

English.

All articles and communications intended for this department should be addressed to the ENGLISH EDITOR, EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL, Room 20, 11½ Richmond Street West, Toronto.

MATRICULATION EXAMINATIONS IN ENGLISH IN THE MIDDLE STATES.

AT THE meeting of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland in Dec. 1893, a committee of ten was appointed "to consider the present usage in the matter of entrance examinations in English language and literature in the colleges of the Association, and to present, if deemed wise, a scheme of uniform entrance requirements in English, to be offered as suggestion or recommendation to the several colleges of the Association."

The report of this committee has recently been made public and is an interesting exposition of the present condition of opinion in the scope and character of English work over a large extent of the United States. One feature of the report will be noticed by the Ontario teachers, namely that the secondary schools of the neighboring Republic are, unlike our own, still hampered by a conflict of classes to meet the requirements of different universities, an evil they are striving hard to get rid of.

The report in the main is as follows:—

"The first meeting of the committee was held at the University of the City of New York on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, February 22, 23, and 24, 1894, and was called to order by the Chairman. Mr. William H. Maxwell was elected Secretary. All the members of the committee were present at the sessions. It was ordered that circulars of inquiry be sent to the colleges of New England, the Middle States, and Maryland, and also to the preparatory schools of the same states, asking for a statement of experience in English work and for an expression of opinion as to the desirability of certain specified forms of entrance requirements now in use. The recommendations of the committee of ten appointed by the National Educational Association were in the main endorsed by the committee. The following recommendations in particular were favorably considered:

1. That any examination set should be based upon the reading of certain masterpieces of English literature, not fewer in number than those at present recommended by the Commission of Colleges in New England on Admission Examinations.

2. That certain of these books should be of a kind to be read by the candidate as literature; and that others—a limited number—should be carefully studied under the immediate direction of the teacher.

3. That each of the whole number of books should be representative, so far as possible, of a period, a tendency, or a type of literature; and that the whole number of works selected for any year should represent with as few gaps as possible the course of English literature from the Elizabethan period to the present time.

4. That the candidate's proficiency in composition should be judged from his answers to the questions set, which should be so framed as to require answers of some length and to test his power of applying the principles of composition.

5. That formal grammar and exercises in the correction of incorrect English should in no case be more than a subordinate part of the examination.

It was further agreed that the task of working out in detail the application of these general principles could best be done by small sub-committees, which were then appointed. The general committee then adjourned, to meet in Philadelphia, May 17, 18, and 19, at the University of Pennsylvania.

It will be noted that the conclusions reached seemed to make it impossible for the committee

to adopt the system of requirements for admission now in use in most of the colleges of New England under the initiative of the New England Commission. The adoption of this system would have given the very great advantage of securing uniformity of usage in the colleges of New England and of the Middle States, and the argument in favor of adopting it was strong because the system had proved to be in many respects of practical value. But expressions of opinion to the effect that these requirements, useful as they have been, were no longer fair or complete tests of the results of the best methods of teaching English, came in great numbers, and from persons of great authority, in reply to the requests for information sent out by the committee; and the conclusion was finally reached that a new system of requirements must be framed. To make such a scheme of requirements without the aid and co-operation of the New England colleges seemed unwise. Friendly correspondence was therefore opened with Professor Poland, Secretary of the Commission of Colleges in New England on Admission Examinations, and by the courteous invitation of that body the Chairman of this committee met the commission for conference at its annual meeting, held in Boston, April 20. After some discussion, the Commission appointed a committee of three, consisting of Professor Winchester, of Wesleyan University (Chairman), Professor Albert S. Cook, of Yale University, and Professor Le Baron R. Briggs, Dean of Harvard College, to meet in Philadelphia, May 17, and to act in co-operation with the representatives of the Middle States and Maryland. By a subsequent action of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of New England, Mr. John Tetlow, Headmaster of the Girls' High and Latin Schools of Boston, and Mr. W. C. Collar, Head Master of the Roxbury Latin School, were appointed as delegates to represent the New England Association at this Philadelphia conference. These delegates, collectively representing the colleges and the preparatory schools of the New England States, the Middle States, and Maryland, met as had been agreed, in Philadelphia, May 17, at 7.30 p.m. The three delegations then organized themselves into a conference, with the understanding that the conclusions reached and the plans adopted should be presented for subsequent ratification by the separate committees. Professor Francis H. Stoddard was elected Chairman of this Conference, and Mr. William H. Maxwell was elected Secretary.

