

that those who make it are the sort of persons who object to the infliction of pain by schoolmasters, or to threats of Hell from the pulpit? Ambition and fear no doubt are not the highest of motives; one hardly imagines the angels influenced by them. Meanwhile they are very human motives, and useful here below while the angel is still in process of evolution. The University is calling, not the righteous, but sinners to education. Are we not all conscious that we do not study readily and keenly apart from some form of competition, some pressure as of examination? Professor Goldwin Smith has often quoted the testimony of the eminent Lord Althorp, who has left it upon record that rivalry was the motive of his first serious effort to educate himself. A more recent and equally eminent Whig leader, he who has earned for himself by his judicial fairness the honorable nickname of "the great Refrigerator," has recently made a somewhat similar confession. Can any one seriously disclaim for himself the influence of competition? or seriously doubt its legitimacy? When this question was last to the front some ten years ago, it was admirably handled, if my memory serves me, by the late Professor Stanley Jevons; I beg to refer doubters to him: ἀπάγετε εἰς μακαρίαν.

If then we cannot dispense with competitive examinations altogether, there remains for consideration the protests, not against the principle of competitive examination, but against examinations as we have them.

What are the alternatives?

It is sometimes suggested that formal examinations should be discarded, but that degrees should be given on the certificate of the instructor in charge; whose certificate again may be based upon any sort of examination he pleases. I think this system prevails in some of the new western universities.

The difficulty to my mind is that whereas the former class of reformers who object to competition are legislating for angel students, this second class of reformers presuppose an angelic Professoriate. The climate of California may work miracles, but here in the east we can but feel that both reforms stand self-confronted for want of contact with Mother Earth. Said Lord Russell, "When I am asked if such and such a nation is fit to be free, I ask in return is any man fit to be a despot? The answer must be none whatever, neither Mussulman nor Christian, neither in Greece nor in Columbia." The answer seems to cover our staff. The staff then, we may trust Lord Russell, is not fit to be a Council of Despots: still less can it be desired that they become fond mothers, granting degrees to all their children-after-the-spirit, for the asking. There remains the present system with or without modifications.

(a) Terminal examinations might be used to diminish the May examinations. There is nothing novel in this. Until recently University College did examine, independently of the University, in the second and third years; and its certificates excused the holder from the May examinations. Obviously the relief so given applies only to students in attendance. Those holding a dispensation would still appear in May.

The objections entertained before to these terminal examinations, so far as I am concerned or informed, were substantially: that they interrupt inadvisedly the work of the best students: he is called off his reading to revise prematurely what he has read; the indifferent student may gain, the good student does not. That they interrupt inadvisedly the work of the lecturer; he is interrupted in his course to interpolate examinations; a short term is made shorter.

That they increase the tendency to examine on "lectures," the May examination may or may not be largely on lectures: that will depend partly on the presence of outside examiners, and partly on the discretion of the inside

examiner; but these shorter examinations at short intervals are more likely to be based directly on the lectures.

This of course raises the whole of the old question of inside versus outside examiners; examinations on lectures versus examinations on the author prescribed.

My own feeling is one of sympathy with the student who wants to be examined on the author rather than on the lectures (not to say the lecturer), who does not want to feel himself compelled to attend lectures, when he is conscious that he is doing his best work by himself, without their help. For this reason I regard the presence of outside examiners upon the Board, as in the past, as on the whole an advantage; and for this same reason I should regret any change tending to base our examinations wholly upon the actual lectures delivered. After all there will always be students for whom the author—the man of genius—has a message, which will only be distorted by passing through the medium of another and incompatible intelligence.

(b) Ordinary terminal compositions, proses, translations, practical work, etc., might be taken into account, more than they are at present, and might be used to influence and lighten the May examination.

These things do not interfere with lectures, would only need some changes in the conditions under which the work is done, to make of it a fair test of knowledge and progress. Dispensations might complicate the system, but those who took dispensations would do so at their risk. The system is in force already, but is capable I think of some advantageous extension. There seems no good reason why the proses and translations—*e.g.*, of honor students, written during the session, under proper conditions—should not contribute to the result of the May examination, and relieve its congested time table.

(c) Oral examination as at Oxford and Cambridge might be extended; at present such examination is used only as a test of pronunciation. The objections to oral examination lie on the surface; nervous persons are either at their worst and do not show what they really know; and conversely, under the stimulus of excitement or by a happy manner, they make a better showing than they ordinarily would, and so lift their record yet another notch above that of the tongue-tied competitor, who is substantially their equal. Only the calm phlegmatic nature appears without disguise.

(d) Possibly some one will advocate the holding of examinations at longer intervals. Oxford and Cambridge, he may say, have only two public examinations at the end of the second and the fourth year. The analogy is misleading. In Oxford and Cambridge the colleges supplement the University and lay their clutches upon the student who is not in the clutches of the University. The University does not examine him annually, but the colleges examine him terminally. Here we have, unfortunately, no tutorial and college system to help the University, and relieve it of part of the necessary supervision. University College replaces the University in the teaching of certain subjects; she does not supplement it. Furthermore, the evil of our present system, the crowding of a session's work into the few weeks before examination, would be intensified by a change which should mass those four examinations into two; already the life of our students—in intellectual matters—oscillates in unstable equilibrium between the opposite poles of starvation and a Red-Indian gorge; already he swallowed his feast of reason Anaconda-fashion, and so it used to be in Oxford in a degree even greater than with us, when a college was slack in its discipline and left examining wholly to the University.

I conclude therefore that our present system with such modifications as are contained in the extension of the credit already given for term work and terminal examina-