

EXAMINATIONS OR BEARS.

THE value of expert knowledge in the science of education cannot be over-estimated. And yet manifestly education is not a subject in regard to which wisdom lies entirely with the professionalists. Indeed, there is ground for maintaining that educational progress is due to the criticisms of laymen quite as much as to the philosophy of experts; and it is certain that words of caution or protest from eminent and intelligent men outside of the calling have more apparent weight with both teachers and public than similar words from educational leaders. Eight years ago Charles Francis Adams stirred up the educational world as neither Colonel Parker nor any other professionalist could have done. The same is true to-day of President Eliot who is practically a layman so far as education in the common schools is concerned. There is a point of view from which these outsiders judge our school work that gives them an advantage and compels attention if not acquiescence from those who are doing the work as well as from those who in their families feel the result of the work.

In his speech to the National Association President Harrison made, or rather implied, some criticisms which find a response in the heart of intelligent parents who have children in our schools as well as in the hearts of intelligent teachers who recognize the unwise pressure of the machine.

Here is a pithy paragraph from his speech which our teachers ought to ponder more than they have in the past.

"I am not here to instruct this convention of instructors. As I have just intimated, it has seemed to me that we are taking on in education some of the developments

which characterize the mechanical arts. No workman produces a finished product. He gives it a little touch and passes it on to somebody else. I sometimes regretfully recall the days when the teacher left his strong impress upon the pupil by reason of long years of personal intercourse and instruction — universities where the professor knew the members of his class and could detect the fraud when a dummy was substituted. Now we have the little one for a few months in the kindergarten, then pass him on to the primary, and then the graded system catches him, much as a moving belt in a machine shop, and carries him on until he is dumped from one of these great universities as a 'finished product.' Perhaps the work is so large and the demand for economy so great that this system is inevitable. Perhaps it throws the pupil somewhat more upon himself, and out of this there may come some advantage; but, without discussing the relative merits of the old way and the new, let us thank God that this great army of instructors, reinforced by the great body of our citizens, is marching on to reach that great result, when there shall not be found an adult citizen of the United States who is not possessed of an elementary education. There is a just mean, I think, between a system of intellectual competition which destroys the body, and a system of physical training that eliminates the mind. Perhaps the stress is applied too early upon our little ones. I throw out this word of caution to our good lady friends here who have them in charge. Some years ago I was passing down a street in Indianapolis from my residence to my office,