

ties in Canada followed a plan which has since been adopted by the publishers of the alleged magazine, *Truth*, and also by the Li-Quor Tea Company, who encourage the pursuit of learning by the bestowal of gold watches and silver tea-spoons upon those who are diligent and lucky.

But all this has happily passed away with the other puerilities of a young civilization. We believe that University medals now serve no good purpose whatever, and that on no reasonable ground can anyone ask for their restoration.

Medals, no less than scholarships, introduce a base and inferior motive for intellectual activity. We conceive that the proper motive is self-cultivation, growth, and expansion, and not the mercenary advantages or the self-complacency which may result from the possession of a medal.

The chief argument that has been advanced in favour of money scholarships is that they furnish indispensable aid to needy students. But even this doubtful argument is not available in the case of medals.

We object to medals because they invest their winners with a certain distinction at the expense of others who are often equally meritorious. Medals are granted on the basis of competitive examinations, but the spirit and the very finest essence of true education cannot be caught by the clumsy device of examinations. Yet by this means a class is made to appear to the world to consist mainly of two medallists, the others being merely an indefinite number of nobodies. The false basis of this system is plain from the fact that these two medallists frequently sink into unbroken oblivion after graduation. A prominent barrister of this city told the writer recently that he wanted no medallist clerks in his office. "For," said he, "the very possession of the medal is *prima facie* evidence that much of the time at College which the holder should have occupied in broadening and deepening his mind, has been wasted on the petty trivialities which decide rank in examinations."

It is well known in the professions that students who acquire medals and scholarships in the faculties of law and medicine frequently win them by neglecting their office or hospital work. A similar practice prevails in the faculty of arts, although the defect is not so apparent to casual observers. It is an actual fact that a few years since a student took prizes, scholarships, and finally a medal in the Modern Language course, who had never read a work of fiction in the English language except one of Fielding's novels, and this only for examination purposes!

A student aiming at a medal or scholarship cannot possibly pursue any subject in the proper mental attitude. The search after truth alone should occupy the student's mind. But if he has one eye, or both, on the Senate's brilliant bauble, truth in its more sober aspect will probably escape his observation. What he looks for, then, is not truth, but "points" for examination.

It is held with reason that the main end of a college course is to fit men to read and study with advantage and appreciation afterwards,—to induce, in fact, an intellectual appetite with its accompanying mental health and vigor. But this cramming the mind with undigested facts, which the medal and scholarship system directly encourages, is the great source of intellectual dyspepsia. The process produces such a loathing for his books in a student's mind that after examinations are over he cannot bear to look into them again.

The columns of THE VARSITY are open for the unlimited discussion of this question. If any of the advocates of medals or scholarships can answer the objections which have been made to the system we shall be glad to give them an opportunity to do so.

PAPER UNIVERSITIES AND WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS.*

OWING to the separation of the teaching from the degree-conferring function in the University of Toronto it has often been called

*These remarks are a summary rather of what I intended to say had

a "paper" university. Rev. Principal Grant, of Queen's College, in a recent enumeration of "sundry pestilent crochets with which we in Canada are afflicted, and which have enjoyed a general acceptance for nearly half a century," included "written competitive examinations," and "paper or examining universities." It would be mere affectation not to recognize the fact that his remark has reference to the University of Toronto, which he does not name, even more than to the University of London, which he does name, and which, on the authority of Professor Chrystal,† he affirms to have been "a failure as an instrument for promoting the higher education."

The President of University College in his recent opening address stated that he was there not to apologise for, but to defend the non-sectarian character of University College, and the applause with which his remark was endorsed showed that our non-sectarian character has its defence in the hearts and convictions of the people. Similarly, I am here not to apologise for, but to defend the constitution of our University, though, for that matter, no defence is needed in view of the fact that the people of Ontario of their own free will have placed in the hands of our graduates more than half of all the head-masterships of the High Schools of the Province.

The University of London has not been the failure Prof. Chrystal and Principal Grant declare it to be. On the contrary, it has done more during the last fifty years for the diffusion and promotion of higher education than any other university in the British Islands, and quite as much as any university in the world. By its rigid adherence to a high standard of scholarship, no less than by its "efficient organization and its unsurpassed staff of examiners," it has materially assisted in raising many of its affiliated teaching institutions from mediocrity to excellence, and has stimulated the older universities to increased educational effort by the wholesome dread of loss of prestige. Similarly, the University of Toronto has not merely kept pace in its requirements with the general advance of higher education the world over, but also applied a most effective stimulus to both the secondary schools and the other universities of this Province. The influence exerted in this direction by this institution was so well described by Dr. Wilson in the opening address to which I have already referred, that I need not dwell upon the matter now further than to predict that, whatever changes of constitution the future may have in store for her, the University of Toronto will never cease to admit to her examinations and receive into the list of her graduates men whose passport is not the hallmark of a teaching college, but their own ability, industry, and perseverance.

Principal Grant denounces "written competitive examinations" as a "pestilent crotchet," and affirms that "the days of the written examination craze are numbered." On both points I can heartily agree with him, if I may be allowed to define my position for myself. The "written examination craze" means, with me, the prevailing idea of making a written examination the criterion of a candidate's knowledge; the "written competitive examination" is injurious, not because it is written but because it is competitive. The trouble with Principal Grant and those who think with him—for he is not by any means the *vox clamans in deserto* he modestly declares himself to be—is that he lays the blame on the wrong element in the system he condemns. So far is he from seeing clearly where the trouble lies, that he persistently and successfully encourages written competitive examinations in his own university, and his example is cited as a reason for not abandoning the practice in ours. He will not merely hasten the disappearance of the "crotchet" he denounces, but confer a lasting benefit on the cause of true education, if he will award the scholarships and bursaries of his own university on some other basis than the result of a "written compe-

time permitted than of what I actually succeeded in saying at the opening of the late public meeting of the Literary and Scientific Society. They cover, of course, only part of the ground covered by the inaugural address. †Address delivered before the mathematical section of the British Association. (See *Nature* of September 10, 1885.)