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ENGLISH AT JUNIOR MATRICULATION.

BY SIR DANIEL WILSON, LL.D., F.R.S.E., PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

THE importance of "English," and its true place in a liberal education, are questions which have received a large amount of attention recently from leading educationists; and a very laudable desire has been manifested by some of the best men among our school inspectors, and the teachers of Canadian Institutes and High Schools, to secure for the study of the English language and literature a greater share of attention than it has hitherto received. This movement cannot fail to commend itself to all who are interested in higher education. It is an encouraging manifestation of intelligent sympathy in this important department of general education, at a time when the city of Toronto has furnished the endowment for a special chair of English Language and Literature in the University. At the same time I recognize in all this only the latest steps in a progressive system of improvement; for there was a time, in the early years of the University, when even the test of accurate orthography could not be

rigidly enforced on the candidates from country Grammar Schools, without involving the rejection of nearly all.

But it is possible to be in hearty sympathy with the aims of educational reformers, and yet differ from them as to the best means for accomplishing the end in view. The cry at present is for a high standard at the annual University matriculation examinations; and with this view examiners have aimed at making the papers for junior matriculation, not only more difficult, but, as it seems to me, more obscure and puzzling. It would be invidious to refer to particular papers, or quote special questions. But in recent years I have looked carefully over the papers prepared: not for Normal School candidates for a teacher's first class certificate; but for hundreds of nervous boys and girls of fifteen or sixteen years of age, required in the brief term of a couple of hours to study and elucidate obscure grammatical questions. Many of them deal with per-