

ment when victory seemed to be almost within their grasp. It is bad enough to be thrown back a whole year in the race for the goal. But far worse than this bitter disappointment is the fact that in many cases the breakdown at the last moment is but the culminating effect of a series of mistakes for which the young man or woman may have to go on paying the penalty during the whole lifetime. And worse than even the crippling of the energies and lessening of the usefulness of the individual throughout a lifetime, is the injury done to the cause of higher education by creating or fostering the prevalent though utterly erroneous belief that the student life and all hard brain work are incompatible with robust physical health, an impression which is depriving the world of much developed brain-power which might otherwise have been turned to good account.

But while it is desirable and right that, for the sake of all concerned and especially as a warning to other students, it should be plainly said that the injury to health which spoils so many a promising career, either before or after graduation, is the result of a fatal but avoidable error, it would be but a superficial inquiry which would rest there. The first and most reprehensible cause must surely lie farther back. May we not affirm, in a word, that there must be something radically wrong in the atmosphere, or the methods, of the college or university in which such breakdowns, often of the most promising students, are of frequent occurrence? They take place almost invariably, we believe, during the yearly examinations. This fact suggests an inquiry into the whole examination system. It is but repeating an educational truism to say that training, not scholarship, is the true aim of an undergraduate course. Every educator will also admit that the student who finds it necessary to read hard, or in other words "cram" during examinations, proves thereby that he has not properly done the work of the term. This may be because he has been idle or careless during the term, relying on his ability to "cram" for examination, or because the course which he has been permitted or required to choose has been too heavy. If the former, the inquiry indicated is whether there is not need of radical improvement in the system which offers inducement for, if it does not actually put a premium upon, taking it easy during the term and "cramming" for examinations.

But, so far as the recent case is concerned, the fact, for such we must believe it to be, stated in a recent letter to the *Globe*, that, to take a single instance, the modern language course which is not usually thought to be one of the heaviest at the University of Toronto, requires of honour students at the close of the second year, no less than twenty-two examinations of two-and-a-half hours each, or a total of fifty-five

hours of writing at examinations, makes it pretty clear that the latter of the two causes is at work. Can any educationist doubt that faithful and deliberate study, kept up steadily throughout the term within a much narrower field, would produce better educational results? Can it be seriously believed that the big yearly examination is the best or truest test either of the student's acquirements, or of the thoroughness with which he has done the prescribed work? Ought the examination questions to be of such a kind that a student can even suppose his chances of success to be materially increased by two or three weeks' "cramming" at the end of the year? Would not, for instance, the writing of a thesis, or some similar exercise, often afford a more reliable test of the real mental training, which is surely the true end of the college course? In a word, is it not time for our educational authorities to consider seriously whether it would not be in the interests of true culture to throw the responsibility for results more largely upon tutors and professors, and to cause students to know that their standings will depend more upon a series of tests such as can be applied from time to time through the term, and less upon the results of a single supreme effort once a year?

COMMON VS. HIGH SCHOOLS.

The true democratic principle in respect to education is, we suppose, that the State has a right to use the public funds for the support of educational institutions just so far as those institutions can be shown to be for the benefit of the whole people, and no farther. Under this principle the free public or common school readily comes. Its advantages are within the reach of every boy and girl in the land. It is simply indispensable, under existing circumstances, to the well-being, if not to the very being of the commonwealth. We do not suppose that any intelligent citizen questions this view, or doubts the wisdom of making the most liberal provision for the support of the public schools.

As we go upward in the scale the application of the principle becomes less obvious. Leaving aside the question of the University, there would be found, we dare say, not a few who would maintain that a rigorous application of the principle would rule out even the high schools and collegiate institutes, seeing that as a matter of fact their advantages are and can be directly enjoyed by but a small percentage of the school population, and that this percentage is composed very largely of those who are preparing for the learned professions. The question of the comparative claims of the common and the high schools upon the Provincial Treasury is almost every session somewhat keenly debated in the Ontario Legislature, and it can scarcely be denied that there is some tendency in the minds of a

good many of the people and their representatives to suspect the Minister of Education of partiality for the latter. On the other hand, it is maintained, not without force, that the high schools and collegiate institutes are the people's colleges, seeing that they are open, without distinction of class or sex, to all who are able to pay the small fees usually charged, and to afford—often, no doubt, a much harder thing—to do without the services of their children for a longer period than that covered by the public school course. A recent statistical table published by the Education Department has some bearing upon this question. It shows that by far the larger number of pupils in the high schools and collegiate institutes during the year 1892 were the sons and daughters of farmers and mechanics. We do not know, however, whether the ratio of professional men to members of the industrial classes among those thus shown to be the patrons of the intermediate schools, may not still be much larger than that of the total number of the one class of citizens to that of the other, nor do we deem the matter of much importance in relation to the question under consideration. It would, perhaps, be more pertinent to show how the number of the pupils who are preparing for the learned professions compares with that of those who are preparing for farming and other industrial pursuits, since the real ground of complaint, if there be any, is not so much that these schools are used by one class of parents rather than another, as that they are adapted to help pupils at the public expense to fit themselves for the professions and not for farming or the mechanical trades.

Probably the strongest answer to the charge that the high schools are being unduly fostered at the expense of the public schools is that urged by the Minister of Education, to the effect that these institutions are needed and very largely used for educating teachers for the public schools. If it be admitted, as we fear it must be, that the inducements as yet offered to public school teachers in Ontario are not sufficient to ensure a supply of competent teachers educated wholly at their own expense, the Minister's argument seems unanswerable, for without an adequate supply of such teachers efficient common schools are an impossibility. Nevertheless, the teaching profession can never rise to its true position and dignity till all this is changed, and the emoluments it offers are sufficient to secure an ample supply of thoroughly qualified teachers, prepared, as the members of every remunerative profession should be, wholly at their own expense.

Admitting, however, that, for the present at least, liberal aid to the intermediate schools in Ontario is a sound educational policy, and feeling proud, as all who have looked into the subject must, of the exceptional excellence which is being attained by many of these schools, another question of