

It was so on the present occasion. She went over and over the same ground without seeming to advance, and evidently dreading the result of the communication.

"Perhaps you had better begin at the beginning, Miss Heath," suggested Sellon.

"That will be best," she replied, turning towards him, and so avoiding Mr. Le Roy's eyes. "It must be between thirty and forty years ago, when I first came to Courtleroy as governess to Mimica's mother. I was quite young, and more of a companion than governess. When she married I went to Monklands to—to help Lady Helena, and be with Lady Margaret. You remember, Mr. Le Roy, my parents were both dead. After my father's death, my mother married again, and died, leaving an only boy. I had to look after him, for her husband, a lawyer, was also dead. He lived with an old servant until he went to school, and I used to see him during my holidays. Sometimes he came to see me. He was very handsome and taking, and everybody liked him."

Here Le Roy made an impatient movement, as much as to say, "What is that to me?"

"He was very fond of me, and, when I was in London, would waylay me whenever he could. He often met us in the park or gardens."

"Us? Who?" interrupted Le Roy.

"My pupil and me. I got him a situation as clerk in a merchant's office, but he hated the desk. He was young and wild, but not wicked, and never told a lie."

"What has this to do with Captain Hope,

or our interview yesterday?" asked Le Roy impatiently.

"You will see—you will see. But you must prepare yourself, Reginald Le Roy," replied Miss Heath, who was so flurried that she could scarcely speak, and whose courage was failing.

Mimica came forward and sat down beside her, taking her hand and whispering, "Tell the worst at once, and let it be over." The red sunlight and flickering firelight cast fantastic glimmers over the room and its inmates.

"The worst!" echoed Miss Heath. "When was that? It must have been when Lady Margaret married, no one knew to whom. I never guessed—I was in despair lest I should be blamed, but no one blamed me. I was grieved from my heart for you, Reginald, though I guessed the match was forced upon her."

"Pray come to the point," said Le Roy, hoarsely, clenching the elbow of his chair.

"I will, only I dread it now I have begun. Some time before this I had lost sight of my brother, and was told by one of his fellow-clerks that he had volunteered for the army.

I was very unhappy about him, for I loved him dearly. I went to live with Mrs. Le Roy as companion after I left Monklands, and we settled, as you know, in London. We had been there over a year, when I received a letter from my brother entreating me to come to him at once. I went to the address he gave me; it was near Regent's Park, and I noticed that there were trees about the place, and that

it looked bright and cheerful. My brother met me at the door.

"Come in, for mercy's sake!" he said, and hurried me upstairs.

"I heard the cry of an infant, and he took me straight to the room whence it came. I saw that the mother lay on the bed. My brother led me to her, and she held out her hand. I nearly fainted, for it was my darling, lost Margaret."

At this announcement an awful groan broke from Le Roy and exclamations of astonishment from the others. George Hope came up to Miss Heath with the agitated cry—

"She was my mother!"

Mimica turned to her uncle. All was confusion, for the effort and the tension had overcome Milly Heath's nerves, and she became suddenly hysterical.

"Take her from the room! Leave me!" shouted Le Roy, with tones that seemed to shake the books on the library shelves. They steadied Miss Heath's nerves, however, who rose, faced him, and said, humbly—

"I grieved for you, for myself, for my brother, for Margaret. But they were married, and she died soon after the birth of George Hope. I promised not to tell. I have broken my promise for his sake and Mimica's. Forgive me a secrecy which I could not help, and which has nearly killed me."

"Leave me," repeated Le Roy, more gently, and George Hope took his newly-found aunt from the room.

(To be continued.)

## USEFUL HINTS FOR EXAMINATION CANDIDATES.

By THE REV. THOMAS B. WILLSON, M.A.



IN these days when competitive examinations prevail so universally, and when girls as well as boys have to compete, a subject such as stands at the head of this paper cannot be without interest to many of my readers who look forward, some, perhaps, with confidence, some with fear, to the ordeal of examinations.

As an old examiner, and one who, from time to time, has examined the papers written by many hundreds, both of girls and boys, for different public examinations, I hope that what I have to say may perhaps be a help to some intending candidates. I want first to make a few suggestions as to the method of dealing with papers, because I feel sure there are many candidates who come out very badly in examinations, not so much from want of knowledge, as from want of a proper method in answering the papers set them, and from going about their work in a wrong way.

There can be but little doubt that the best test of a thorough knowledge of a subject will be by written examination. There real work is sure to tell, and those who depend (as so many do) on their natural quickness in a *viva voce* examination will find their true and legitimate place.

I am not, indeed, advocating the abolition of *viva voce* examination, because I know there are many kinds of questions which show especially whether a book has been studied intelligently, and with attention to the

details, as well as general outline, which can best be put *viva voce*.

