

## HEREDITARY SUCCESS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In your report of Mr. Dixon's speech on the reform of the House of Lords I find the following passage :—" Referring to the statistics of the Universities, I find that the commoners had there been twice as assiduous and successful as the sons of peers." Permit me to ask through your pages, from Mr. Dixon, for a little more detail about these statistics, which flatly contradict certain theories at which I myself arrived after a good deal of inquiry.

The number of individuals in the classes who send sons to the University is enormous. Thus I find, on a rough estimate, above 50,000 names in the "Court Guide" in the *Post Office London Directory*. There are some 20,000 clergy, mostly resident in the country, and the "Law List" and the "Medical List" are about equally numerous, making 60,000 altogether, and perhaps (at a guess) 50,000 not in the "Court Guide." Besides these are the manufacturers of our large towns other than London. It would be a moderate computation to take a total of all these classes at 100,000, to set off against, say, 450 peers. They are more than 200 times as numerous. Again, there are many individuals who have struggled, by virtue of their high natural gifts, from the lower strata of society, whose numbers are to be counted by the million. Yet, the sons of peers make, as it appears to me, a remarkably good show in the class lists of the two Universities. In Cambridge Mr. Strutt, the eldest son of Lord Rayleigh, was Senior Wrangler—that is, the very first of his year (1865), in Mathematics; and the Duke of Devonshire was second of his year, in 1829. In classics, Lord Lyttelton was bracketed first, together with Dr. Vaughan, as the first of their year (1838), and the Hon. George Denman was the very first of his year, 1842. Lord Derby was one of the first class—that is, one of the first dozen or so, in 1848. In Oxford, where sons of noblemen are sent more frequently than to Cambridge, the cases are proportionately more numerous. Lords Kimberley, Carnarvon, Camperdown, Colchester, Morley, are all "first class men," the first class in Oxford consisting of, perhaps, eight or ten on an average; and of other sons of peers becoming first-class men, there are numerous examples; and I have no doubt, from the case with which I have lighted upon these instances, that, with leisure for inquiry, I could make my case much stronger.

What has Mr. Dixon to adduce, *per contra*?

Yours obediently,

F. G.