

for the matriculation and for the Junior Scholarships examinations, the pupils or the teachers of this school ever have a very easy time. The discipline is, as far as I can see, very good, the order is excellent, and it is maintained without perceptible effort. The text-books in use are well chosen, but there are, perhaps, too many of them. The building is very suitable for the purpose for which it is intended. The class-rooms are large and well ventilated, 150 pupils could be accommodated in them.

The opinion that I have formed with regard to the nature of the instruction given here is based partly on information received from the teachers, and partly on my inspection of the examination papers that were being worked by the girls while I was present. The work of preparing girls for dealing with examination papers is admirably done—it would be impossible for any one, who had seen the logical and methodical way in which the questions placed before them were attacked and dealt with by the girls, to doubt that the instruction that had produced such results must have been of a very high class indeed. The mathematical work especially was clearly and beautifully done.

It is very possible that too much stress is laid here, as elsewhere, on this work of preparing pupils to undergo written examinations. It may be that it would be better if girls and boys received much more training in *viva voce* work and preparation for *viva voce* examinations than they ever actually get, if it were considered just as important that a girl should be ready to answer questions on the spur of the moment, to see immediately the bearings of facts one upon another, and to utilize and produce off-hand all that she knows, as that she should be able to express in writing the results of slow and deliberate thinking. It is possible, too, that the former kind of training might be of more practical utility than that which alone finds favour now that it would make brighter and more vigorous, if somewhat less ponderous and thoughtful, men and women than the present system is fitted to produce. Be that as it may however, teachers cannot help themselves—they are driven to make preparation for written examinations the principal part of their work. On the one hand the wishes of the parents, expressed or understood, are urging teachers on to get as many children as possible to pass examinations that give the *entrée* to some profitable employment, or to a higher social rank, on the other, the University is compelling them, by means of the number and variety of subjects in which candidates for the smaller academical distinctions are required to pass, to devote nearly the whole of their time and most of their energy to this preparation for written examinations. Then, again, teachers find that their professional reputations depend almost entirely on their success in getting pupils to obtain good places in the various competitive and other examinations. A teacher who tried to strike out a new and better line for himself would soon lose all his scholars. It should be remembered, too, that teachers have not only to produce absolutely good examination results, but, from the causes mentioned, they are driven to try to make their pupils better than those of other similar institutions. In short, it may be said that the only road to a first-class position for a teacher lies through success in preparing pupils for competitive written examinations. It would appear therefore, that teachers cannot be held responsible for whatever evils result from the present high-pressure system, but that they are bound in self-defence to act precisely as they do. The fault lies with public opinion, which holds success in preparing boys and girls for passing difficult written examinations to be almost the sole criterion of a teacher's capabilities. On the whole, it seems to me that there is only one thing wanting to make this school nearly perfect, this is, that much more time and opportunity for *viva voce* work should be given to it, by means of a judicious curtailment and alteration of the school course. If something like the standard system adopted in the case of the primary schools could be introduced here, so that there should be one course, and one only, with no preparation work for examinations outside of it—and if this course of study could be drawn up and regulated, not merely with the view of making girls work up to the utmost limit of their powers (girls who like their teachers will work for them until they can do no more), but in accordance with careful and judicious considerations as to how much they may be called upon to do without risk of injuring their minds or their bodies, then, indeed, this would be an admirable school. As it is, and judged by the canons at present in vogue, I should say that the arrangements and the teaching leave little to be desired.

These remarks are made with considerable diffidence, they express my own views exactly, but a casual observer, having at the best but imperfect opportunities of judging, cannot be expected to know as much about the working of an institution like this as do those who are constantly seeing it in full operation. Perhaps it might be well to consider that this report merely suggests questions that should be more fully and satisfactorily answered by future visitors to this very important school.

The Secretary for Education.

I have, &c.,

JAMES H. POPE.

9. REMARKS by the LADY PRINCIPAL.

SIR,—

Girls' High School, 18th December, 1883.

As the Inspector of Secondary Schools visited us when the examinations were being conducted, he had very little opportunity of judging directly of our methods and general work, and I therefore think it due to the school that I should make a brief statement of those matters which would not otherwise be known.

In the upper classes the work has this year been so arranged that neither Latin nor more advanced mathematics necessarily form part of the school course—extra English or some light subject may be substituted for them. In the lower classes Latin is omitted altogether, and French instead, as being an easier subject for young children, is taught to all. Throughout the school the subject to which the greatest prominence is given is English. Some new subjects have been introduced this year German has been studied by a few of the girls in the middle classes, botany and physiology by all, and drawing, instead of being a special subject, is now a part of the