

bilities of the household. Incidental to the work of high schools and normal schools there is still another fact that specially lends itself to the overworking of girls. A boy of only average ability does not usually choose a profession that demands a high educational test; but at present almost the only occupation open to gentlewomen, whether they have much or little ability, is teaching. There are many grades of teachers, from Class A at the top to Class E at the bottom; and every girl who is worthy to become a teacher tries to qualify for the highest grade to which she can possibly attain; hence the necessity for passing degree and other test examinations. Now, many girls, strong in health, and quick in assimilating what they are taught, can pass such examinations without any strain; but in the case of others of less talent, or of less robust health, the strain proves too great, and they break down. It is incumbent, therefore, on all parents to count well the cost before determining that their daughters shall enter on a course of study with a special aim of this kind, whether of obtaining a degree, scholarship, or teacher's certificate. So far as this school is concerned, the matter is entirely in the hands of parents. It is necessary that parents should insist on their children devoting a reasonable time to evening preparation; but it is still more imperative that they should see that not more than a reasonable time is given to home work, and that, should the work appear to be too heavy, they should at once communicate with me on the subject. During the past year I have anxiously tried to guard against overworking the more studious girls. To this end I have done all in my power to encourage out-door games. Thanks chiefly to the exertions of the ex-High School Girls' Club, we have now two excellent asphalted courts for tennis, which, with the five courts, are much used during play hours. Further, in order as much as possible to extend the time for play, I have kept the grounds open during the summer months for an hour after afternoon school. Another corrective to overwork is the gymnastic lesson, which each class has twice a week. I cannot insist too strongly on the importance of gymnastics to all girls whose general health admits of their taking part in the exercises, and on the necessity of each girl being provided with a suitable dress, so that she may be able to derive full benefit from the lesson.

The Chairman, Board of Governors.

A. WILSON, Principal.

7. REPORTS OF EXAMINERS (December, 1885).

REPORT OF THE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH, HISTORY, AND GEOGRAPHY.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report that I examined the Boys' High School, from the Lower Fourth upwards, and the whole of the Girls' High School, towards the end of the session just concluded, in the following subjects:—

(1.) *English*.—Including reading, descriptive grammar, historical grammar (in the higher Forms only), and selected works or portions of works of leading English writers, ranging from the extracts of Geikie's Fifth Reader to the Fourth Book of *Paradise Lost*, various plays of Shakespeare, Bacon's Essays, the first six cantos of the *Faerie Queene* (Girls'), and Chaucer's Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* (Boys'). (2.) *History*.—Only English history was taken up this year: on a previous occasion European history was studied in the highest form of the Girls' School. The most advanced book was Smith's *Smaller History of England* in the Girls' School (Sixth Form), and the *Royal History of England* in the Boys' School (Fifth Form). (3.) *Geography*.—The course in this subject is progressive in both schools up to the Fifth Form, and is very complete. The most advanced text-book in ordinary geography is Mackay's *Intermediate Geography*; but the Lower Fifth Form of the Girls' School has studied Blackie's *Physical Geography* with particularly satisfactory results.

Girls' High School.

The Syllabus.—The curriculum in the subjects in which I examined appears to me to be most satisfactorily arranged. The learners proceed gradually from the preliminary to the advanced subjects without ever being suddenly brought into contact with subjects of excessive difficulty, and all the work done is of the most valuable nature for both educational and practical purposes. The principal point about the construction of the curriculum that seems to me open to inquiry is the position assigned to history. From my experience as an examiner under "the Oxford and Cambridge School Examination Syndicate" I consider that history is somewhat subordinated to literature and language. The inequality is by no means serious; but at the present time, when the directors of education seem so generally disposed to put history in the background, it is necessary to call attention to the fact that, whatever be the value of a knowledge of the mere facts of history, the study of it in class from the works of a first-class historian, and under the guidance of an experienced teacher, is probably the best known means of acquiring the power of grasping and assimilating the leading points of a writer—a power on which all self-education depends.

Teaching.—I have been present during the instruction or examination of most of the classes by their teachers, and have in every case been much impressed by the energy and skill of the latter, as exhibited both in giving instruction and in drawing out the pupils' knowledge. In every class I found genuine teaching, and nowhere did I see any trace of the system once so common under which the school was little more than a place for hearing lessons repeated.

Results.

(a.) *Reading*.—Throughout the classes that I examined in reading, the work was marked by that correctness of emphasis which results from the power of taking in the meaning of a whole sentence at a glance. But in according this high praise, I must mention that the passages read were those with which the pupils were already familiar, and that, in the limited time available, it would not have been fair to either pupils or teachers to attempt the reading of entirely new matter. But, though the excellence of that part of reading which proceeds from intellectual mastery of the