EXAMINATIONS.

As surely as November signals the sporting season, the Melbourne University announces its annual academic festivity, to as many more—teachers and candidates, and those who, like gods to the latest carelessness of mending, papers, and the like, may use the slim, but significant art. The requirement by the Public Examinations Board of an English essay, apart from the English literature paper, in the higher public examination, is a step in the right direction.

A stumbling block to many students who aspire to take the University arts course is the fact that there are only five optional subjects which constitute a pass in the senior public examination, and the matriculation, which is required to enter the University, and which has four compulsory subjects—Latin, Greek, geometry, and Greek. Hence, many students, with perhaps five or six objects, often find themselves unable to attach themselves with one or more of these compulsories to be cleared off at the terminus of a hardworked undergraduate's career. Hence, the Higher Examination is a qualifying factor for a degree. Especially does this seem true to some of the smaller schools, where an ambition to secure a high pass list in candidates for matriculation is an object to outweigh the interests of the students who intend to enter the University, and who, when they reach senior position, are not interested in matriculating to the subjects which constitute matriculation. The Higher Public Examination offers an additional scope for advanced studies, when the compulsory subjects have been completed.

Many a candidate for the University can testify to the intricate drawback of matriculating to the subjects which have had to be made up at the end of a hard year, or else, which, haunting the summer vacation, must be faced in the May or February birthmonth. Especially does this apply to Greek, while Greek is a compulsory subject for matriculation, every school which desires preparation for the public examinations should prepare a subject for matriculation in it. The comic aftermath of the examination is seen in some of the reports in that little "Manual of the University" in which, among much helpful advice and criticism which might well be pondered by teachers and candidates, the chieftest of the season's "howlers" appears as "rightly or wrongly, and let off with a mental attitude. The improvement of the present system of public examinations must be regarded as not only a matter of great advantage, but might possibly make real weight as criteria of genuine achievement, lies along the lines of improved co-ordination between the school year and the examinations at the end of it. Senior and higher public candidates in Botany, for instance, are required to submit both a book and a psychological report, and it is not altogether surprising to find that these reports have been written; but, if the notebook be not of sufficient merit, the candidate will not be allowed to pass. Some guarantee of practical achievement on the literary side, such as a collection of essays signed by the teacher and handed in with the examination paper.