

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## SPECIALISTS.

*To the Editor of THE MONTHLY:*

SIR,—With your permission I wish to draw particular attention to the serious and continued injustice done by the Departmental Regulations to a considerable number of experienced and successful High School teachers. I refer to the clauses defining the qualification of specialists in Collegiate Institutes.

The changes in the Regulations have been so frequent and varied (I might add unnecessary) that it is not easy to recall with certainty when they were made. If I remember rightly, however, no attempt was made till 1887 to define precisely the qualifications required for the rank of specialist, the Department undertaking to judge each case on its merits. In that year the possession of a First A., or proof of having passed an examination regarded by the Department as its equivalent, was suddenly made imperative for all that wished to obtain the standing; while the fortunate individuals who, whatever their university honours or grade of certificate, had been already accepted as specialists, and were then engaged in teaching as such, were confirmed in their rank.

Now I have no fault to find with the Department for wishing to insist on a high standard of education, and even to raise it, if necessary; but I do most strongly object to the sudden promulgation of resolutions which are virtually retroactive in their character, and which, if strictly enforced, debar from a certain rank men who up to that time had had reason to believe themselves entitled to claim it if they wished. Let the Department if it chooses give notice that after a certain date (allowing a reasonable time) all

teachers wishing to be recognized as specialists will be required to possess certain qualifications, and few, if any, will be found to object; but suddenly and without any warning, to interpose a barrier, and say to A., "Your university standing or your certificate may be just as good as B.'s, your experience and success as a teacher just as great, and your ranking on inspection just as high; but because he applied for recognition he was accepted, and now retains his rank for all time; while you, having failed to present your claim, must now abandon all hope of the desired standing, unless you are willing to submit to an examination of such a nature, at such a time, and under such circumstances as the Department may prescribe."

But not only are the Regulations unfair and objectionable in that they drew an arbitrary line of distinction between teachers of equal qualifications and efficiency, I hold that they lay an undue stress on mere scholarship, as tested by success at university or other examinations, in comparison with experience and success as a teacher. Which of us has not known instances of men who had taken the highest university honours, and whose scholarship in their special department was unquestioned, but who proved, if not absolute failures, at least far from successful as teachers? Is it fair or reasonable then that certain university honours, followed by three months and examination at a training institute, should entitle one man to rank for all time as a specialist, while another (his former teacher it may be) who has taught ten or fifteen years with marked success, as shown by the University and Departmental class lists, is told that no matter how much he may have read, and studied,