

EDUCATIONAL TOPICS.

TWO THEORIES OF EXAMINATION.

One of the first things that a teacher accustomed to English methods remarks in the examination papers of a Canadian school is the difference of aim between the systems of England and Canada. Each system of course has its merits, but the difference is marked. In setting his papers, a Canadian is careful to confine himself strictly to the matter in hand, to take his questions from the text-book and from that only, in short, to make his examination bear rather upon the memory of the pupil than upon his judgment or his powers of reflection. Questions suggested by the subject but not strictly contained within it are almost regarded as unfair; pupils should not be examined, it is said, upon what they have not learned. An examination paper in England is a very different matter. It of course contains a majority of what may be called merely book questions, such that, if the pupil has got the text-book by heart, he can answer them to perfection. But the questions marked most highly are those that test, not the memory, but the general mental power of the pupil, those that require him not only to get up his text-book, to think the subject over, to compare the different parts of it together, and generally to read outside of it. Thus, a Euclid paper will contain a fair number of riders, an examination in the Classics will include translation of unseen passages, a History paper upon a special period or country will contain questions, to answer which requires comparison with the history of other periods and of other countries. In every scholarship examination at the Universities and in most final examinations of higher forms of Public Schools, a critical or Taste paper is set and marked very highly, which is intended to test the general culture and knowledge of the pupils examined.

The following are questions taken at random from questions *set to schoolboys* in English schools:—

- (1) "Greek mythology is but another dialect of the common Aryan mythology." Briefly explain this.
- (2) Give the main features of the French Revolution calendar. Explain fully why 1700 was a leap year in England and Russia but not in Rome.
- (3) Describe the daily life (1) of an Athenian of the age of Pericles, (2) of a Roman under the Empire.
- (4) What do you consider to be the object of Tragedy?