

educational system to deter him from writing the article "Democracy and Education" that appeared in your last number.

The point of the article seems to be to show that some defects inherent in the system, and some objectionable results in working, are attributable to the democratic nature of the system, and he leaves the impression that, in his opinion, the democratic feature should be considered a reproach and something to be got rid of.

Mr. Heaton must surely know that an overwhelming majority—ninety-nine per cent.—of our people are democratic, and that democracy is a feature of all our public institutions. It is much in evidence in the election and working of our township councils, our county councils, our town and city councils, our provincial legislatures, our Dominion parliament, and in our conventions, conferences and synods. How, then, in the nature of things, can it be otherwise than that an institution that must be shaped by the feelings, wishes and wants of a democratic people as its educational system must be, can be other than democratic in principle? In the minds of our people democracy has no connection with mob rule. May this be far from us! To us the term means freedom to govern ourselves, to create, develop and support such institutions as wisdom and experience shall show to be necessary and conducive to our well-being. If democracy like this is a taint and reproach it runs deep in the life's blood of the people of Ontario and no oburgation of Mr. Heaton or of any one else will ever eradicate it.

I pass over much in Mr. Heaton's article that has little or no bearing on the subject-title of it, and come to the paragraph in which he appears to condemn Toronto University for having "set books" in what he calls its "entrance examination." He should know that not only the matriculation examination into the University, but that all subsequent examinations in the University are on "set books"; and that the examinations all through the Public and High School courses are based on "set books." He lays the evil of cramming to the door of "set books," and says that "the absence of set books naturally presupposes time and good teaching." He evidently is not aware that a teacher bent on cramming his pupils can do so much easier and better without "set books" than with, and that a good teacher won't let his pupils cram even a set book. It will be found a difficult matter to eliminate cramming from instruction (it is not education) so long as there is competition between schools and teachers as to results; so long as the subjects of examination are so numerous; and so long as there is a desire on the part of students to rush and race through the period of education, and crowd into it (quite irrespective of mind and faculty training) the greatest number of examination results, with the view of making these results immediately available for the earning of bread and butter as soon in life as possible. But self-interest, freedom of action and cheap education, not democracy, are responsible for cramming like this. Educationists in monarchical England, and in autocratic Germany lament the evils of cramming quite as much as educationists in democratic Ontario.

I hope Mr. Heaton will excuse me if I point out two errors of fact in this paragraph about cramming. He says:—

"This evil (of cramming) is further fostered by the fact that not only the salary and standing of the teachers, but also the Government grant to the school is made to depend upon the successful examinations of leaving pupils rather than the average training of the school."

It may be true that some boards of trustees are inclined too often to estimate the value of a teacher by the number of pupils he can get through some examination ordeal, rather than by the mental training he gives the whole school; but in a long teaching experience, I have never heard of his salary being made to depend upon it; and certainly, in no way whatever, does the amount of the Government grant depend on the successful examinations of pupils—leaving or otherwise. If Mr. Heaton's statement were correct it would only be adopting the principle of "payment by results"; and this could be no reproach to Canadian democracy, since it is an essential feature of government assistance to education in monarchical England.

The other error lies in the following:

"This characteristic (use of set books) of the University matriculation examination may be due to the fact that the studies of High Schools, as intimated by the Minister of Education, are conducted chiefly in the interests of embryo Public School teachers."

While it is true that many—possibly a moiety—of the young men and women, who attend a High School, do so with a view of qualifying as teachers, I don't think it true that the studies of the High Schools are conducted chiefly in their interests. How can they be, when (as Mr. Heaton has previously said) "the University, by its matriculation examination, sets the tone to the studies of the High School?" It is true that the work of preparing embryo teachers for the departmental examinations, and the work of preparing embryo graduates for their matriculation examinations, in subjects common to both examinations, has now for some years gone hand in hand; and so much to the benefit and satisfaction of the Universities has this been done that all our Universities now accept the Departmental Junior and Senior Leaving Examinations in place of their own Junior and Senior Matriculation Examinations; and well, indeed, they might, since, as a rule, the questions are more difficult and the percentage of marks required higher. Other bodies, too, such as the Dental Association, the Pharmaceutical Society, the Veterinary College, the Medical Council and the Law Society, accept, in place of entering examinations of their own, the examinations to which the Education Department subjects its embryo teachers. Thus it will be seen that the arrangement of studies in a High School that suits embryo teachers also suits embryo graduates, dentists, druggists, vets., doctors, and lawyers. Mr. Heaton may consider this state of things very democratic; but to bring it about was the very acme of wisdom on the part of the Minister of Education and the heads of these learned institutions. If monarchical England would take this leaf out of democratic Ontario's book, it would show her wisdom too. As for the intimation, I may mention that I have kept pretty close track of the public utterances of the Minister of Education, and I do not remember of ever hearing him intimate that High School studies were chiefly conducted in the interests of Public School teachers. In his efforts to get money from a close-fisted legislature for the proper support of secondary schools, he has endeavoured to overcome the objections of those members who were willing to support Public Schools only, by showing that Public School teachers were indebted to High Schools for their non-professional training.

Having in view the results of the last elections in monarchical England, Mr. Heaton really should not sneer at "pot-house politics," and say that they and democracy appear to be inseparable. I have seen it stated that beer carried Salisbury back into power and saved the House of Lords.

Mr. Heaton is only half correct in saying that "School-Trustees are elected in the same manner as the Municipal Council, by the ratepayers." The fact is that it is only Public School Trustees that are elected in this way. High School Trustees are appointed partly by the Town Council and partly by the County Council. If Mr. Heaton considers this democracy he should remember that England has lately gone much further in her "Parish Boards."

He deplores, as will every right-minded person, that, in the appointment of teachers "merit too often goes to the wall." But is this a feature of education alone? Is it not true of civil, military, clerical and commercial appointments? And is it a feature peculiar to democracy? Unfortunately, Ontario has no monopoly of "ways that are dark and tricks that are mean" in the matter of bestowing and obtaining appointments.

I can easily understand how astonishing, even horrifying, the so called rebellion of the students of Toronto University must appear to one to whom everything that savors in the least of democracy is as offensive as it seems to be to Mr. Heaton. Youth is democratic everywhere, and the "Ontario educational system" is no more accountable for that "example of the spirit of young democracy" than are educational systems of Germany or Russia for the riotous escapades of their University students. If such an uprising against high-handed proceedings (whether real or supposed, I am not saying) had taken place at Oxford, I can readily imagine Mr. Heaton with his Old Country proclivities and national characteristics, applauding it as a fine example of proper British spirit, for "Britons," you know, "never, never, will be slaves."

A. PURSLOW.

Port Hope, August 19th, 1895.