

the other the conference, established as an annual affair by the Senate of one year, was dis-established as an affair of any kind by the Senate of the next. The only remedy seems to lie in a permanent academic body with the functions above stated, having official recognition from the Senate proper, who also have the right of discussion and veto.

*(b.) Methods of the University.*

Under this head come the arrangement of degree courses and methods of examination. With regard to the arrangement of courses I shall only say that I think cases should be dealt with individually, and the natural talents and requirements of each student should be the main consideration in determining the course he should take at the University. In each case a homogeneous correlation of subjects should be insisted on. In addition to a main line of study complementary branches should be studied, and the whole course subordinated to a definite end and the various parts blend harmoniously together. Under the present method the choice of subjects is more or less a haphazard one, the student not infrequently selecting a subject rather on account of its easiness than because it is in any way correlated to the other subjects of his course. The result is that the student who aspires no higher than the pass degree often knows, when he attains that height, a little of many things and nothing of anything. As a hall-mark of general culture, which our B.A. degree purports to be, it is, to say the least, unreliable.

However grave this and other evils enumerated may be, the gravest and most dangerous evil of all is the method of purely external examination. This is a millstone around the neck of the University which is alone sufficient to prevent absolutely any upward progress. The dangers of the system, the tendency it exercises towards cram on the part of the student, its tendency to undermine the initiative and individuality of teacher and student alike, and many others, have been fully dealt with in the reform pamphlet, and I shall not enumerate them here. A system of examination which does not take into account the year's work of the candidate presenting himself must on the face of it be unjust and no fair test of the candidate's qualifications for a degree. It may be said, in answer to this, that the year's work has been taken into consideration by the teacher in the terms examination. That may be so, but the teacher's powers in such examinations are merely negative; he can fail the candidate. Once he has let him pass, however, the teacher's evidence becomes worthless, for the matter is then out of his hands, and the external examiner has nothing to judge by except the papers before him. As a matter of fact, under the present conditions a professor will let a student pass his terms examination if he thinks he has the slightest chance of scraping through his degree examination, for he is naturally very loth to deprive a man of even a frail chance when he knows that the final responsibility lies in the hands of another.

A flagrant instance of the futility of the present system has recently been brought under my notice. A student sat for a section of his B.A. examination four times, and his record for the examination reads as follows: Latin—Pass, fail fail, pass; education—Fail, fail, pass, pass; mental science—Pass, pass, pass, fail. The first time he failed in education he had obtained first class and special mention in that subject in his college examination. This student has therefore passed twice in both Latin and education and three times in mental science; University result, nil: a state of affairs which hardly requires any comment to demonstrate its absurdity. Another instance is that of a candidate who presented himself for the Senior Scholarship Examination in German. He was known to his professor to have read very widely in his subject—in fact, was probably the best-read student that had ever presented himself from that college. He obtained the highest marks in the examination, and yet no scholarship was awarded him, the reason, as stated by the examiner, being to the effect that, though the candidate could write good and idiomatic German, his acquaintance with the language was evidently not one of wide reading. Yet another candidate presented himself for honours in German. His marks were not very high, but the comment of the examiner was reassuring. "This candidate," he said, "seems to be better than his marks indicate." So here we have a system which admittedly reduces everything to a question of marks, bases everything on a foundation of marks, and yet the divinity that shapes the marks candidly admits that they do not indicate the merits or position of the candidate. Truly a system that cannot even be called perfect in its imperfections.

Such cases could not occur if the teacher had a share in the examination, and in no other university except the old University of London is the teacher deprived of his share in the examining. As far as London is concerned the external examination has received its death-blow in the report of the Royal Commission on University Education in London, which recently concluded its sittings under Lord Haldane. There, amongst other things, it is said of the external examination, "As far as it tests his knowledge or information alone it can obtain evidence only of memory and not even of lasting memory, because in the case of some subjects, at any rate, cramming is the most successful way of preparing for the test, and it is notorious that a good coach can enable a candidate even to dispense with cramming more than fragments of a subject prescribed." And again, "No doubt the degree is an incentive to work, and there are very few who can dispense with some incentive, but the external examination does not test the quality of the work. It can be more easily and more effectively prepared for by means that are not educational. It is in spite of and not by means of the so-called principle of guidance by test if the great majority of the candidates do not belong to the class which Newman describes as 'those earnest but ill-used persons who are forced to load their minds with a score of subjects against an examination, who have too much on their hands to indulge themselves in thinking or investigation, who devour premiss and conclusion together with indiscriminate greediness,