

Does it not lie with him, then, to stay this waste? Not altogether; he is part of a system. But more, one and all of us are so intent on the false show of the examination result that neither the prayers of the central figure in the show nor of his champions are heard. Is it sufficient that that delicate instrument—a child's mind—should contribute to the senseless glorification of a school or the pacification of the almighty tax-payer? What matters it, then, should the instrument be wasted or even destroyed in the process? The end justifies the means, forsooth!

The pessimistic teacher looks upon the mental waste which he sees all around him as the inevitable result of the system under which he works. But no true teacher can be a pessimist in anything but theory. His life work demands that he should work and hope for the best even whilst oppressed with a sense of the worst. Still, intellectual pessimism is of service; it is the best antidote to the fatal optimism that is so apt to be fostered by the dazzle of the latter day examination result. It compels us to give heed to the vicious points in our method of educating, and the practical result, so far as the teacher is concerned, is an endeavor on his part to rise superior to the system that enthalls him.

Of intellectual waste, as of any other kind of waste, there are two kinds, productive and unproductive. The acquisition of former knowledge that has now disappeared from the mental consciousness has certainly proved unproductive, if the mind received no training in the acquisition. This is waste with nothing to show for it. But there is the unavoidable waste involved in the disappearance of formerly acquired knowledge whose acquisition resulted in a certain development of the mental powers. Here there is a loss and gain, the

latter often far transcending the former. In a utilitarian age, when every bit of knowledge is apt to be judged from a one-sided utilitarian point of view, this latter kind of waste is often confounded with the former. It is the unproductive waste which concerns us.

The testimony of inspectors will doubtless be corroborated by that of the observant teacher, that the study of some subjects entails a greater amount of waste than that of others. Such subjects as history and geography have acquired bad prominence in this respect. Important as history is, from the point of view of future citizenship, to the average pupil of the elementary school, yet inspector and teacher alike seem to view the subject with despair. As *deus ex machina*, it is either expelled the curriculum of the elementary school, or (perhaps by way of a conscience-salve) relegated to the oft nondescript position of a reading lesson. The question is thus suggested: Are there certain subjects of school instruction of such a nature that to attempt to teach them only results in waste unproductive? Or is the waste wholly or partly the outcome of wrong method in teaching those subjects? The case of history would seem to favor the former alternative. But what does the now historical cry of the inherent difficulty of the subject amount to? It will be granted that in general any subject of study is difficult or easy, according to the way in which it is approached. A glance through the ordinary historical textbook shows the method by which the pupil is introduced to a knowledge of history. It is questionable if there is at present in the educational market a single historical manual that deviates from the orthodox plan of treating the subject "from the beginning." In general, the pupil is led through a series of facts whose sole connection