

exist. Probably Oxford would cease to exist with it. In the good old times, before Mr. Goschen and Lord Coleridge abolished Tests, no term elapsed without its pulpit denunciations and its expenditure of Union eloquence upon the wickedness of schismatics and the need of keeping the University pure from all taint of Dissent. Tests were abolished, and unwilling Masters of Arts were no longer forced to subscribe to a number of theological propositions couched in the language of the sixteenth century. The grievance of the Dissenters was removed, and the point of dispute between the Theological and the Liberal parties was shifted. Since then there has been a gradual tendency on the part of the orthodox Dissenters to withdraw from the alliance of those who are not orthodox, and to incline towards the party of those who are. It is, therefore, with a sense of something like a return to a bygone age that we hear of an agitation among the Oxford Churchmen on the question whether a Nonconformist may be appointed to act as Examiner in Pass Divinity, or, as it is officially called, in the Rudiments of Faith and Religion. Vice-Chancellor Jowett, it appears, has appointed to that post a Nonconformist minister, who is also a distinguished Fellow of New College; and this appointment is now seriously exercising the minds of many devout people in the University. The examination is in the books of the Old Testament, with the Gospels and the Acts in Greek; and to these are added, except for those candidates who claim exemption on conscientious grounds, the Articles of the Church of England. Ought a Nonconformist to examine in these? That is the question now being discussed. As, however, Mr. Horton will have two colleagues, presumably Churchmen and probably clergymen, it will not be difficult for them to relieve him of the definitely Anglican part of the examination, if it is thought improper that he should deal with a subject which has frequently been intrusted to the hands of not too orthodox laymen. More important than this little theological dispute is the question, often mooted and now apparently becoming a practical proposal, about the abolition of the *visa voce* part of the examination. There is much to be said on both sides, but, for our own part, we must confess that we should see the change with regret. University teaching, in the higher branches, has now almost entirely lost its catechetical character, and is carried on by means of set lectures, note-books, and written essays. The system is excellent for creating good lecturers and good writers, but it is not at all adapted for making a man quick, ready, and able to call up his knowledge when it is asked for. *Visa voce* is a valuable corrective to the faults incidental to a system of lectures and essays. It enables an examiner to pierce through a rhetorical disguise. Often, too, it helps a weak man, or a man whose power of expression is not equal to his knowledge. It will require very strong arguments to convince us that the abolition of this part of the examination will be of service either to candidates or examiners.—*London Times*.

OXFORD, Dec. 13. Considerably more than 700 Masters of Arts mustered to-day from all parts of the country to record their votes in the matter of the nomination of Mr. Horton as an Examiner in the Rudiments of Religion. As is sometimes done on the occasion of large gatherings, the Convention was held in the Sheltonian Theatre, the area of which was occupied by the Masters of Arts, while the superior degrees found their place in the semi-circle on either side of the Vice-Chancellor, and the gallery was crowded with ladies and a sprinkling of undergraduates. The area itself was, as may be supposed, quite but not disagreeably full. Shortly after two o'clock the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Jowett), taking his place between the Proctors, announced in the usual formula in Latin the object of the Convocation. Then, with a change of tone, he began in English with the words "To avoid mistakes," but was interrupted by an universal peal of laughter, something in the words or the change of language appealing to the sense of humour of the Convocation. The Vice-Chancellor, however, upon silence being restored, severely rebuked the giddy triflers with the sarcasm "I am afraid, gentlemen, that if I had spoken in Latin many of you would have been unable to understand me." He

left it, indeed, an open question whether it had been his own powers of expression, or theirs of interpretation of which he had been in doubt. This interlude over, the Vice-Chancellor resumed his explanation. The ayes and noes were to give their votes filing out at opposite doors, at one of which was posted bodkin and a strip of paper, on which he pricked the vote. As soon as the affirmative votes were disposed of, the Vice-Chancellor diverted a portion of the negative voters through the same door—a step which greatly abridged the process of voting, and was a convenience to voters. There were some stragglers present, presumably residents, who did not vote. It was apparent from the first that the opposition to the nomination was in a large majority. When the last "non placet" had been recorded, and the Proctors had compared their lists, the senior Proctor announced the result with the formula, "majori parti non placet." The declaration of the numbers which followed—Placet 155, Non-Placet 576—was followed by a loud burst of cheering; some surprise being felt—not at the issue—for of that there could be no doubt, but at the largeness of the majority, being in the proportion of nearly four to one. So ended, as it was apparent from the first must end, this well meaning but most injudicious attempt to recognize the unsectarian character of the University. It is not impossible that the result may be to draw attention afresh to the examination itself, which, as all who have taken part in it confess, is of a most unsatisfactory character, and to lead either to an extensive modification of it, or, though this is, perhaps, less immediately probable, to its entire abolition. As it is, the most sacred topics have to be handled with a painful familiarity, and are, in consequence of the large amount of matter nominally required, necessarily dealt with in the most superficial and unprofitable manner. Regarded as a test of religious instruction, it cannot be said to be worth very much, except in so far as it secures a degree of acquaintance with portions of the Greek text of the New Testament.

THE attempt to break the will of Mrs. Jennie McGraw Fiske has been fairly inaugurated in Ithaca. The first effort is to show that at the time of her death—Sept. 30, 1881—Cornell University already had in its possession property worth \$3,000,000, and that under its charter it was incompetent to possess more. In this the interests of Professor Fiske, the husband of the testatrix, and of her own kin are identical. Edmunds L. Williams, acting treasurer of the institution, swears that at the date mentioned, the property of the University, including buildings, grounds, experimental farm, libraries, apparatus and funds, was worth \$2,226,974.36, exclusive of 375,276.49 acres of Western land. He also deposes that about that time a sale of land was made at \$5.50 an acre. Some has since been sold at \$16.50 an acre. The next move is to learn the value of this land two years ago, and an open commission issues from the surrogate to make inquiries where the land lies in Wisconsin and neighboring States. A litigation probably prolonged has begun. The University may plead that this estimate of the value of its buildings, grounds and apparatus, perhaps representing cost, does not represent value. It may and doubtless will plead that since the death of this last benefactor, and before the actual transfer of any of her property to it, it had become by act of the Legislature competent to hold property to any amount, and therefore to receive the legacy. Possibly an argument may be built upon the fact that Mrs. Fiske's gifts were not to the general funds of the College, but for particular objects, the care and maintenance of a building erected by her father for a hospital for sick students, and for the library. Questions, complicated indeed, will be presented to Surrogate Lyon. His judicial spirit will be tested. He is doubtless aware that the limiting clause of the University charter was a part of a compromise, made when the institution was first started, to quiet the clamor of envious persons. He likewise knows that all the funds have been and are now admirably managed, and that if allowed to receive what its friends have given it, the institution will become one of the most promising in the country. And happily for them, judges are not to right