

"THE EXAMS."

Of all the good things said by President Britton in his address before the late meeting of the Ontario Medical Association none was of greater importance than his epigrammatic sentence: A head full of knowledge and a worn-out nervous system are but poor qualifications for the coming mothers of Canada's sons. He then went on to speak of the splendid school system Ontario has, but declared that from a physician's standpoint it is handicapped with a defect of such magnitude as to alarm him who weighs well the possibilities of the future. The first seven or eight years of life, he went on to say (he should have doubled the time), should be free from care and worry, and devoted exclusively to such pleasurable pursuits as shall conduce in the highest degree to the development of bone and muscle. Then he facetiously observed that parents and teachers leap for joy when a five-year-old manifests his precociousness, and the nervous little monster is held up by his attenuated arms in the sight of his phlegmatic and sanguine classmates as a paragon of perfection angelic to behold; and adds that it would be much better were he making mud pies and wearing out his pantaloons in the physical activities of childhood.

With this we perfectly agree, and Dr. Britton's criticisms might with equal force be applied to the regimen of high schools and universities. A teacher of entrance pupils not a hundred miles from Lindsay, Woodstock, Aurora or Sarnia, exults in the fact that he has succeeded in shoving his whole class through the "exam," and feels now that his re-engagement at \$325 is assured. Is this education?

The big collegiate institutes not a

hundred miles from London, Hamilton or St. Catharines, with sixteen "pushers," hustle on these twelve-year-old monsters through their institutions, cramming great gobbets of knowledge of seventeen subjects into their anæmic cerebrums, terrorize them with "exams," and glory in leading the provincial van in having turned out more raw material for the pedagogic and university mills than any other. Is this education?

Then the oracular and fossiliferous professoriate of the universities, normal schools and colleges, take these pale wrecks (as many of them are) and pour in the profundities of a discarded metaphysics, the dry and unpractical abstractions of the higher mathematics, the horrors of Latin prose and the Greek verbs in *mi*; beside the more useful, but immense, quantities of scientific lore, modern languages and English; and graduate them by "exams."—the finished product of our magnificent and unrivalled school system. Is this education? Seriously, Goliath must be slain.

Besides Dr. Britton's above remarks a very strong presentation of the case was made by Dr. Ferguson, of London, Ontario; and many medical men present corroborated the views of these gentlemen. We do hope to see fewer subjects taught; "exams," as now conducted, abolished to a great extent; prohibition of attendance of children under seven from the common schools; shorter hours and longer holidays for those over that age; and greater attention to ventilation and lighting and sanitation generally. We can only at present point out some general lines along which improvement should take place. If attention is strongly given to this matter many specific plans will be evolved whereby the evils will be remedied.