

PUBLIC SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.

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THE PUBLIC EXAMINATION DAY.

December is, perhaps, the busiest month in the year in our public schools. The teacher, whose duty it is to take stock of the progress made during the past few months, is busy reviewing the work of the junior classes orally, and examining the senior classes by written papers. Added to this, he has to devote serious attention to the preparations for his closing exercises; so that when that most trying day in the year to every teacher, old and young, the public examination, or more properly exhibition day, comes, he will have every arrangement made to make all go "merry as a marriage bell." The scholars, too, who are at all ambitious, must not be idle, because upon the results of their work this month in many schools depends their promotion to a higher class. Besides, have they not maps and specimens of various kinds of work to prepare for the edification of their visitors, and songs, readings and recitations for their entertainment? And happiest, though most laborious task of all, have they not the school to decorate, and make, in their own estimation at least, like a garden of Eden for one day in the year? Happy is the teacher who, in sympathy with his scholars, can make these joyous occupations of theirs a recreation to himself, and a reminiscence of his own childhood's days. Even if he cannot do this, let him tolerate them with the consolatory thought that his scholars are going the most successful way about making the day a red letter one in their life's calendar. However happy the anticipation of this day may be to the scholars, it is too often looked forward to with feelings of painful anxiety by the teacher. There are many whose success in keeping their classes in the

best of order, on that day, under circumstances the most unfavourable, will decide whether they be reappointed or promoted. Trustees and others, who only visit the school on examination day, are too prone to estimate a teacher by what they then see, however superficial the display may be. Hence, in teaching, as in other occupations of life, "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." It too often happens that the one who can make the best outward show wins the palm, while he who may be by all odds the most skilful in developing not only the intellect but the character may be cast adrift, or left behind, because he has not either the faculty or the inclination to do work for mere show. In the desire to create a favourable impression upon visitors, injudicious teachers are strongly tempted to prepare pet questions for their scholars to answer. Indeed, we have known a teacher of some standing who remarked to a scholar after a day of this kind, that if she had not been present to have answered the question in history she gave her, and in which she had been drilled a day or two previously, she could not have had it answered at all. We would urge our readers to abstain from such a demoralizing practice as this with all the power they possess. By giving way to it you corrupt the weak among your scholars, and incur the contempt of those whose nature is above such petty tricks, and you lose your own self respect. Keep in mind that every act of yours before your scholars should have the same effect on them that each blow of the sculptor's mallet has on the marble. Do everything in your power to make the examination day a happy one to your scholars, but let it be a profitable one too, both to them and to you. Remember while scholars retain recollections of their ordinary school