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HIGHER COMMERCIAL EDUCATION AT ANTWERP, LEIPZIG, PARIS AND HAVRE.

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(Continued from last issue)

IV.

It may be asked from what ranks in Belgian society are the students of the Institute chiefly drawn? Do the great merchants favor the scheme and send their own sons to receive the advantages offered by its instruction? In a letter to the *Times* of March 14, 1898, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, who speaks with the highest authority on matters of commercial education, asked, "Who are the Belgian merchants of repute in the commerce of the world, and the manufacturers of Belgium who have received their education at the Institut Supérieur de Commerce of Antwerp, which has not been established for many years?" These pertinent questions raise issues which will be discussed at greater length in a later part of this memorandum, but it may be convenient here to mention some facts which bear upon the point.

The Institute was founded in 1852. It has, therefore, been in existence nearly forty-six years. Indirectly, it owed its origin to the Hyde Park Exhibition of 1851. Four years previously, the then Foreign Minister of Belgium, Monsieur Dechamps, had laid before the Municipality of Antwerp and the Provincial Council

a scheme for a Higher Institute of Commerce, and an Antwerp merchant had simultaneously published a pamphlet, entitled "Projet d'organisation d'une université belge de commerce et d'industrie."* But difficulties arose which frustrated the carrying out of these plans. In 1851, however, Monsieur Rogier, then Belgian Minister for the Interior, revived the scheme. He had been impressed by the commercial activity of England, as displayed in the Great Exhibition and by the new world of industrial effort which he saw presaged there. He felt that more could be done to promote Belgian trade, "if only Belgium had competent men to represent her in foreign markets."† M. Rogier's plan was quickly taken up, and the Institute founded. For a long time the number of students taking the full course was small. Beginning with 10 in 1853-4, it stood at 35 ten years later, while in 1873-4 it had only increased to 50. After another decade, it had risen to 78, and now stands at about 300. The number of students taking only special

* Cp. "Commercial Education in Belgium," by Prof. W. Layton, p. 6.

† Léauté, *L'enseignement commercial*, p. 581.

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