

ficulties in the way of this system have so often been under discussion, and thoughtful men are so unanimous about it, that I need only summarise the arguments here. They contend that the candidate is likely to be injured, both physically and mentally, by the strain put upon him in early years. The teachers who prepare him for these struggles live merely by their success, as shown by the results of the competition, and have no further care or interest in the well-being of the pupil. It is also contended that the people over whom he wins control will not be better governed, but worse, by a man who has spent all his early years in the fatigues of cramming and competing. There are many who think that Wellington's officers, taking all things into account, were as well fitted for their work as Lord Wolseley's. I saw an official report of the leading medical men of the province of Elsass a few years ago, in which they deliberately state that the hospital student of their earlier days, who came ignorant but fresh to his work, was distinctly a better clinical student—more observant, more intelligent, more handy—than the anæmic, myopic, worn creature who comes to them a new kind of Strasburg goose. All this is now commonplace. It is less usual to add a word concerning the anxieties and disappointments inflicted upon parents and guardians. Their troubles seem to count for nothing, even among those who advocate the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Yet surely this competitive system has ingeniously devised a system of torture for the majority. It torments teachers, parents, examiners, candidates—in fact, all but the small minority of successful candidates, with their elated parents and result-paid teachers.

I will only endorse these criticisms,

and turn to another aspect of the problem.

The new system professes to be established for the benefit of the masses, to substitute merit for patronage, and give to the small the same chance as to the great. Is this really true, or have the public been gulled, as is usual, by specious pretences? Is it true that the poor have gained these great advantages? I say no. The development of the new system has made open competition the most expensive method yet discovered for entering a profession. A commission in the army could be obtained in the old days by purchase for less money than it now costs to train an average lad to obtain it. Between the preliminary schooling, the actual cramming, the training at Woolwich or Sandhurst, or in the Militia, there is far more spent now on commissions than ever was spent before. There may, indeed, be a few boys of genius who can do all this for themselves. Though I have never known such a case, it is possible. But I do not think that under any system such a personage would ever have failed. He would certainly have commanded patronage, or he would have risen from the ranks, as, for example, Captain Cook did, under the most exclusive of systems. The recent change has not, then, thrown open these emoluments to the poor, but has substituted mere wealth for wealth with high traditions. It is the *nouveau riche* who really profits by it. The poor, whether aristocratic or plebeian, are put under a heavy tax, without any effective counterbalance of advantages. The same evil has invaded the competitions for scholarships at the public schools. They are theoretically open; they fall, as a rule, to the sons of men who can afford 200*l.* a year for the preliminary training. And so all the proprieties of things are violated; rich men are