THE MATHEMATICAL TRIPOS OF 1906.*

Cambridge University Examination Papers, Easter term, 1906 ;
Containing the Papers for the Mathematical Tripos, Parts I
and II. Cambridge, at the University Press. Pp. 739–782.
Price 2s. 6d. (For sale through Deighton, Bell and Company,
Cambridge, England.)

THE main difference between the average British student of
mathematics and his continental brother is summed up in the
relative importance of examination and dissertation. While
the examination for the German doctorate is a single oral ordeal
lasting not over a couple of hours, the tripos for the first degree
(baccalaureus artium) occupies several days, and the honor
papers make demands on the successful candidates which could
seldom be met by a young German doctor. On the other hand,
the German student has been engaged on a single problem for
one to two years, and his results make a more or less important
contribution to the science. The student at Cambridge has
concentrated all his skill on short, definite exercises, most of
which, however, have a direct bearing on general mathematical
development. The principal feature of the examinations is the
solution of a large number of strictly original problems.

The names which have become famous among English math-
ematicians are almost identical with those which have stood
high in the examinations, but many of these very men are now
active in the movement to change their character by allowing
time for the second part, and putting more emphasis on real
original work, rather than on "an excessive amount of polish-
ing of mathematical tools." †

The tripos papers of 1906 contain twenty examinations of
three hours each. The number of questions varies from four
to twenty, and these range in difficulty from a simple corollary
in plane geometry to abstruse theorems on the outer boundary
of mathematical knowledge. The papers are arranged in three
groups. The first group of seven is set for all candidates for
the B.A. degree with honors in mathematics. They are taken

---

* For an account of the development of the mathematical tripos, one
should consult the History of the study of mathematics at Cambridge, by
W. W. Rouse Ball, Cambridge, 1899, and the inaugural address before the
London mathematical society by Dr. Glaisher, in 1888.

† See BULLETIN, volume 12, page 468.