

may attend a teacher who so acts, but continued success cannot be secured by such means.

The effect of the examinations is to introduce throughout schools a graduated programme of work not conceived by individual predilections, but devised by highly qualified members of our chief Universities. The benefit of the examinations is thus extended to those who are not candidates.

In consequence of the great success of the scheme as regards boys' schools, the Universities of Cambridge and Edinburgh have opened their examinations to girls. Last year, local examinations of the pupils of ladies' schools were held at Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Manchester, London, and Sheffield, and the testimony of the examiners respecting their value is most satisfactory.

Through the kindness of Dr. Heaton, a meeting of ladies resident in the chief towns of the Riding, and interested in the education of girls, was held at his house, Leeds, for the purpose of discussing the above subject, with Mr. J. G. Fitch, M.A., Assistant-Commissioner of the Schools Inquiry Royal Commission, Mr. Henry H. Sales, Hon. Secretary to the West Riding Educational Board, and Miss E. Davies, the authoress of many works on the social and intellectual advancement of women. After luncheon, the subject for consideration was introduced by Dr. Heaton, who remarked that, as regarded the University examinations of girls, they must all feel that a test of the efficiency of the instruction given in their schools was alike valuable to teachers and parents.

Mr. Fitch, who referred in some detail to the history of the University Local Examinations. They had originated about ten years ago, in a proposal made by the Rev. Dr. Temple, the present Head Master of Rugby, and Mr. T. D. Acland. It had long been felt by these gentlemen that it was in the power of the Universities to confer great advantages on others beside their own students, and to raise the tone of the general middle-class education in the country. The Universities had acquired, by long practice, experience of special value in the art of examining, and this experience it was proposed to make available for testing the work of schools.

After due deliberation, it was determined by Oxford to hold examinations at certain local centres, and on subjects which were generally taught in good schools. The first experiment was made in June, 1858; and by December of the same year the Cambridge Senate had organised a similar scheme of local examination. There was no rivalry between the two great Universities. They simply agreed to divide the work between them, and had ever since co-operated in the most friendly way. One or two slight practical differences, however, existed, and it was worth while to refer to them. Oxford conferred the title of A.A., or Associate in Arts, upon all candidates who successfully passed the Senior Examination; while Cambridge, though having come later into the field, and having thus had time to reconsider that part of the proposal, had determined on awarding no title, but simply on granting certificates to all who had passed. This distinction was, however, unimportant. It was not found, on the one hand, that the title of A.A. was in any danger of being confounded with the older and well-known distinctions of B.A. and M.A., which were of course still reserved for graduates. On the other hand, the Cambridge senior certificate was in no sense inferior in value to that of Oxford, although the latter conferred a title.

A more important distinction between the practice of the two Universities concerned the question of religion. Both Universities, of course, attached importance to this subject. But the Council of Oxford require that every candidate, unless his parents shall request, *conscientiæ causâ*, a special exemption, shall be examined in the Scriptures and in the Church Catechism, and no one is held to have satisfied the examiners unless he shall have passed in both subjects. On the other hand, Cambridge offers, besides the Scriptural examination, an alternative of two departments—the one consisting of the formularies of the Church of England, and the other of *Wheatley's Evidences* or *Paley's Horæ Paulinæ*. It was thus evident that a Nonconformist candidate, whose parents did not desire that he should be instructed in the creeds of the Church of England, was placed at a slight disadvantage at Oxford as compared with Cambridge.

The only other difference in procedure worth referring to was, that the Oxford examination takes place annually in June, and that of Cambridge in December. But in all other respects—in the age of the candidates, in the amount of the fee, in the range of the subjects, and in the general character of the examinations—the two Universities are practically at one.

