

The Educational Weekly.

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THE new curriculum of the University of Toronto, which has just been published, may be taken as in some measure indicative of the tendency for some time to come in educational affairs. The intimate connection between the universities and all the other teaching institutions of the Province leaves the latter susceptible to influences emanating from the former. These are the abodes of the highest intellectual life and culture of our country, and it is proper and desirable that progress there should be felt and reflected through all the different grades of schools. The changes made, and the tendencies indicated in these changes, are necessarily of interest to every one who is in any way connected with educational work.

The standard to be attained is placed higher than before. The thorough work done for some years past in our public and high schools has furnished an abundant supply of matriculants, whose attainments are higher each year than those of previous years. As a consequence, we naturally look for greater things from each succeeding class of graduates. The time seems now to have come when, in the opinion of the Senate, the work required for a degree may be made more extensive and difficult. Each curriculum of the University of Toronto has been an advance in this direction on its predecessor. It is probable that the one just issued is equal to any former one in that respect.

Examinations, to teacher and student, have always been a vexation and a burden. They have their place; without them it is impossible to do good work, or, in fact, work of any kind, in any educational institution. For the purposes of classification, of testing the pupil's progress, of fixing ideas, of stimulating laggards, of weeding out the indolent and the inefficient, of discovering weak places in the work of teacher or of student, they have their place and value. But when they come to be the end of all effort, the one absorbing theme with both those who teach and those who are taught, when percentages and relative standing are taken as the only indications of thorough work, when mental development, ability to think for one's self, and to express one's thoughts clearly, vigorously and gracefully, are lost sight of in the frantic scramble for a prize in the examination lottery, then they become an evil. Toronto University and University College throughout their history have had a superfluity of examinations; a matriculation examination, a Christmas and an Easter examination each session, in addition to the annual examinations in May—seven in the arts course—were enough to deter any but the

courageous from facing the ordeal. These are now reduced in number, the University accepting the college examinations of the second and third years, so that those who graduate hereafter may escape with only five visits in cap and gown to Convocation Hall. University men are realizing more and more, yearly, that examinations should occupy a lower place than they have so far held. When they are unduly numerous, cram and hurry are prone to take the place of thoughtful and earnest investigation. The influence of the Senate's action will be felt doubtless in time on all our examining bodies.

The changes in the curriculum in the sub-department of English are also indicative of substantial progress. Their tenor may be summed up in a few words. The new curriculum, while not neglecting the history of our literature, gives greater prominence than before to the critical reading of specified works of the best authors, and to English composition. The subject is one which is receiving an increasing amount of attention at the present time among prominent educational workers in the United States and Britain, as well as in Canada, and our teachers must not be slow to discern the signs of the times.

In the department of physics some elementary work is assigned for matriculation. As an option, chemistry, or botany, may be taken in its place, but not more than one of these by the same candidate. In the pass course, hydrostatics is added to the work of the second year, heat taking its place in the third year, and an option being allowed between astronomy and electricity in the fourth year. The most noticeable change in the honor physics is the increased amount of practical work required. The practical character of the scientific training required is also illustrated in the department of natural sciences—at least 295 hours must be spent in a college laboratory in the second year of the arts course, 395 in the third year, and 400 in the fourth year. Mere theorizing is of small value in this department. In the same department a great advance has been made in the arranging of the work in three divisions, in any one of which candidates may graduate. When an honor student has reached his fourth year he has a good general acquaintance with the work of the department, and it is well to allow him thereafter to follow the bent of his own inclinations in more detailed investigations than were possible under the old curriculum. The change, which increases the work to be done in the department, has been advocated by natural science students and professors for some time.

In classics the special features are the

greater attention given to grammar and prose, and the requiring of translations of passages from Latin and Greek authors not specified. This applies to pass men, too. Here, as elsewhere, the requirements will, hereafter, be greater than before.

A somewhat radical innovation has been made in allowing the substitution of French and German for Greek. This has been allowed under the old curriculum only in the case of those taking honor modern languages, but the new curriculum gives this option even to pass men. The mere mention of graduates who know no Greek is startling to men of the old school, but there can be no reason why the study of modern languages, especially German, should not, if properly conducted, have as high an educative value as any other subject, while French and German have a practical value of their own in the business of life which will cause many to prefer them.

Medals and scholarships have received a blow which has greatly weakened them, and which will, perhaps, lead in time to their final banishment. One looks in vain for any announcement relating to medals. They are soon to be a tradition of the past so far as Toronto University is concerned. Few, even of those who have been most successful in winning them, will regret that they have gone. The evils which attended them were many, their utility questionable. Their absence will further the true interests of education by leading men to look less at what will tell on examinations, and more at what is worth knowing for its own sake. Scholarships are still retained for junior matriculation and the first year examinations. It is fortunate that they do not extend their influence further into the course. Whether the good they do compensates the attendant evils is, to say the least, questionable.

Several new subjects, not formerly recognized in the examinations of Toronto University, are in future to have a place on the curriculum. We are pleased to find that undergraduates in the pass course in the third and fourth years may, in lieu of one or two of the subjects prescribed for each of these years, take certain of the following subjects, namely:—Biblical Greek, Biblical Literature, Apologetics, and Church History. A similar option is to be allowed to undergraduates in the various honor departments of the university. All undergraduates who avail themselves of the right to take these subjects in place of some specified subject of the ordinary arts course, must present certificates of having attended lectures and passed examinations in the subjects so selected at an affiliated college other than university college. It is further enacted that the minimum for passing at these examinations shall not be less than the minimum required at university examinations of the third year. We may confidently expect that no option in the new curriculum will be more popular or more frequently selected than this one.