

over the border. There is danger of the whole affair being manipulated and the whole time occupied by a few who may be more forward without being more wise than their neighbours. The essential notion of such a convention is that of mutual conference. It is not a place to which the few come to teach and the many to be taught. Nor should such a convention be turned into a mutual admiration society, in which a half dozen speakers engage in a crossfire of compliments, and their little circles of admiring hearers vie with each other in exaggerated expressions of admiration, or confine their efforts to moving and seconding votes of thanks.

A Teachers' Convention should be preeminently a deliberative assembly. Its members should prove themselves too intelligent and too thoughtful to be carried away by the rhetoric of any hobby-rider. Each should show himself capable of thinking for himself. Let each bring all his mental acumen to the investigation of the doctrines and theories that may be elaborated. Let each ponder and inwardly digest that which is brought before him, resolved neither to allow old prejudices to blunt his perceptions or warp his judgments, nor yet to permit himself to be carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, in favour of new fangled and impracticable schemes.

In our next issue we hope to be able to furnish for the benefit of those of our readers who may be unable to attend, a tolerably full report of the proceedings of a very successful convention.

TORONTO UNIVERSITY ARTS COURSE.

The Senate of the Provincial University has adopted the sensible practice of periodically revising its curriculum in Arts, thus affording an opportunity of keeping abreast of the times in science and literature. The latest revision is now before us, and while there are obvious defects to be noted it is satisfactory to find that real improvements have been made in several directions.

The work for matriculation is that which most interests the teachers of our Public and High Schools, and with the changes in this part of the curriculum they are now generally familiar. The most important are to be found in the departments of Classics, and English for pass, in French and German for honors, and in the introduction of natural science amongst the optional subjects. In Classics the work in Latin Prose has been made more definite by prescribing Bradley's Arnold's Prose Composition as a text-book. In English new poetry for critical reading is prescribed for every year, and a prose work is prescribed as the basis of exercises in English composition. In honor French and German the candidates will be examined as to their capacity to write from dictation, this practice being the best training to give facility in conversation in these languages. The recognition extended to science is slight, but it is a step in the right direction.

The most important of these changes is that made in English, and their importance is enhanced by the fact that the Education Department adopts the University curriculum for the teachers' examinations. Heretofore the repetition of the same work year after year, or even after short intervals, has

given rise to two evils—the anticipation of what may be called “stock questions” by the teachers, and the asking of out of the way questions by the examiners in order to defeat rote teaching. Now one author is selected for every year, and he is not repeated during the whole five for which this part of the curriculum is to be current. He must be a very stupid examiner who cannot keep out of ruts under such circumstances, and he must be a very unwise teacher who will attempt to “cram” his pupils.

In the past English composition has played but a very unimportant part in the University examinations, and the themes set have been very unsatisfactory. The first condition of good writing is to have something to say, and this will now be secured in the case of all who read carefully the prescribed prose work of the year. The candidate who is familiar with Macaulay's essay on Warren Hastings, which is the text for 1866, may fail in composition, but he cannot charge his failure to ignorance of the themes set.

The effect of this system on the teachers cannot fail to be most beneficial. During the next five years they will be compelled to read with their classes a considerable part of the best poetry of Coleridge, Thomson, Cowper, Scott and Byron, and of the best prose of Macaulay, Southey, Coleridge, Addison, and Goldsmith. Assuming that five new authors in poetry and five in prose, will be selected for the next five years, the teacher at the end of ten will have acquired in the ordinary work of the school room a wide and varied acquaintance with English literature, which he would have otherwise missed. It is unfortunate for the Public School teachers below the fourth class that a similar system has not been adopted in prescribing English for the High School Entrance Examinations.

There is great room for improvement in the English of the first year. The Senate has wisely prescribed the same texts for first year pass and matriculation honor work, but no prose has been prescribed at all. This is a singular omission, for definiteness is quite as much needed in the first year as at an earlier stage of the student's course. We see it stated that the curriculum in its present form was adopted for only the current academical year. If this is so there will be an opportunity of supplying this defect, and it is to be hoped that there will be no hesitation in doing so. Both Earle's Philology and Chaucer's text might well be postponed to a later stage. The student can spend his first year to better advantage in learning how to use his own language in its present state than in cultivating acquaintance with its archaic forms. There should be more of Shakespeare's and Milton's works read, especially for honors, in the higher years. They are our great classics, and he who has read them to good purpose will find less difficulty in dealing with minor poets.

Speaking of archaic stages of language reminds us that Homer is still the first or second Greek author whose acquaintance a pupil makes in school. The wisdom of such an arrangement is fairly open to question. It would be less so if the forms of Homeric tenses and cases were the result of changes made in those of classic Greek. But Homer's dialect never was classic, and it seems unwise to burden the pupil with such a variety of detail in Greek accidence when it can easily be