

management of it in the hands of the most eminent men they could command. The examination was conducted entirely in writing. The papers were sent up to the University, and were placed in the hands of examiners, who had never seen the candidates, and did not even know their names. Every answer was carefully read, and a numerical estimate of its value was set down by the examiner. The whole of the marks thus obtained were afterwards added up, and the candidate's position in the list depended entirely upon the result of this process. All the precautions which long experience had taught the Universities to adopt in order to detect dishonest artifices, and to make the examination the best test of genuine acquirement were scrupulously carried out in the local examinations. Thus the public, as well as the scholastic profession, had the highest possible guarantee for the trustworthiness of the examinations.

It was not to be wondered at that the system had been received with great favour, and that a steady growth in the number of candidates should have been annually perceptible. In 1858 Cambridge had only 370 candidates, while the average of the first five years gives 715 per annum; but in 1865, there were in all 1,347 candidates for examination at the Cambridge examination in December, and this year no less than 1,224 candidates presented themselves in June to the Oxford examination.

It was not till 1863 that it was proposed to extend the advantages of these examinations to the pupils of girls schools. An influential committee consisting of many ladies and of some men of great political and social eminence, placed itself in communication with the governing bodies of the Universities, and sought to obtain their consent to the admission of girls. At first Cambridge yielded cautiously; and a sort of experimental examination was held in London at Christmas, 1863. 91 girls presented themselves, of whom 57 failed to reach the standard of the examiners. But this result, so far from discouraging the committee, only served to render more evident the need for some such measures of improvement. Further negotiation with the Cambridge syndicate led to more complete arrangements last year; and at six of the local centres, viz., Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Manchester, London, and Sheffield, girls were admitted at Christmas, 1865. The total number of female candidates was 130, of whom 76 presented themselves for the senior or higher examination.

Some passages from the report of the syndicate were then read:—"It is particularly satisfactory to remark that arithmetic, which in 1863 was so disastrous, especially to the seniors, of whom more than 90 per cent. were rejected in that subject alone, has this year been very successful. Indeed of the whole number of candidates no more than three failed in it. The total number rejected was 28 seniors and eight juniors." * * * "In English the failures were remarkably few. The examiners all speak well of the work sent up. In dictation half the girls obtained full marks. In the preliminary geography, the examiner speaks well of their performances. In English grammar eleven out of the juniors got more than half-marks; and in English composition eight of the seniors more than three-quarters; fifteen, less than three-quarters and more than two-thirds; seventeen, from one-half to two-thirds of the marks. In English history about 37 per cent. of the girls got half marks or more. One obtained six-sevenths of the maximum number. The examiner thought the style of the girls' replies better than that of the boys. It was more straightforward and to the point, and there were fewer attempts at fine writing." * * * "In political economy, of the seven girls who took it up, none failed; * * * the average of their marks was about five per cent. higher than that of the boys. In Shakspeare the girls were very successful; one obtained the highest marks attained by any candidate in this subject." * * * "One of the examiners in religious knowledge writes:—The answers of the girls were orderly and methodical, and the writing and expression good. The papers of many gave proofs of the care and ability on the part of both teacher and scholar." * * * "Three junior girls attempted Latin. Of these none failed. Of nine seniors two failed. The examiners say that the papers were extremely creditable. They appear to have been struck with the accuracy and good taste of the translations. No girl attempted Greek." * * * "Thirty-five students, of whom none failed; and sixty-five seniors, of whom seven failed, went in for French. Among the seniors the examiners observe little difference between boys and girls.

With regard to the juniors the examiner writes:—In the matter of grammar the girls are better than the boys. The former learn a French grammar, while the latter trust to their knowledge of Latin, which it is almost needless to say is often extremely defective. Five juniors of whom one, and nineteen seniors of whom two failed, tried German. Three juniors and eleven seniors succeeded in attaining marks of distinction. In drawing ten out of twenty four seniors, and four out of six juniors passed; three obtained marks of distinction. The girls have been more carefully selected than the boys. One of them excelled all other candidates in the colour

sketch, which was admirable, as was also her model drawing. Five juniors attempted music, of whom all passed, and twenty seniors of whom twelve passed.

