

## THE VARSITY.

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The last report of the President of Harvard University is, as usual, a veritable mine of information for the educationist. President Eliot's reports are always interesting reading, and have a value which is not merely for the time being, but which, by reason of the broad views enunciated therein, and the practical nature of the reforms suggested, supply most valuable memoranda on the state, progress, and future of education generally. The report before us cordially approves of the recent action of the University authorities in doing away with the compulsory clause requiring attendance at daily prayers; and of the substitution therefor of a series of Chapel services, conducted, at an annual cost of over \$9,000 a year, by a number of prominent clergymen, chosen from different denominations. These hold a position somewhat analagous, we take it, to the Select Preachers of Oxford and Cambridge. The success of the new movement, the President remarks, has astonished even those who advocated it most warmly. The only difficulty apprehended will be in finding and engaging men of eminence and personal power to take part in the work. The list of Preachers for 1886-87 includes such names as Edward Everett Hale, and Phillips Brooks, and if these can be taken, and they may fairly, as a sample of the Harvard University Select Preachers, there is no good reason why the Chapel services should not only be popular, but also productive of great good. Under such auspices it was quite safe to do away with compulsory attendance at daily prayers.

The report tells us that after a full and exhaustive discussion, lasting over three years, the University has adopted a standard for admission to Harvard which had been recommended almost unanimously by the College Faculty in 1885. The results of the measure adopted are summarized in three ways: (1) From the point of view of the candidate; (2) From the point of view of secondary schools; and (3) From the point of view of preparatory schools. With regard to the first—or the candidate's point of view, there is little change, practically speaking, in the method of entering the College, in so far as the selection of studies is concerned. A candidate who has mastered the elements of Latin and Greek so as to be able to translate simple prose at sight, is given a wide range of choice for the more advanced studies which he may take at his final matriculation. He may, as the measure provides, devote himself thereafter chiefly to the Classics, or to French and German, or to Mathematics, or he can make combinations of these four principal subjects in various proportions; or he can, if he so elect, substitute Mathematics, or Mathematics and Physics, for all the Greek.

From the point of view of secondary schools, those which retain the elements of Greek in their school programme, have a much greater chance under the new regulations, of developing other branches, in the direction of Languages, Science, and Mathematics; because advanced study in any one of these directions will count towards admission to Harvard. From the point of view of the pre-

paratory schools, these can now secure admission for their pupils on a level with other candidates, as the new scheme will allow them to prepare pupils thoroughly in English, French or German, Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics, with the elements of Latin, and of the history of England and the United States. In connection with this question of admission to Harvard, it must be explained that, as we understand it, candidates can have a preliminary and a final examination for entrance. In the preliminary they may take, for example, Greek and Latin. If they pass satisfactorily in these branches, they can devote two years, as President Eliot suggests, to more advanced and miscellaneous subjects, and then come up for a final matriculation examination. By this means candidates can be well grounded, and at the same time, have some choice presented to them of those studies for which they have shown a marked preference. The evils of cramming can be to a large extent mitigated, as the candidate can thus take, as it were, two bites of the cherry, without the chance of being choked.

These changes in the standard for admission to Harvard are such as will commend themselves to educationists. They have been rendered necessary by the increasing multiplicity of studies, the advance of science, and from the feeling that every possible obstacle should be removed from the path of those who might take a College course, and thereby reap the inestimable benefits of a liberal education, but who, from some cause of failure, either in themselves or in the college requirements for admission, are deterred from so doing. As the report points out, "the present sharp division of secondary schools into those which prepare boys for college, and those which do not, the important decision for or against a college education must generally be made for a boy as early as his fourteenth year." If there existed, says President Eliot, "a large class of schools having a programme of studies which on the one hand sufficed to admit their graduates creditably to college, and on the other furnished an appropriate training for boys who at 18 are to go into business or technical pursuits, this all important decision might be postponed to a more suitable age." The changes which have been made, provide, as will have been seen, for increasing the number and variety of schools which can prepare boys for college; they will, the University authorities hope, have some influence in the direction of improving the methods of teaching history and science in all schools. The practical effect of these measures will be that the secondary schools will be able to train boys for college and for mercantile pursuits at the same time. They can retain them until the age of 18, when they are in a position to make a choice for or against a college course, without prejudicing their chances of success either at college or in business, as the training received will have been such as to fit them equally well for both.

There is one thing most gratifying in connection with this question, and it is this: That the policy of Harvard University is in the direction of the elevation of the standard of the secondary schools. Every advance made by the Universities compels also an advance by the secondary schools, affecting in turn the preparatory and primary schools. The secondary schools should most certainly approximate their standards to the requirements of the Universities; for any lowering of the standard for secondary schools is immediately felt by the Universities; and schools and colleges, with no high standard before them, sink into insignificance and mediocrity, and so become altogether unprofitable. But there must be an understanding, an *en ente cordiale*, between the Universities and the secondary schools, if the requirements and needs of both are to be mutually known and satisfactorily adjusted. As the result of Harvard's wise policy in this matter, thirteen New England Colleges have united in the creation of a Commission on requirements for admission to college. This Commission, which is to be a permanent organization, has been established in the expectation that it will furnish a regular medium of communication between the preparatory schools and the colleges, so that the needs