

not actually practice it whether premeditated or not? We don't believe there is one student out of five hundred who, if he examines himself and honestly confesses the truth as revealed, will deny that, in some measure at least, such has been his experience in study.

We believe two things are to be blamed for this lamentable fact. First, there is not in many cases actual time enough to prepare thoroughly the assigned work. There may be a gorging but no digestion, a gulping but no assimilation. What one student can do is impossible for another. Even if a few brilliant student can acquire with great rapidity, the majority cannot and this world is run upon the majority plan apparently. The brilliants can find plenty to exercise their surplus time upon if they wish, and if they do not, their brilliancy is not likely to carry them far.

The second fact to which we believe we may credit the "cramming" process is examinations. Examinations test, but they often test a student's ability to get up a work in three days upon which three months have been spent. They will not, they do not and, as things present exist in most colleges, they cannot be accepted as conclusive testimony of how much a student really knows about a subject. It is a well known fact that the really best students are not always those who write the best examination papers. The forty-eight hour plugger very often bobs up the serenest of the serene upon examination day. He merely wants plenty of physical endurance, some present determination, an idea of his position and a fair amount of brain fodder and he has the matter in his own hand. For the next three months he can smoke round, boss about, take up a novel, go out of an evening, skim over the pages of his work in order not to disgrace himself at the lecture and groan in anticipation of that coming seventy-two hour "go as you please."

Such is the fact. It is all right to say we shouldn't do this; that examination is not for the purpose of showing how high you can stand in figures. The truth is, that idea too often prevails, thoughtlessly, perhaps, but nevertheless, actually. Popping on examinations when least expected seems hard but, after all, it is ridiculous to think so. What are we here for anyway? What is the object in attending lectures four years? Not for the purpose of "passing" whatever else it may be. Do away with examinations or bring them unexpectedly on at no stated times,

giving no time for special "preparation," as it is euphemistically called and there would be among students who have a purpose, a more thorough mastery of their work, better habits of mental discipline formed, and much more satisfaction all round.

CANADA as yet has not made herself immortal in the world of letters. Indeed it would be perhaps, rather a matter of surprise if, in this early stage of her career, she had. Great literary genius seems to be in its fullest development an outgrowth of time. The first few hundred years are devoted to consolidation, building up; there is scarcely time for literary work. Witness Greece, Rome and England. Shakespeare's time, the most active, prolific and grandest of any in English history was after the nation had fairly planted its foot, bidding defiance to enemies and confident in the strength and glory of her own soil.

Again, a fire-brand of some kind seems necessary to set the flames crackling. A great national event, a war, invasion, discovery, or something which will stir men's blood, quicken their monotonous pulses, invigorate their enthusiasm and set them thinking is needed. The age comes, it produces its men. Milton had a glorious theme in a stormy time; Dante lived in a vigorous age of his country; Virgil's period of writing was bathed in the most glorious sunset of empire ancient times ever saw. And these men have left the fruits of their genius in the most immortal of all earthly possessions, literature.

Canada has had no period of this kind. As a part of the British Empire we have a glorious past; as a new country and one of vast and varied resources we have a brilliant future; but at present there is nothing which will inspire to the extent of moving mind to extraordinary exertion. We have had no climaxes, no jumping off places, nothing to stir men to their depths, hence no great strides have been made in literature.

Yet we have not been altogether idle. In fiction we are not immortal but commencing. Novelists there have been but not such as to make themselves famous or add much to the general stock of respectable fiction. Sam Slick is one of the classics of America, broader than Nova Scotia, wider than the Dominion; the fame of the author extends over all America and his work for originality, acute experience, thorough knowledge of human nature, wit and wisdom is pro-