



E. W. Poynter, photo.

Mouth of Waimatea River.

THE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION MOVEMENT.

BY FANNY BULLEID.

Beginning as a mere experiment, this remarkable movement has assumed an importance such as its originators could scarcely have anticipated, and seems to indicate that a great era in popular education is running its course. The success of the University Extension Scheme has been so immense in Britain, that I see no reason why New Zealand should not adopt its methods, and thus extend to her sons and daughters the benefits of the higher education.

We may at first imagine that the scheme is too ambitious, but when we learn the origin of the movement at home, we shall, I think, take heart and try to do likewise.

The origin of the movement was this:

Some thirty years ago, there existed in several of the large towns in England, what were called "Ladies' Educational Associations," which had been formed for the purpose of organising courses of lectures for ladies only. These lectures were, as a rule, undertaken

by graduates of the Universities. They were so successful that evening courses were arranged for the benefit of those engaged during the day. The popularity of these was so great that it soon became apparent that the only difficulty in the way of indefinitely extending them was the difficulty of finding competent lecturers. At this point, Professor Stuart, of Trinity College, Cambridge, to whom the movement owes more than to any single man, took the matter up.

The difficulty of providing adequate remuneration for a lecturer was at first met by the co-operation of towns in the same district.

At last, a formal appeal was made to the University of Cambridge for a supply of lecturers, and for a definite scheme of higher education.

The University not unnaturally hesitated, but, though slow in moving, it moved at last, and in 1872 a syndicate was appointed to inquire into the best way of meeting the request made by the memorialists. It was empowered for a period of two years to try the experiment of instituting lectures and classes, and of appointing examiners to test work.