

It is evident that a serious mistake here will be fatal to the scheme. Now, it so happens that the results which we desire to attain by means of our educational institutions, the results which, in their aggregate presence, fill up the meaning of the word "education," are very difficult to handle. They elude our grasp, and set at defiance all attempts to weigh or to measure them. It is true that approximations can be made, which are extremely valuable for certain purposes, and when taken under certain conditions, but they are only approximations after all, and approximations in which the coarser and more external, the least valuable, elements are gathered, while the best are necessarily often imperfectly estimated, or not estimated at all. We have no sieve fine enough to retain them, and in the strong-handed winnowing for "results," upon an examination-day, they are blown away among the chaff. That which is discovered and retained is valuable; that which is not may be even more valuable. In fact it is a practical impossibility, under the circumstances, to arrive at a full and correct knowledge of the extent to which a student has attained an education, in its best and real significance, by set formal examinations; and, in saying this, I am far from speaking against examinations as a means of mental training, and as a means of a very valuable kind of discovering the value of the instruction of the teacher and the ability and diligence of the pupil. The statement I make is that it is impossible, in this way, to gain a full or reliable knowledge of the value of the *educational benefit* communicated and received. That the case is the more serious from this fact, that the elements which are not brought into the estimate are probably of far greater value than those which are, is apparent. Such being the case, what is the outcome of our present system? Sim-

ply this: Determining to award prizes according to results, and being unable to attain to any satisfactory estimate of the results most truly valuable, we confer our rewards on the lower, because more tangible, results; *i.e.*, we reward according to the number of pupils who can pass certain examinations, who have simply been, by any means, put into temporary possession of the required number of facts in the line of the examinations. Of course, in the preparation for these examinations a certain amount of training is given; but it is narrow, superficial, unnatural and strained. It has the essentially vicious principle in it of leading teachers and pupils alike to work from *wrong motives*, and the really worthy results are mere accidents, of which the student becomes possessed almost unknown to himself—while, of the noblest results of education, the opening up of his mind, the kindling of the desire for knowledge, and the expansion of his whole being in the presence of new fields of thought, of these it is almost impossible that he can become possessed through such means, because these results have to do with *motives* and *desires*, not with the memory of facts and the knowledge of the peculiarities of an examiner.

The mistake is in making certain examinations, notably the intermediate examination, the test, practically the sole test, of the efficiency of a school, and in still farther aggravating the evil by making the number of pupils who pass these examinations the measure of the success of a school, and in giving it rank and reward accordingly. From what has been stated it will be at once evident that trustees and teachers of High Schools are compelled to bend all their energies to the manufacture of students who can pass these examinations, and that the effects of the process on schools, teachers, and pupils, beyond