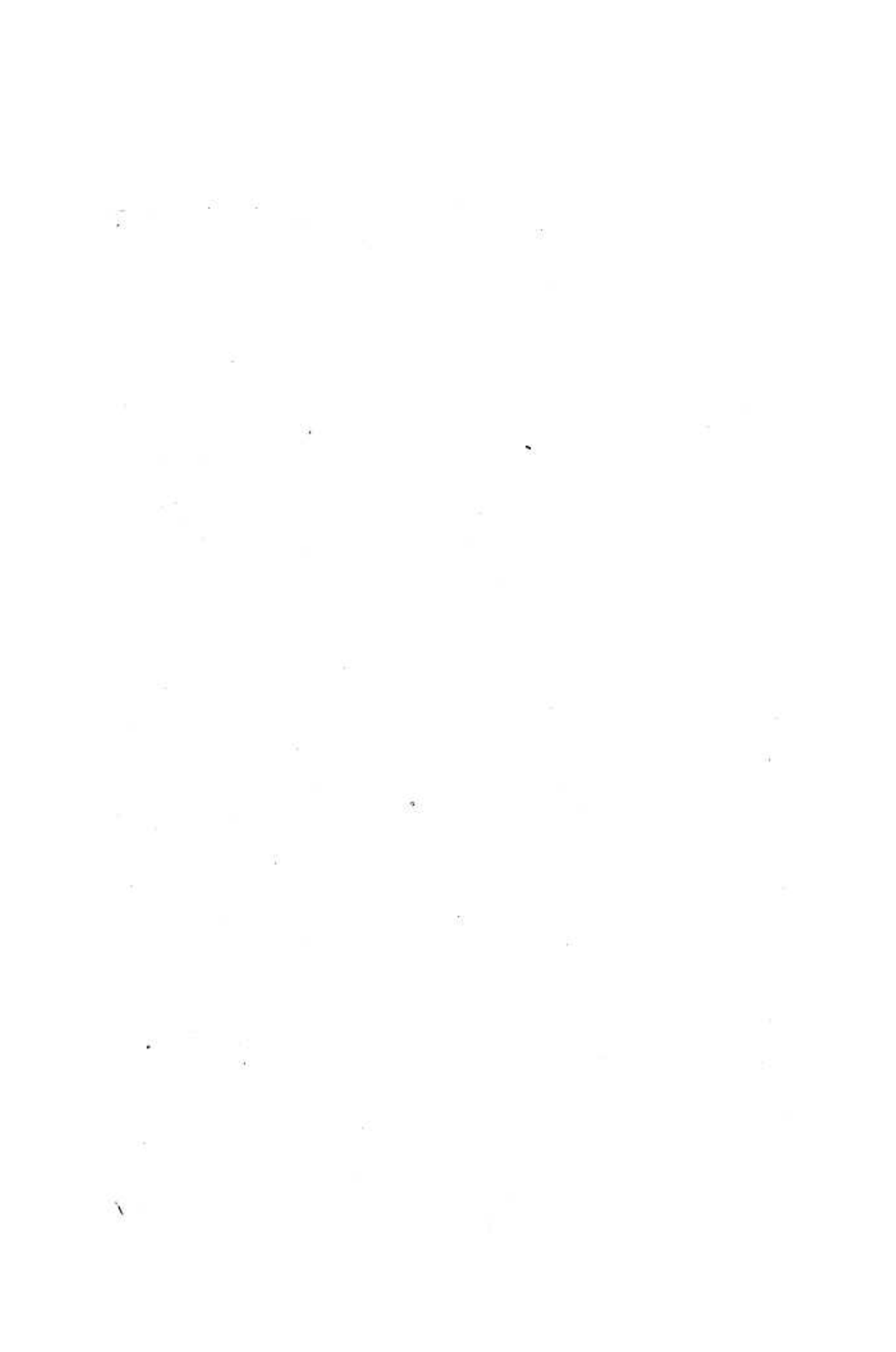
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LETTER.

University of Mississippi, March 15, 1858.

TO THE MEMBERS OF
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI:—

GENTLEMEN:—

CERTAIN matters of weight relating to the system of education and instruction pursued in this institution, have long appeared to the undersigned to require, when the fitting moment should arrive, your deliberate and careful attention. The undersigned has therefore, for the last two or three years, constantly cherished the purpose to lay these matters before you, so soon as the internal condition of the University, in regard to its instrumental means and material conveniences for imparting instruction of the highest order, should have begun to approximate to that degree of perfection at which you have been so steadily and perseveringly aiming. That period, accelerated by the provision made by the Legislature of the State, at its session of 1856, in response to your appeal, appears now to have arrived;

and there remains no longer any reason why the consideration of the matters to which allusion has just been made should be any longer deferred.

In the beginning, it may seem proper to explain for what reason the undersigned has chosen to adopt the present form of communication with the members of your honorable body, instead of awaiting the period of your stated annual meeting, and embodying the topics here discussed into the usual official report of the head of the University. Were these topics such as to call only for ordinary legislation, this latter course would undoubtedly be the most appropriate. But involving, as they do, a consideration of the expediency of introducing into the arrangement and division of the subjects embraced in the educational course already existing, changes of some considerable moment, it is eminently desirable that they should be made subjects of more mature and deliberate reflection, than the usually brief duration of your annual sessions allows; and it will no doubt be considered by yourselves also an advantage to be able to make them a subject of consultation with the friends of education among the people of the State, before you shall be called on to pass upon them your final judgment. These reasons have determined the undersigned to express his views in the form of a circular letter, issued long enough before the period of your annual assembling, to enable you to bring to the meeting opinions unembarrassed by hesitation or doubt.

It need hardly be called to your attention that the educational world has long been agitated by the question, whether the American college system has not failed to keep pace with the intellectual advancement of the age in which we live. So large have been the conquests of mind, especially in the field of physical science, during the present century, that a much more considerable amount of positive knowledge is now expected of a liberally educated man, than was the case when the system originated. Such knowledge it is demanded that the colleges shall impart; yet the popular voice, in making this demand, disregards almost entirely the consideration that the college system, in its theory, contemplates not so much the communication of knowledge as the discipline and training of the intellectual powers. And the attempt to silence the importunity by holding up this consideration, is practically vain; for if the value of the knowledge and its necessity to the completeness of a finished education be admitted, the fact that it can nowhere be generally obtained if not in colleges, is always deemed a sufficient reply. It is therefore claimed that, however exclusive of all purposes but one may have been the original idea of the system, the condition of the world forbids that it should longer continue to be so. It is claimed that the necessity of the age requires of colleges, that they should no longer teach merely with the view, through the exercise of the mind upon the subjects taught, to develop the intellectual powers; but that, besides this, they