The conclusions reached by the Conference were embodied in a final report, which was signed by each of the members. The committee presents these conclusions as a part of its own report and adopts them as the basis of the recommendations which it makes to the Association.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE.

A Conference on Entrance Requirements in English, consisting of a committee of ten appointed by the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, a committee of three appointed by the Commission of Colleges in New England on Admission Examinations, and a committee of two from the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, met in Philadelphia, May 17, 18, and 19, 1894, and adopted the following report, with the understanding that it should be presented for ratification to each of the bodies represented in the Conference:

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Conference recommends:

1. That the time allowed for the English examination for entrance to college be not less than two hours.

2. That the books prescribed be divided into two groups—one for reading, the other for more careful study.

3. That in connection with the reading and study of the required books parallel or subsidiary reading be encouraged.

4. That a considerable amount of English poetry be committed to memory in preparatory study.

5. That the essentials of English Grammar, even if there is no examination in that subject, be not neglected in preparatory study.

Although the Conference believes that the correction of bad English is useful in preparatory study, it does not favor an examination in this subject as a requirement for admission to college.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS.—The Conference recommends that the following scheme of entrance requirements in English be adopted by the various colleges.

Entrance Requirements.

NOTE.—No candidate will be accepted in English whose work is notably defective in point of spelling, punctuation, idiom, or division into paragraphs.

I. *Reading*.—A certain number of books will be set for reading. The candidate will be required to present evidence of a general knowledge of the subject-matter, and to answer simple questions on the lives of the authors. The form of examination will usually be the writing of a paragraph or two on each of several topics, to be chosen by the candidate from a considerable number—perhaps ten or fifteen—set before him in the examination paper. The treatment of these topics is designed to test the candidate's power of clear and accurate expression, and will call for only a general knowledge of the substance of the books. In place of a part or a whole of this test, the candidate may present an exercise book, properly certified by his instructor, containing compositions or other written work done in connection with the reading of books. The books set for this part of the examination will be:

1895: Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night"; "The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers" in *The Spectator*; Irving's "Sketch Book"; Scott's "Abbot"; Webster's "First Bunker Hill Oration"; Macaulay's "Essay on Milton"; Longfellow's "Evangeline."

1896: Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; Defoe's "History of the Plague in London"; Irving's "Tales of a Traveller"; Scott's "Woodstock"; Macaulay's "Essay on Milton"; Longfellow's "Evangeline"; George Eliot's "Silas Marner."

1897: Shakespeare's "As You Like It"; Defoe's "History of the Plague in London"; Irving's "Tales of a Traveller"; Hawthorne's "Twice Told Tales"; Longfellow's "Evangeline"; George Eliot's "Silas Marner."

1898: Milton's "Paradise Lost" Books I. and II.; Pope's "Iliad," Books I. and XXII.; "The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers" in *The Spectator*; Goldsmith's "The Vicar of Wakefield"; Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner"; Southey's "Life of Nelson"; Carlyle's Essay on Burns"; Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal"; Hawthorne's "The House of the Seven Gables."

II. *Study and Practice*.—This part of the examination presupposes the thorough study of each of the works named below. The examination will be upon subject-matter, form and structure.

The books set for this part of the examination will be:

1895: Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice"; Milton's "L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus, and Lycidas"; Macaulay's "Essay on Addison."

1896: Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice"; Milton's "L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus, and Lycidas"; Webster's "First Bunker Hill Oration."

1897: Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice"; Burke's "Speech on Conciliation with America"; Scott's "Marmion"; Macaulay's "Life of Samuel Johnson."

1898: Shakespeare's "Macbeth"; Burke's "Speech on Conciliation with America";