

true guide and syllabus for a new year's work, and this will be the case as long as competitive written examinations continue. How then is it possible to overestimate the power and responsibility of an examiner in the exercise of his functions? When he takes his pen to write a question he may very well exert his imagination to picture not only thousands of anxious candidates but also the upturned eyes of tens of thousands who will look to him in succeeding terms for direction and orders; again, not only do the pupils but the masters themselves, more especially that numerous class of them who in remote villages feel themselves unable to be independent and to assert their personal tendencies, the masters themselves regard their "last year's papers" as the authoritative interpretation of a scanty syllabus. One might well exclaim—show me this year's papers and I can show you next year's work. Now while many examiners appear to feel the truth of all this to the fullest extent and to approach their work with scrupulous conscientiousness and a solemn regard for its far-reaching influence, it is certain that many others, especially those not actually engaged in some branch of teaching, toss off their papers in a spirit of mercenary indifference or of mere half-awake indolence with no adequate sense of the endless harm they do, or in sublime ignorance of recent advances in the subjects dealt with.

The papers on which candidates for matriculation and for teachers' non-professional certificates wrote in July last gave pretty general satisfaction, if we disregard, as of course we may very well do, the criticisms of those who are quite below the level on which we find a common-sense atmosphere; there was not quite as much adverse criticism as usual. Of course the candidate who fails, and

the master who fears the loss of his situation if he does not "pass" a certain number—fixed by some worthy trustee such as the village auctioneer or the oracular ex-public-school-teacher who has risen to wealth and respectability in a new calling and "knows how to run a school"—these unfortunates find the papers awful and outrageous; but such sufferers will moan through the press and sign themselves, "Teacher" and "Fiat Justitia" to the last syllable of recorded time. One does not care to join in the pursuit of an examiner when the whole field are hard upon his heels, but this year there is fair game; there are few huntsmen and dogs and one is tempted by the very calm and serenity to say a few temperate words concerning examinations in general and the recent papers in particular.

It would be a useful problem for young students of psychology to endeavour to arrive at the mental attitude of a departmental examiner as he begins the preparation of his questions; there would be the attitude of the ideal examiner, that of the average real examiner, and that of the worst possible. Taking the second as the most profitable study for the present we may suppose him to have accepted his appointment and to have concluded that the time for action has arrived. He considers what will be expected of him by the Department and the University authorities, judging their expectations by what he knows of the views of certain educationists in positions of trust. He has more or less vague notions as to what the teachers of the subject in question and their pupils may reasonably expect to see in his paper. Moreover, he must consult his own views with more or less independence, and possibly at times he may find it necessary to endeavour to meet the views of some enthusiastic friend who can-