

whole field of study and then industriously cultivate every inch of ground by itself.

The lack of *self reliance* is also seen in the hesitancy with which a proposition is laid down and defended. "I think Davies' Grammar gives this definition" or "Bullion says so and so." Now Examiners want an answer to the purpose, an answer on the *merits* of the question itself, and not the "I think" or the "I believe" of anybody. It is for *them* to judge whether that answer conforms to the acknowledged authorities of the day. This hesitancy, like lack of precision, arises from a want of thoroughness. The student who has mastered the difficulties of any branch of learning, does not depend for his statement on the *ipse dixit* of the authors whom he consulted. That knowledge has become his own, because by their assistance he has gone to the same sources as they did for his information, he has examined the evidences in favor of their conclusions and having satisfied himself in regard to their correctness, he has become entirely independent of their authority.

The system of rote work so prevalent in some schools has given rise to this mental servitude, so fatal to success at our County Boards. When a candidate fails to recall an author's views or words on any subject, he is lost. Why? Because he was the bondman of that author and not an independent thinker as he ought to be. Had he labored to master the *subject* and not the *author* he would have been far more successful. His ideas would then have some foundation, and he could draw upon principles which are available and safe when words may mislead and beguile. Candidates, to succeed well, should be able to look at a subject from more than one standpoint—their knowledge should not consist merely of a few dry formal definitions committed to memory and always faulty if ONE word is omitted; but with care, diligence and reflection, they should fix the broad principles upon the mind and *fill in* by de-

tails so thoroughly that no question of reasonable difficulty could possibly baffle them.

We have also referred to *obscurity of expression* as a cause of failure. This every Examiner must have noticed. In many cases, the answer is so ambiguous as not to mean anything at all. Not that the candidate was ignorant of the matter in regard to which he was writing, but from lack of practice and experience his ideas did not assume proper shape. Again, much valuable time is wasted by superfluous explanations. Not being satisfied apparently with the first statement made, another effort is put forth to elaborate more fully and thus perhaps by explanation, the answer, sufficiently correct before, is entirely vitiated.

And what shall we say about *nervousness*—a complaint so general and so annoying? We cannot propose a remedy, for what is often a constitutional weakness, but we might give some hints that would possibly mitigate the trouble. And first we would advise every candidate to be well prepared in all the subjects of examination. A self satisfied sense of ability to accomplish a given task gives confidence and courage—we are only afraid when we feel that there are very grave doubts regarding the issue. Indeed the best preventative we know against that feeling of dread so common among candidates is thorough preparation. Let them know their own power and feel able for the task, and then Examiners will be no more dreaded than ordinary mortals.

Briefly to summarize our hints to candidates we would say:—

1. Be thorough—master every subject. Make the arguments, principles and facts your own. Understand them in all their bearings.

2. Cultivate self reliance. Do not trust to your memory for the Author's words. Think for yourself.

3. State your answers clearly. Do not endeavor to write too much. An answer short, clear, and to the point, is what is wanted.