

themes. The jests of a schoolmaster are coarse or thin. They do not tell out of school. He is under the restraint of a formal or didactic hypocrisy in company, as a clergyman is under a moral one. He can no more let his intellect loose in society than the other can his inclinations. He is forlorn among his coevals; his juniors cannot be his friends.—*Charles Lamb*.

Competitive Examination.—The system of appointment by competitive examination is now so firmly established that it would be idle to seek to abolish it, even if any one seriously wished to return to the old practice; but it does not seem at all impossible to modify and temper its practical working, so as greatly to diminish the dangers which its continuance involves. No better employment could be found for the reflections of a far-seeing statesman; and to such we may recommend the emphatic utterances of Professor Huxley, following on those of other weighty authorities. "The educational abomination of desolation of the present day, is the stimulation of young people to work at high pressure by incessant competitive examinations." "The vigor and freshness which should have been stored up for the purposes of the hard struggle for existence in practical life, have been washed out of them by precocious mental debauchery, by book-gluttony and lesson-bibbing."—*The Spectator*.

Reform at Cambridge.—The Cambridge Board of Modern and Mediæval Languages have drawn up a scheme for a new special examination for the ordinary B.A. degree, of which English language and literature, with either French or German language and literature, should be the subjects. It is suggested that this is but a reasonable extension of the local and other examinations held under university sanction, and will be a step towards recognizing the increasing amount of study of modern language in public schools. Meanwhile an influential syndicate has been appointed to consider the whole question of ordinary degree examinations, and those preliminary to honours or to commencing residence in the university. This is but a pendant to the thorough revision of the Cambridge Tripos scheme which has recently been carried out.—*The Athenæum*.

SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT.

WRITTEN LANGUAGE OF THE MOUND BUILDERS—ASSINIBOINE AND RED RIVER
WATERS—FORESTRY IN AMERICA—THE WELLS COMET—JUMBO—NEW
MILK TEST—ACTION OF ELECTRIC LIGHT ON VEGETATION.

In a previous number of the RECORD attention was called to the fact that the Davenport Academy of Science was in possession of the only known remains of the written language of the Mound Builders. Knowing the great value of language in determining the affinities of a people, it was hoped that if this Davenport tablet could be deciphered it would throw much light on the origin of the early dwellers in our Western land. The last number of *The American Antiquarian* contains a paper by Rev. Professor Campbell of the Pres-