But with respect to that kind of examination there is no doubt it should not be conducted in a class. If so, it is manifestly unfair to some candidates. It is quite impossible for an examiner, even if he be ever so anxious to give fair play to all, to make each question he may put equally easy. For example, the question which falls to the lot of A may be much easier or harder than that which comes to the turn of B, C, or D, and so A will either be placed at an advantage or disadvantage as regards the others. To make *viva voce* examination really fair to all candidates each one should get the same question. They should be taken up separately. This will no doubt entail more trouble on an examiner, but it is the only way I can see by which *viva voce* can be made uniformly fair.

To return, however, to the subject of examination papers. Many candidates, as I have said, do not show to the best advantage in them, because they have no method in dealing with their papers.

When you receive your paper, there are a few things you should consider before you begin to try to answer it. First of all, the time allotted to the paper before you, and then how many of the questions you intend to attempt. Of course, papers will often be divided into obligatory questions—that is, questions which you must answer, if you can—and optional questions—those of a more difficult nature, some of which are to be attempted.

It may be assumed that an examiner will not give a paper which is supposed to be finished in two hours of such a nature that a well-informed candidate would require three hours in which to do it justice; but very many of the candidates waste time about beginning

and in other ways, so it is always well to consider at the very outset the time at your disposal.

One great rule—a golden rule, I think we may call it—in dealing with examination papers is this: Always begin with the easiest questions (those you feel quite sure of), and leave the more difficult ones until you have finished the former. By doing so you are certain to receive credit for what you have done. Very often it happens that candidates begin with the hardest questions (those they are least certain of), and then find, to their dismay, that they have taken up so much of their appointed time over these questions that none remained to answer those which they really knew, and the papers are taken up before they can finish them. I feel quite sure that neglect of this simple precaution has over and over again deprived candidates of marks, which, if they had observed this rule, they would otherwise have gained.

In attempting to answer questions set on examination papers, try and be as concise as possible, and do not put in extraneous matter. You will gain nothing whatever by it, but rather disgust an examiner. Remember he has to read through, perhaps, many hundreds of similar papers dealing with the same questions, and as examiners are, after all, human, they may not feel so amiably disposed towards an unknown examinee, if he or she persists in adding a great deal of matter which has really nothing whatever to do with the question. For example, if you are instructed to write a brief note on the life of Queen Elizabeth, or Mary Queen of Scots, do not enter into a disquisition as to the advantages or disadvantages of women as rulers of a state, or branch off into such like side issues. I must say I have always found

girls greater offenders in this respect than boys. They certainly write a great deal more in their answers. Try in answering questions such as above to give something more than the usually best known story connected with the historical personage. Undoubtedly it is often the only fact known to the candidate, and if he or she were deprived of it, the result might be disastrous. Has it not been suggested that a question on the reign of King Alfred should be put in this way—“Write an account of King Alfred, omitting the story of the burnt cakes,” or of King Knut, leaving out the rebuke of the courtiers? If that were done I fear it would reduce the marks gained by the candidate.

One very common fault of candidates when answering papers is this: A question is given in which the examinee has a choice, such as “Write a brief account of any *one* of the following counties: Yorkshire, Devonshire, or Kent.” Now, one would imagine that a question worded in that way would be quite intelligible, and that candidates would distinctly understand that they are not to attempt more than *one* of the counties named; yet, notwithstanding that, in questions of this kind I have over and over again found that candidates will attempt *all* the places named. This is, of course, very annoying to an examiner, because it gives a great deal of unnecessary trouble, and places him in a difficulty to know which of the places described he is to select as *the* answer to the question. A little more thought on the part of a candidate would show that giving more than one is told to do is useless, and not likely to impress an examiner favourably.

Candidates, when viewed through the medium of their papers, divide themselves into many different classes. It is an interesting study to read the characters of those you are examining in that way, especially when you know nothing whatever about them, except that they bear a certain number. One can often tell a good deal about candidates you have never seen by reading their papers, especially if you examine historical papers or English composition. If the former, you can often discern their religion, what part of the land they come from, &c., and sometimes in compositions, little facts about their lives. These are often amusing; sometimes pathetic. It is curious what an insight you may get into the ideas of persons quite unknown to you by reading their papers. You cannot go through

800 girls' papers in one examination, or 1,000 boys', as I have done, more than once, without coming across much which is interesting amid a mass of dry facts and figures.

With respect to the way in which they do their work, candidates arrange themselves in many different classes. There is the methodical candidate, who does the work in a regular way, arranges the answers intelligently on the paper, and gives you no trouble in that way. Not always, however, are these the best. The clever candidate is not so particular, but has mastered the subject, and, though frequently careless in the form of the answer, yet impresses you with the idea that you have before you the paper of one who knows what he or she is writing about. Then there are the reckless guessers, often a most amusing class to meet by their haphazard attempts. Frequently you will perceive they have a glimmering what the answer should be; but often get a hold of it by the wrong end. Of this class was one who told me, in answer to a question as to the causes which led to the revolt of the American colonies in 1775, that it was due to the penny postage! The answer was, of course, absurd, but one could easily see that the Stamp Act of 1765 was the cause of this curious reply.

