

AN EASY AND EFFICIENT METHOD OF READING
EXAMINATION PAPERS.

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EVERY English master in Ontario groans in spirit, monthly, bi-monthly or semi-monthly, as he deposits on his study-table an armful of papers on literature, or English grammar, or composition. Groans in spirit, I say, with curses deep and loud as he thinks of the long-drawn agony of wading through from one to five hundred pages of badly-written foolscap before he can sigh and say, "That set's off!" Of course it is a pleasure to know how the class express themselves in writing, but most teachers probably find themselves disappointed always with the result, and the labour of examining is hence a weariness to the flesh, unmitigated by any more human reward than the sense of duty done.

A method of examining occurred to me a couple of years ago, which I have used since with such success as to induce me to lay it before the profession in the hope that others may find their work done more easily and more efficiently at the same time, as I have myself.

My plan is a simple one and may be already in use, though the masters to whom I have mentioned it have found it new to them. I have two long tables covered with black oil cloth; they are about 13 feet long by 3 feet wide, and are simply made of planed boards screwed together and mounted on trestles. On these tables I arrange all the papers written by the pupils. The pupils are instructed to arrange the sheets in folding with the first page uppermost in regular order, to write

only one answer on one sheet (unless there should result too great a waste of paper), and to fold the sheets only once. The work of arranging these papers on tables is not very heavy. Of course care must be taken to allow no hurricanes to blow through the room, indeed a very gentle zephyr will lift a sheet of foolscap and waft it gently across the table or onto the floor. When this work of arranging is complete, I take the questions and read the first of them; then, walking round the tables, I mark the answers to it on all the papers before touching the second; then I take up the second and deal with it similarly, and so on to the end of the set. Having marked all the answers, I add the marks on the papers, fold them and mark the totals on the outsides.

Of course I take it for granted that most teachers examine as I used to do, read a paper quite through before going on to another.

Now, I believe that the new method has several advantages over the old, while the old has no advantage over the new. Moreover, I believe that no English master who once tries the new method will ever revert to the old. I shall not expatiate upon the merits of my suggestion, because I feel confident that those who read this will make the experiment, and discover for themselves all that I could say on the subject; they will find that they save one hour in four; that they are saved the burden of carrying a whole set of questions and values in their heads at once; that they can