

Dublin, and Dr. Goldwin Smith, formerly of Oxford. A fourth was the conferring of honorary degrees on distinguished recipients, including Dr. Goldwin Smith, Dr. Loudon of the University of Toronto, and Dr. Peterson of McGill University, each of whom was created a Doctor of Laws, and Dr. Caven of Knox College, who was created a Doctor of Divinity. Though Princeton is a venerable University, it could hardly be called a distinguished one until the late Dr. McCosh was appointed President about thirty years ago. Whatever may be thought of his erudition or his philosophical views there can be no doubt about his success in securing for the institution the funds necessary to enable it to take a high rank among the universities of America and of the world. During the past quarter of a century its expansion has been phenomenally rapid. Building after building has been erected on its campus, and chair after chair has been added to its professoriate. Dr. Patton, who succeeded Dr. McCosh five or six years ago, bids fair to rival his predecessor in ability to secure additions to the equipment and the endowment, while he is second to no former President in the already long line in purely academical qualifications for his high office. By a curious custom all the past Presidents lie side by side in Princeton cemetery. Since the writer visited the spot some years ago, Dr. McCosh, who was then a vigorous octogenarian, has taken his place in the sequence, and President Patton presides alone.

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Educational Competitions.

IN a recent address, delivered on the occasion of the award of prizes won by successful competitors in Upper Canada College, Principal Parkin spoke regretfully of the lack of spirit in the competition, "especially in the upper part of the School." According to him, if he is correctly reported, "there is something lacking in a boy, or a class of boys, when honour and the desire to excel are not keen impulses to exertion, when they are willing to let even the ablest competitors win without a sharp struggle."

From my point of view this lack of competitive spirit is highly satisfactory, to whatever cause it may be due, and I hope the management of the College will soon follow the example of our High School Boards throughout the Province, and abandon the practice of offering prizes. Apparently one effect of the competition in the College is to check the activity of some of the pupils while it stimulates that of others. It has always been, and it always will be, so. The members of the class soon settle to their own satisfaction who the successful competitors will be, and those who have no hope of winning retire from the competition, while the few who are recognized as having a chance, work on with an ignoble purpose which crushes out of their minds alike the sense of duty and the desire of culture. This result is of such constant occurrence where prizes are given that I cannot see why Dr. Parkin should be surprised at it in the case of his own School.

In another part of his address the learned Principal takes up a position with which I am in entire sympathy, when he says: "I absolutely refuse to stake the reputation and character of the School, or its value for educational purposes, on its prize and honour winnings. My own plans do not specially look to a great repute for prize-winning as the best basis on which the College can be built up. Careful training and wise treatment for each boy furnish a more true and satisfactory basis. In fact, a school or college which stakes its reputation entirely on its prize-winning record lays itself open to the most subtle and powerful temptation to educational wrong-doing. That temptation is

to train the brilliant few at the expense of the commonplace many. It is easy to imagine a great prize-winning school which by that very fact is made an essentially bad school. If the chief energies of the teachers are concentrated upon the training of a few bright pupils, prizes can easily be won, while the general mass of pupils may be comparatively neglected."

My main purpose in quoting these remarks is not to emphasize the apparent inconsistency between the two passages above extracted from the address, but to express the hope that all who have to do with secondary education everywhere will discharge their duties in the spirit so well described by Dr. Parkin. It is quite customary for local authorities to publish the results of the midsummer Departmental and University examinations with a view to showing that their school has surpassed others in the number of candidates passed or of honours obtained. This spirit of childish rivalry has been intensified by the competition for the scholarships offered to matriculants by the University of Toronto. A belief that this would be the case, induced me to suggest to Mr. Edward Blake, before the scholarships were established, some other use of the money. Now that they have been established they are manifestly aggravating the very evil to which Dr. Parkin refers. If those responsible for the management of a school choose to refrain from competition in order to give their pupils the best training possible, their motives are misrepresented, and the persistent boasting about successful candidates elsewhere makes the path of perfect educational rectitude more difficult to follow.

The spirit of competition denounced by Dr. Parkin is quite as unjust and injurious to the teachers as it is to the pupils. The public who patronize the schools are educated by the teachers themselves into the belief that the success of candidates at a competitive examination is the best test of good teaching, and when, owing to causes beyond the control of the staff, the number and standing of successful candidates are low, the public naturally conclude that the teaching has deteriorated, when it may actually have been improved.

Protests against the use of false standards of excellence and misleading criteria of success may be unavailing, but I am none the less unwilling to take the responsibility of leaving them unmade.

W. M. HOUSTON.

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Wellington.—I.

IT seems singular that, during the first extensive revival of the Napoleonic spirit, when ancient records are so minutely examined for the slightest relative fragment of intelligence relating to the man whose splendid visions were made by his supreme genius equally splendid realities, so little attention should have been devoted to the greatest of his conquerors, the victor of decisive Waterloo. That Wellington was overestimated by his contemporaries does not sufficiently account for his neglect by posterity. History, viewing as it does events with some degree of impartiality, has not yet attained that perfection, beneath whose transcendent inspiration it gives to all, even to the weakest, his proper share of praise or blame, measuring out to him when his age has revered beyond his work, less renown in the succeeding generation, while it gives to him who has been forgotten by his own contemporaries a fame far surpassing the fame which is his due until the neglect of the past mingles with the over-estimation of the present in such harmonizing proportions, that the proper average of fame has been attained. Justice and fame, however, are not equally meted out to all. Many of those to whom society, to whom even civilization itself is most indebted, have perished; no history contains their biographies, no painting preserves the shadowy outline of their features, no inscription or tablet or monument proclaims to man the tragic labour of their worthy lives. Then