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A2/1787

Proposed Admission of Girls to University Local Examinations.

17, CUNNINGHAM PLACE, LONDON, N.W.

Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> 1863.

Dear Sir

We are much indebted to you for so fully entering into the objections which have occurred to you, respecting our proposal.

The Committee are I believe, quite alive to the paramount importance of guarding against anything like undue publicity or exposure in the case of girls. After a

considerable amount of careful inquiry, they have satisfied themselves that the admission of girls to the University local Examinations might be so provided for as to avoid any risks of this sort.

No scheme of public or mixed instruction is proposed. The attendance at the Examination would take place only once in the year, probably for most of the candidates, only once in their lives, & the sanction of their parents would always be indispensable.

The difficulties attending the inspection of schools, on the plan recently adopted by Cambridge, would appear to be greater than those of simple examination.

A French exercise would be judged by the same rules, whether written by a girl or a boy, but it may be questioned whether University men would be in all respects the persons best fitted to examine into & pronounce upon the internal arrangements of a girls' school.

The Committee feel very strongly the

danger of overworking girls. It appears however that in girls' schools, almost without an exception, a half-yearly examination takes place, & it is believed that an improvement in the Character of the examination would not materially increase the stimulus, though it would greatly add to the value of the results. In many schools also, what is called a "concert" is given once a year, to which the parents & friends of the pupils are invited, & where the musical proficiency of the girls is displayed. Some of the best teachers

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would be inclined to welcome a scheme of examinations which might give them some support in resisting the disposition to give an excessive prominence & an unreasonable amount of time to the attainment by girls without musical gifts, of mere mechanical excellence. As the Universities already examine in French, German, Drawing, Botany & the other ordinary subjects of female education, it seems scarcely worth while to incur the great additional expense of a new system of examinations, provided always

that such arrangements could be made at the various centres as would ensure perfect decorum.

The number of female candidates would probably be comparatively small, & it would therefore be necessary to provide for the expenses of a separate scheme by making the fees higher. So high indeed, as virtually to exclude many of the candidates whom we are most anxious to reach.

If the Universities were willing to sanction the proposal as far as they are concerned, it might be left optional with the local Committees, to accept or refuse female candidates according to the circumstances of

the case. It would no doubt be generally found expedient to give the girls a separate room, & to require the attendance of a Lady-Visitor. This plan is adopted at the various classes in the Ladies' Colleges & is found to work well. The safe conduct of the girls to & from the place of examination, would naturally be provided for by their parents & teachers.

The Leeds Local Secretary believes that there would be no insuperable difficulty in making suitable arrangements there, & the London Secretary (for Cambridge) is of the same opinion as regards London.

The Brighton Local Committee have  
already passed a resolution expressing  
their willingness to receive female  
candidates, under the sanction  
of the Universities.

I have not received the compilation  
you kindly speak of sending.

Pray excuse my troubling you  
with this long letter.

I am, dear Sir

Yours truly

L. E. Davies.