

tionable modes of reducing the number; one, by exacting a higher percentage; a second, by an increase of work in a given time. There is still another, by purposely giving to one or more of the papers such an unusual turn as is not anticipated in the general line of teaching pursued. The last plan we think is hardly justifiable. Having reference to the programme of study and to former papers on the same subject, the course is construed into a breach of faith, as between pupil and examiner. These remarks will be thought irrelevant by those who have heard no complaints in the direction indicated.

Of the

#### FIRST CLASS EXAMINATION

I shall merely say that we must all approve of the recent regulation by which honor undergraduates of our universities are admitted as having passed an equivalent for the non-professional examination. As before remarked, I regard our Departmental Examinations superior to those they superseded. At the same time I do not think that their warmest admirers consider them incapable of improvement. Any reasonable suggestions to which our discussions may give rise will therefore be likely to receive due attention from the Minister and his advisers.

## THE DECAY OF READING.

BY RICHARD GRANT WHITE.

IT used to be supposed that the acquirement of "the three R's" was such a simple matter, and so entirely within the capacity of even the lowest intelligence, that a child who had had any schooling at all must know how to read, and to write, and something of arithmetic. And in very deed it was so. But that was in the days when education had not been made a science, when teachers called themselves simply teachers, and not educators, and when "educational" books and magazines were unknown. The teacher then, having some knowledge, some faculty of imparting it, and some love for his function, went simply and honestly to work and taught his pupils, without troubling himself about philosophies and systems of education. And, however this may be, the result as to the first two of the three R's was that there was hardly a school-boy of seven or eight years old who could not read a narrative book aloud with correctness

and tolerably good accent and emphasis, and who could not write, although in boyish hand and boyish phrase, a tolerably well-spelled letter of a few lines to his mother. But now that we have an educational science, and professors of the art of teaching, and schools of teaching, and everything about teaching is educational exquisitely, we hear on all sides the complaint that great boys and girls who are learning what in elementary schools are called "additional branches" cannot read a story or a paragraph in a newspaper aloud in an intelligible manner, or write from dictation a simple sentence so that it can be understood. As to reading, the complaint is peculiar to no country. A late number of the *Saturday Review* has an article on "Reading Made Uneasy," of which the following is the first paragraph:

"The reports of the School Inspectors, which are printed in the appendix to the annual report of the Education Department,