

can pass from the Common to the High School are sometimes appalling to a college professor. He feels thankful that in his day such fences had not to be leaped, for he knows that in attempting to jump them even now he would be sure to get a cropper. And yet these papers are placed before his little son and daughter, and they, with fingers that have hardly learned to hold a pen with ease and minds untrained to clothe half-formed thoughts in words, are compelled to torture their immature brains to solve a given number of puzzles in a given time, and write the solutions down in black and white, or be subjected to what must always be considered disgrace. A teacher who comes in contact with his scholars every day ought to know whether they are fit to pass into another school. If he cannot be trusted, associate with him the Rector of the High School or the Chairman or a Committee of the Trustees, and let the result depend on oral more than on written examinations. There is no need to put the fence too high. As a rule, fees are charged and rightly charged in High Schools, and that of itself is almost sufficient fence, not to speak of the greater difficulty of the lessons, a fact which can have no great attraction for the ordinary juvenile mind. At any rate, why should the decision be wholly upon written examinations on questions drawn up by a central department and not upon examinations by men who are in a position to make all the allowances that ought to be made? Our system of course is intended to secure uniformity; but uniformity in education is the one thing to be shunned. It is dear to the official mind, and is therefore bad. As a rule, the departmental mind can rise no higher than to conceive of a mechanism faultlessly uniform. Cf the higher unity and beauty and power of an organism, vast as a na-

tion, elastic and full of infinite possibilities, it has no appreciation. It has been said that "the teacher who does not regard the individuality of his pupils is like the physician who administers the same medicine to all his patients." But, if it be wrong for the teacher to treat his two or three score of pupils regardless of the divine differences between them, what shall be said of the wrong done by the system that deals with two or three millions as if they were simply so many bricks in a brickyard? Uniformity is the great idol before which many a genius has been tortured. Uniformity in the Common School, uniformity in the High School, uniformity in the University, this is the ideal of the ordinary official or departmental mind. China exists as a warning, but the warning is unheeded.

It is only fair to note here that for the last year or two the examination papers for entrance to the High Schools have been much improved. There are fewer puzzles and catch questions, but they are still too difficult, taken as a whole. But the system itself is the great wrong. Any boy who can read with fluency, expression and intelligence might safely be admitted to a High School. How many boys in our High Schools can read in such a way? And how can a written examination test the cultivation of intellect that is implied in such reading! It can test cram, and little else.

That is the best possible education which has respect to what a boy is and to the life he has to live. Our boys are to be citizens of a free State, and the great mass of them will have to work for their living. It is necessary that they should be able to read their mother tongue with ease, that their imaginations should be filled and possessed with true ideals, and that their minds should have de-