“A CERTIFICATED Teacher.” Turn over the pages of any educational paper, and in nearly every advertisement for governesses you will find these words. In fact, the day is rapidly approaching, if it is not already here, when the uncertificated teachers will find it impossible to make a living. It seems hard that this should be so, for the suffering which attends all revolutions seems all the harder when its victims are women, unfitted by Nature and education to adapt themselves to new conditions of work. Very honest, good work has been done by the untrained
teachers, but their day is over; and, in the interest of education, we cannot regret it. Public opinion is right when it demands some guarantee as to the competence of the "professional parents." Is not their influence powerful to make or to mar the mind and character of our children? True, the teacher, like the poet, is born, not made, and examinations can only test the knowledge, not the capability, of the candidate; still it is something to know that the teacher possesses the intellectual qualifications for her work.

In this paper I propose to speak of one only of the numerous examinations now open to women; but that one is deservedly in high repute, both with teachers and with the general public. I mean the Cambridge Higher Local Examination. "How can I obtain a Higher Local certificate?" is the question asked by many a young teacher. I shall try to answer that question.

In the first place, what is this examination? It is a University examination; its certificate carries with it something of the prestige of University honours; and it is certainly an impartial verdict on the candidate's work. Then, it is an examination for women, not for school-girls, and it may be taken as the standard to which the University considers that an educated woman of average ability should attain. If you wish, therefore, to obtain a Higher Local certificate you must possess, or make up your mind to acquire, the necessary knowledge; and here let me enter my protest against the despicable system of cramming. I cannot say that it never succeeds, but so do other frauds; and I do say, and I say it in deep earnest, that every woman who obtains a certificate in this way is sailing under false colours, and pretending to the possession of qualifications which are not hers.

I assume that our candidate is prepared to obtain her certificate by honest work. The first thing is to choose the subjects of study. Full allowance is made for individual taste, and candidates may present themselves for examination in any of the following groups:

- Group R.—Religious Knowledge.
- A.—English Language and Literature.
- B.—Languages, Classical or Modern.
- C.—Mathematics.
- D.—Moral Sciences.
- E.—Natural Sciences.
- F.—Music.
- H.—History.

To obtain a pass certificate it is necessary to satisfy the examiners in arithmetic and three of the above groups; groups R. and F. will not be taken as two of the three. Every candidate must take either group B or group C; for the University declines to recognise as well educated a woman who does not know one foreign language or a little elementary mathematics.

These different groups may be taken up in successive years; and those who have teaching or other work on hand will do well to avail themselves of this permission. The groups that bear most directly on the teacher's work are A, B, C, E, and H; but the training to be derived from the study necessary for R or D makes them equally valuable. The choice of each individual will vary with her tastes and previous education. In the limits of one short paper it would be impossible to give advice as to the study of such varied subjects. All I can do is to say something of the obligatory subjects, leaving the optional ones to the students themselves.

First, there is arithmetic. I fancy I hear my young reader give a sigh when I mention this subject. But the papers are not difficult, all that is required is a sound knowledge of the principles and practice of elementary arithmetic. Unfortunately this knowledge is often wanting, and most young ladies would find themselves none the worse for a thorough study of this subject. Go back to the beginning, to notation and numeration; make sure of each step before you go on further, and you will find that arithmetic acquires a meaning and an interest which it did not possess for you before.

Then there is group B. Here, too, the student has plenty of scope for individual taste. A pass in one language is all that is required, and that language may be Greek or Latin, French, German, or Italian. Again, it is thorough knowledge which is needed. The grammar must be carefully studied, and no facility in translation will condone for defective accuracy.

Then comes group C, which may be taken instead of group B. Arithmetic, Euclid, and Algebra are necessary to satisfy the examiners. A few questions are set for advanced students, but the greater part of the papers is devoted to the elementary work.

Special distinction in any subject is notified on the certificate, and the names of candidates are arranged in three classes. To attain to a place in the 1st or 2nd class a wider knowledge is needed, and in most cases more subjects must be taken up, e.g., no one can obtain a 1st or 2nd class in group B with one language only. A Pass Certificate can be changed into an Honour Certificate by carrying the study of the subjects further, and then being examined again.

I have dwelt on thoroughness of knowledge, but do not be discouraged if you feel yourself deficient in this. Go back to the beginning of things, strengthen the foundations before you begin to build upon them, and do not think that this is only necessary for examination purposes; it is a duty which you owe to your pupils and to your employers, as well as to yourself. Its performance will give you the satisfaction of a clear conscience, as well as material advantages. Do not be content to remain an uncertificated teacher; work steadily, and prepare yourself to meet that growing demand—"Wanted, a Certificated Teacher."