With regard to the general result of the examination and to the interest taken in it by the girls, all the local examiners speak favourably. One writes:—I conducted the girls' examination in London. Everything went on quiet as regularly and quietly as at any examination at which I have ever been present. The girls seemed to take great interest in it, and worked at their papers in a very business-like way, and for the whole time allotted to them. I was quite struck with the easy way in which they bore the stress of the examination, I could not detect any flagging of interest in it, or any ill effect upon them whatever."

These extracts will suffice to show how far the experiment of last year succeeded, and they furnish an indication of the way in which the plan is likely to work, when it comes to be more generally extended to girls' schools. Indeed, there is nothing especially masculine either in the subjects of examination or in the nature of the test applied. There is no reason which justifies the introduction of this system for boys' schools which does not apply, at least with equal force, to those for the other sex. Governesses need quite as much as schoolmasters the help and guidance which are furnished by such a scheme. They are subject even to greater temptations to acquiesce in an inexact and superficial style of learning. For them and for their pupils the need of a thoroughly trustworthy external test of the value of the work they are doing, then, is peculiarly great. In the last years of a boys' school career he has many motives for diligence. He may be destined for the University. He may be entering on some one of the numerous careers in which young people are now confronted with trial examinations. At least he has the business of life before him; and he knows that all his culture and knowledge will come into play, and be roughly tested then. But a girl has, at present, no such motives to animate her to exertion. Society does not encourage her to suppose that school-learning has a very close relation to the life she is about to enter; and it oftens happens that from sixteen to eighteen her interest in learning slackens, and her reading becomes aimless and desultory. It is just at this moment when, if ever, the intellectual character of a girl is being formed for life, that the University examination would come in, as a motive for exertion, and a means of giving definiteness to her aims, and thoroughness to her methods of study. Moreover, there would not be the smallest reason to change the course of instruction already adopted in the best ladies' schools. It was a fortunate circumstance, that although the scheme of examination was determined on some years ago, before the admission of girls was ever contemplated, it is so comprehensive, both at Cambridge and at Oxford, that it includes every branch of instruction to which importance is attached by the most eminent teacher in ladies' colleges and schools. History, English literature, modern languages, drawing and music, and other subjects in which well instructed girls generally excel, receive quite as full and honourable recognition as classics, mathematics, and physical science. Fears had been sometimes expressed lest the adoption of such a system would produce unhealthy nervous excitement, and prove otherwise detrimental to the grace and modesty of the female character. But those fears were, he believed, unfounded. In the course of his inquiries for the Royal Commission, it had been his duty to examine the pupils in many ladies' schools; and he had always found that all nervousness and trepidation soon disappeared, when pupils were presented with questions on subjects which they had properly studied, and in which, by wise teaching, they had been led to feel interested. The imagination of a young girl was always active, and while a proposal of this sort was new and strange, the prospect of an examination was apt to seem formidable. But it was the duty of teachers to consider what would be the effect of such examinations when the novelty and strangeness should have worn off; and when pupils learned to look upon them as a natural and usual incident in their school career. He had no reason to suppose that girls were placed at any greater disadvantage than boys, when their knowledge came to be tested in writing. The University took the most careful precautions to secure the quietness and privacy of the examinations. At every local centre, at which girls were admitted, there was a committee of ladies who gave to the examiner the great advantage of their own help and presence. He knew that there were on the part of teachers many doubts, and not unreasonable misgivings on the whole subject, and it might well be admitted that there were many high qualities, and much of valuable educational influence which could not be tested by any examination, however good. But let them accept the scheme for such services as it was able to render, and not expect too much from it. It would increase the accuracy and the fulness of a learner's knowledge, it would induce more systematic and orderly habits of mind, it would encourage greater exertions, and it would enable teachers to measure better the worth of their own plans. Examinations have been long known to be the most efficient instruments for keeping up the standard of scholar-