Some candidates are in a state of deep despondency; they have done badly in some subjects it is clear, and they hope to move hard-hearted examiners by an appeal to their compassion. Such appeals, I must say, I have found only in girls' papers. Boys, I suppose, think (and, indeed, rightly) that they do not pay. The despondent one adds a footnote to a badly done paper, to say that she failed in some other subject, and hopes the examiner will be merciful, &c., &c. If, however, such candidates knew how little good their moving appeals effected, they would probably save themselves the trouble of writing them.

The subject of curious answers given at examinations has frequently been dealt with, but I would like to give a few instances. They sometimes take an almost enigmatical form, and it requires some study to see the idea which was working in the mind of the candidate. I remember one answer took me a long time to solve. It was in a history paper. The question was to give some account of the Court of the Star Chamber. The reply contained merely these words—“The birth of Sir Chambers was a secret;” I give it *verbatim*.

There seemed to be no sense whatever in such an answer. But in turning it over, it seemed as if “Sir Chambers” was a corruption of Star Chamber; the writing was clear and distinct. But then there was the curious expression “the birth of Sir Chambers.” The only solution I could ever come to was this—I fear my candidate had no idea of the answer, and he (I think it was a boy) was shabby enough to apply to a neighbour for help. The neighbour did not like to refuse, so whispered back, “The Court of Star Chamber was a secret tribunal,” &c., but he had only got so far as the word “secret,” when he saw the examiner looking that way, and immediately stopped, and the ignorant one, having failed to catch the words correctly, wrote down what he thought was said, quite regardless as to whether it made any sense.

The Court of the Star Chamber has long been a puzzle to many candidates. I was once told that “the Court of the Star Chamber was so called because it let Sebastian Cabot go to find America,” also that “it was a place where a prisoner was sent before he was found.”

That well-known rebel, Wat Tyler, and the events of his rebellion, furnish many delightful answers. “Wat Tyler was a rowdy Irishman who claimed the Crown at fourpence an acre.” “Wat Tyler was a rebellious prelate;” “Wat Tyler was the son of the Black Prince;” “Wat Tyler's rebellion was caused by the income tax.” “Wat Tyler quarrelled with the King about the choice of an Archbishop of Canterbury.”

These are but a few out of the many specimens of absurd answers which may be culled from an examiner's note-book. They serve to illustrate the curious way in which boys and girls often attempt to satisfy their examiners, and they give abundant confirmation of the old adage about a little learning being a “dangerous thing.” One might easily fill many pages with examples of this sort, which would be amusing enough, but my object is not merely to amuse but to help my readers who are competitors in written examinations, to avoid those mistakes into which they so frequently fall.

If candidates would only observe some of the simple rules for working at their papers which I have suggested, they would, I doubt not, greatly benefit themselves, and make the task of an examiner much easier.

## MY BROTHER'S FRIEND.

By EGLANTON THORNE, Author of “The Old Worcester Jug,” etc.

### CHAPTER XVI.

A FAIR, GLAD DAY, AND THE NIGHT THAT FOLLOWED IT.



It was strange how summer came back to us with Ralph Dugdale's arrival. There were a few days of brilliant sunshine, the chilliness vanished from

the air, and we were not conscious of the touch of frost which had begun to make itself felt at night and morning. And not less signal was the sudden revival of strength and spirits which Edmund manifested. Was it merely caused by

the excitement incident to the coming of his friend and the pleasure with which he was looking forward to going to Grindelwald at the beginning of the next week, as Ralph had persuaded us to do? My heart refused to believe that it was only a temporary improvement, and hope began to fortify itself anew. I forgot the shocked, grieved expression I had caught for an instant on Ralph's face as he first saw Edmund after the lapse of several weeks. Edmund was once more sanguine of recovery, and he infected me with his own hopefulness.

“I think I have taken a turn for the better at last; there is more of life before me yet, thank God,” he said, one day. “Do you know I woke this morning with the words ringing in my ears, ‘I shall

not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord.’ I took it as a token that my days were to be prolonged. Ah, you cannot know how fair God's world looks to me now! One needs to be brought low to know the joys of life.”

As he spoke thus, Edmund was lying amongst cushions and rugs on the soft turf of a little upland glade, into which the midday sun was pouring its warmest rays. It had been his own proposal that we should come and make a picnic-luncheon there. Sturdy bearers had carried him to this spot through the lovely pinewood from which it opened. A small, impetuous stream, dashing with many a turn and twist through the gully it had formed for itself, separated us from this wood, but we could look