

schools in Calcutta. This eastern student greatly disapproved of the system, and said, "In their schools pupils were only urged on by their English teachers to get ready for examinations; and that therefore they were obliged to stuff their memory with a mass of unconnected facts which were only half understood—a process in which it was impossible to cultivate independent thought."

Is not this picture too closely descriptive of the system which obtains in Canada, or rather in Ontario? It would appear that for the last five or six years the examination mania has taken tight hold of us. We, too, have come to attribute great virtue to examinations. That public school is spoken of as well conducted, and is held up as a model, if "wee things" in the first class are not promoted to the second, until they can pass an examination in subjects of class one. Class three is reached by an examination in subjects of class two, and so on all through the public school course of a child; while the door between the public and high school is only to be opened by passing successfully the "Entrance Examination." And what awaits him there? As promotions and final entry into the high school are the goal to which the aim of the public school pupil is constantly directed, so when once in the high school he enters upon a course of training having for its object his ability to pass the intermediate examination, and, perhaps, ultimately the matriculation examination of some university. And, be it remembered, that examinations for promotions are not the only ones he has to face: "good schools" have weekly examinations and most have monthly ones.

And when he leaves the high school for the university, what then? Being no longer a boy of an age

when one may fairly expect him to be imbued with a love of knowledge, surely he can confidently be trusted to pursue it for its own sake? Not at all. Examinations sterner still stare him in the face, and at every step. And not only so; at the university, even more than during his school career, it is thought necessary to goad his flagging zeal in the cause of knowledge by dangling before his eyes sundry honours, golden scholarships, medals, etc.

Thus from the outset to the close of his educational career—from the time when he enters the public school as an infant till he leaves the university as a graduate, he has the value of the ability to *pass examinations* dinned into his very soul. Surely with us, as in England, "the mania for examinations has been pushed to its furthest limits."

Now is this a healthy or desirable state of things? It must be acknowledged that it is neither. Those who uphold it, point with pride to the results—that the system makes in-ter-nants for the high school at ten or eleven; intermediates at thirteen or fourteen; and matriculants so young that the university will not admit them on the score of youth. And they ask by what other system could you accomplish results like these? With what other lever could you so move the mass of school-boy sluggishness and innate love of idleness? We allow that the means are admirably adapted to produce this result; that is, that the system is admirably adapted for making pupils work to store their heads with facts, and for making them able to pour out, on examination day, what the teacher has poured in. But do not those who point to their success in this confound instruction with education? They tell us life is a race; and that the competition which examinations afford is a good preparation for that