

however, might be reduced considerably from the formidable proportions it assumes at the first glance. In the full course of study in Arts, there are eight or twelve series of examinations; but the matriculation and exhibition examinations, in the first year, are conducted now by gentlemen who do not know the candidates, and, as for the rest of the examinations, we think that the Christmas examinations, which are comparatively unimportant, might be left out of the question, and then by awarding the exhibitions and scholarships at the sessional examinations, there would be only one series of examinations each year which would need a special board of examiners, now such a board would need but three or four members for the space of a month. (The subjects of study, if rightly considered, amount to four: languages, mathematics, natural science, philosophy.) Surely the expense of such a board would not be too great for our University to bear.

The second difficulty is one which we believe it would be troublesome to obviate, so far as our limited knowledge of Canadian scholarship goes. The examiners must be men of high standing and unblemished name, whose knowledge is fresh and serviceable, and who can afford the necessary time. Where can we get them? The only men who fulfil the first conditions, if we are not mistaken, are the professors of sister Universities, and of course they could not give the time, unless, indeed, the system of special examiners is made common throughout the country, and the professors of various Universities simply exchange places for the time,—a vain hope, it seems to us.

Such are the difficulties, and to make clear the need of an attempt to overcome them, it is necessary to show the advantages of the state in which we wish to be.

To the general reasons for the necessity of having special examiners in any academic institution, we can add others applying more particularly to McGill. The first, a comparatively unimportant one, is that some of our Professors demand from their classes more than is given in the text books, *ie.*, refuse to take, word for word, a proof which is surely to be considered sufficient when given expressly for learners in a college text book. We respectfully express our dissatisfaction at this, because if a man from sickness, or other cause, absents himself from a single lecture, he is likely to lose a whole question at examination, although he may have his book-work up thoroughly. This matter, however, is of little account, but there is another and most dangerous evil arising from our professors examining their own pupils. A large proportion of McGill men fail in examinations, especially in mathematics, we believe for this reason: a great deal of ground is gone over during the session, and difficult papers are set at the examination, and our professors have no compunction in setting such papers, simply because they themselves examine them; and though a large part of the class may be cut off, the only remark elicited from outsiders is something like the following:—"What a high-class University have we here;—no child's play to get through the course." No, certainly not! But if a special board of examiners were to come here, and make such an onslaught on McGill students, we would hear different words:—"Gentlemen of McGill, it is evident that your class is not up to the mark, you are going too fast, or your matriculation standard is too low," or something else.

Whatever is the cause, there is no doubt that it is often more than difficult to do well at McGill. In the Department of Science, to which these remarks are even more applicable than to the faculty of Arts proper, the ratio of failure to success in examinations is very noticeable. There is but one man left, in the senior year, of about a dozen freshmen who entered at the same time.

Again, it is almost impossible for a professor to examine, with true impartiality, the papers of students whom he sees daily in class. It is a fact, that not one, out of every ten historians whom the world has seen, has been an impartial relater of the events which he concerns himself with; and to compare small things with great, we think that it is almost impossible for a professor to see a man working honestly and ably in class during a whole session, without forming an unconscious opinion of his merit. Now we do not wish to be misunderstood, our professors are as conscientious and impartial as it is possible for men to be, but we mean this,—a familiar name appears at the head of a set of answers,—if that name belong to one whom the examiner knows to be well up,—many a little slip, perhaps even a big one, will be unconsciously hurried over. But if the case is exactly the reverse, and the student known to be behindhand, his papers are examined, we might almost say, with a magnifying glass.

To conclude, the advantages, concisely stated, would be something like these:—a higher standard of matriculation; less work gone over, and gone over more thoroughly; greater solicitude on the part of professors concerning the standing of their classes; the turning out of more solid scholars, and therefore the increase of the reputation of the University.

Now we may not have viewed this question fairly. The advantages may not be so great as we have stated; the disadvantages, at present, not so real; and there may be objections and difficulties of which we have not taken account. If such be the case we are doubly sorry; first, because we would not like to give a false view of the question; secondly, because a pleasant dream will have been disturbed. But we think we are mainly right. The system we hope for is established in many of the great public schools, and in some of the Universities of England, and has been a decided success. Indeed the most serious argument against the advisability or possibility of establishing such a system here, is the fact, that our Faculty and our Principal, who are ever watchful of McGill interests, have not made any attempt to institute it in our own case, although they have practically founded a court of special examiners for the pupils of our schools.

#### THE LAW FACULTY.

Querulous fault-finding is to be discountenanced at all times and in all places, but nowhere, perhaps, is it more out of place than in a College journal. However, although we do not for one moment wish to assume a position which could be mistaken for that of a critic, with unfriendly motives, we think that the present condition of affairs in the Faculty of Law justifies our noticing any anomalies we may perceive, and warrants us in making suggestions for the amelioration of this portion of the University. Firstly, as to the *personnel* of the Faculty.

If the Professors of this Faculty attended personally to the duties of their position no objection could be made on this score, for a mere perusal of the list will satisfy anyone that it contains the names of the most eminent members of the legal profession in Montreal, and indeed in the Province. Unfortunately, however, whether through lack of time, or on account of the inadequacy of the pecuniary remuneration, the majority of the Professors have avoided the performance of their duties, and have entrusted the fulfilment of them to lecturers, the greater number of whom are young advocates, possessing neither experience nor knowledge sufficiently great to qualify them for the position which they hold. As a consequence of this, the work has been very