It would not be necessary for his purpose to give the curriculum of both Universities, but it would suffice briefly to describe that of Cambridge. There were two examinations held simultaneously—the one for junior candidates below the age of sixteen, the other for seniors whose age did not exceed eighteen. Each of these examinations consisted of two parts—a preliminary portion, which included all the necessary or obligatory subjects, and a second part offering

a considerable range of choice to the candidate. Thus, at the junior examination, every candidate is required first, to read aloud, to write a passage from dictation, and to pass a simple elementary examination in English grammar, in arithmetic, in geography, and in history. After this, he is at liberty to select any of the following ten subjects, of which he may not attempt more than six, but he is required to satisfy the examiners in two, at least—religious knowledge, English language, Latin, Greek, French, German, pure mathematics, elementary mechanics, chemistry, zoology, and botany. There is also a further examination for those who choose to present themselves in drawing and music. A similar arrangement, *mutatis mutandis*, prevails at the senior examination. Here there is first, a preliminary or necessary part consisting of reading, English grammar and analysis, simple English composition, arithmetic, geography, and the outlines of English history. There are the nine optional sections, of which each candidate is required to take three, but is not permitted to take more than five. They are, religious knowledge, English history or literature, Latin or Greek, French or German, pure or applied mathematics, chemistry, natural science, drawing, and music. Under each of these heads details were given describing the nature of the examination, and the range and depth of knowledge, which it pre-supposed.

The advantages of the establishment of this system had been very marked, and its success during eight successive years, had fully realised the most earnest hopes of its promoters. He could testify that the influence of the whole scheme upon the schools which he had visited in Yorkshire and elsewhere had been most beneficial. There were exceptions, of course; but, as a rule, the schools whose names appeared in the class-lists of successful pupils were among the best and most hopeful schools in the district. And this was not to be wondered at, for a well-considered scheme of this kind was of especial value as a means of guidance and help to the teachers. There was no profession whose members were so isolated as that of the schoolmaster. There was none in which earnest men were trying experiments so much in the dark, in ignorance of what was being done by their brethren, and without the advantage of concert or comparison. Many of them went on from year to year, applying their own tests, comparing the work of one class with another, and of one half-year with the next; but, meanwhile, their standard might be unconsciously lowering itself, and their work be very unsatisfactory, because they had no external standard by which to measure its quality. The publication of the Cambridge curriculum showed to teachers what, in the opinion of the most eminent scholars in the country, a good school ought to do for boys of sixteen or eighteen; the publication of the questions and the class-lists served to show how much was actually done by the pupils of the best schools; while the annual report of the examiners, drawing attention to deficiencies, and pointing out how the methods of teaching particular subjects might be improved, were calculated to be especially helpful to all teachers who wished to understand their profession better, and to obtain higher results. And if the examination scheme had been useful to teachers, its influence had been still more potent upon the pupils. It supplied them with a motive for exertion, and with a definite object towards which to study. A further merit in the scheme was the wide range of choice which it left to the discretion of candidates and their teachers.

Nothing could well have been more mischievous than for the Universities to come before the schools of the country with a rigid and authoritative scheme of instruction, to which all were to conform alike. In the present state of our educational knowledge, we are far from being entitled to pronounce with clear decisiveness, what subject should and what should not be included in the mental training of young people; and, at least as a provisional measure, the wisest course seems to be to leave the largest liberty of choice to teachers, and to be ready to recognise intellectual excellence, in whatever form it may be attained. For, after all, it is not so much the thing learned, as the accuracy, thoroughness, and earnestness with which it is learned, on which the success and worthiness of a scheme of Education depend. And the Universities have from the first proceeded on this principle in regard to these local examinations. They prescribe nothing absolutely except those simple elementary matters about which every body is agreed,—the reading, writing, arithmetic, the grammar, geography, and history, which are included in every school, whether for boys or girls. Beyond this, they leave the learner to choose, or his teacher to choose for him, whether he will distinguish himself in literature, in science, in the knowledge of his own language, of the ancient or the modern languages, in drawing or in music.

And as the scheme was thus wise and comprehensive in its conception, it was not less remarkable for the perfect fairness and care with which it had been carried out. There are no bodies in the kingdom which could command the public confidence in the same way as the two great Universities. They had taken up the business of this middle-class examination with zeal, and had placed the